

FROM THE THEME EDITORS

Ethnographic Imagination

We issued a call for articles on the question of “Why ethnography?” based on our belief that everyone associated with ethnography’s various forms ought to have something to say. This could include the communication scholar in the thick of fieldwork, the sociologist who chose ethnography as a method for her thesis, the philosopher investigating the relationship between ethnography and aesthetics, the artist who, using digital techniques, is searching for a novel ethnographic narrative, or an anthropology preparing to give a lecture on ethnography. We now present the Moment Journal under the theme of “ethnography”, with range of voices as wide as we predicted in our call for papers.

The interview we conducted with Tim Ingold can be read as a continuation of an exciting discussion that has intensified in recent years. Ingold explains why anthropological understanding of “education” should (and must) be different from conventional education. He argues that knowledge gives the “knowledgeable” the status of power when faced by one who is considered weak or ignorant; yet the kind of wisdom that enlarges our understanding the possibilities of life can only emerge through the joint action of all parties (student, participant, researcher, scholar) willing to discover that wisdom. For Ingold, this cannot be attained from a journey with a pre-determined destination; this is exactly where richness of anthropology (and the lameness of ethnography) lies. We hope our report has been able to capture the pleasure and excitement we took from the interview.

Daniel Miller, a pioneer in adapting ethnographic studies to the Internet, spared time between his fieldwork in Russia and Italy to conduct an interview with us. We first considered his recently finished project, “Why We Post?”, which focuses on uses of social media in nine countries, including Turkey, over 15 months. We then asked him about the factors that render an ethnographic study “good” or “bad”, discussed his own future projects, and got his response to Tim Ingold’s article, “That’s Enough About Ethnography!”, which we have translated for this issue.

The issue’s first article, “Diachronic Media Ethnography: From Social Change to Actual Social Changes”, is by John Postill, who is well known to scholars from the field of media anthropology/media ethnography. Postill discusses the difficult and complex relationship between media and social change from an ethnographic perspective. In emphasizing the limits of examining social changing on the basis of “present time”, Postill offers an ethnographic perspective that captures social changes in their historical context. He offers valuable approach to researchers aiming to trace observable social changes (instead of *social changing*) ethnographically: Diachronic ethnography.

Following Postill’s article, Ece Algan, known for her studies in the fields of community media and media ethnography, has written a commentary article, “On the Value of Longitudinal Media Ethnography and a Response to Postill”. Algan, while recognizing the virtue and contribution of conducting diachronic ethnography (i.e. shifting our focus from “present continuous” to “ethnographic past tense”), emphasizes the significance of ethnographer’s timed revisits to the field. Referring to the previous (successful) ethnographic attempts (including her own) in understanding media’s role in social changes, Algan suggests longitudinal approach.

In his article, “Studying Alevism as a Non-Alevi Researcher: Multi-Sited Ethnography in the Context of Migration Yet at Home”, Besim Can Zırh touches upon the fractures experienced in ethnographic fieldwork before sharing his own field experience from a self-reflexive perspective. In light of this, he suggests that neither drawing thick lines between the studied-other’s “that place” and the studying-I’s “this place” nor imagining the “field” as a given place is possible in practice. His multi-field ethnographic study focuses on three Alevi Culture Centers, in Germany (Berlin), England (London) and Norway (Drammen), where he stayed for two years. He recounts his experiences as a non-Alevi researcher with reference to discussions on “anthropology at home”.

Laurin Baumgardt’s inspiring article, “Unfinished Futures: Ethnographic Reflections on Infrastructure and Aspirations in an Informal Settlement in South

Africa”, presents fieldwork conducted in Enkanini. Baumgardt locates the notion of “unfinishedness” inherent to ethnographic fieldwork alongside the stories of the inhabitants who, in their unfinished futures, seek clues towards a better life for themselves, which they can maintain assisted by this pursuit. Based on rich observations from the field, the author discusses “unfinishedness” as an ethnographic possibility in a world of accelerating poverty and precarization.

Çağdaş Ceyhan, Züleyha Özbaş-Anbarlı and Nalan Ova present “Urban Experience in Search of Time: Auto-Ethnographic Views on City and Memory”, an auto-ethnographic study based on the narration of their lives and experiences in Eskişehir and Ankara. They combine the traces of memories of their own pasts in these two Turkish cities with their present impressions, with an emphasis on the “politicalness” of remembering. By sharing their own feelings regarding daily life, the streets, and politics, they use their own words to offer an experience of confrontation.

In “Multi-Species Ethnography: On The Possibility For A Face to Face” Ezgi Burgan explores the theoretical and methodological possibility of non-anthropocentric ethnographic research. After reviewing pioneering studies and researchers working in multi-species ethnography, she offers an ethnographic approach that avoids reifying animals as subjects but instead tries to see their own lives from their perspectives through examples. She considers such issues as livable lives, language and representation, subversive practices, and breaking the nature-culture dichotomy. As well as looking at cross-species encounters from a critical and relational perspective, she also integrates inter-sectionality among several forms of domination into her approach.

The title of Oya Morva’s article, “Rereading the Ethnographic Legacy of the Chicago School of Sociology: Symbolic Interactionism in the Age of Digital Ethnography”, summarizes the intersection of theoretical and methodological perspective she explores. Chicago School ethnographers taught the secrets of the streets to social scientists who wished to understand 20th century individuals in urban settlements: The ambiguous, complex and slipper nature of the everyday and face to face communication were shaped in the streets of the city. By revisiting the Chicago School a hundred years after its establishment, Morva recommends us to follow its present “alumni” to discover digital daily life and digital (street) culture.

An ethnographer knows that fieldwork does not consist of or end with merely observing the geography of relations. The field is first and foremost, an imagination that produces responsibility, and that is surrounded by power relations and ethical

boundaries. Throughout the fieldwork, this imagination is accompanied by not only changing, deepening and reassuring encounters but also by tensions that constrain and make it ethically problematic. The final thematic article in this issue, Başak Can's "Ethnographic Research at the Intersections of Everyday Life, Power Relations and Ethical Codes", focuses on this crucial tension. Can points out the fragile status of the researcher against the power's (state's) gaze regarding vital concerns, such as loyalty to ethical principles, privacy of the field, and freedom to search for the truth. She explores this vulnerability through her personal experiences and observations in the context of Turkey.

This issue continues with three essays drawing on their respective authors' rich field experiences. First, we present Tim Ingold's highly provocative and eye-opening essay, "That's Enough About Ethnography!" (translated into Turkish by Beren Kandemir), originally published in *HAU-Journal of Ethnographic Theory* in 2014. We recommend our readers read this in conjunction with our interview with Ingold.

We also re-present Tayfun Atay's 1996 essay, "The Issue of Method and Ethics in Social Anthropology: From Classical Ethnography to Dialogic Ethnography", first published in the proceedings of the 4th Social Sciences Congress. Atay offers a fundamental and critical discussion of social anthropology in its journey from its conventional to self-reflexive and dialogical form.

In "Qualitative Thinking and Ethnography: A Reflexive Approach to Ethnographic Methodology", Asker Kartarı, who has diligently tried to apply qualitative methods, especially ethnography, to communication studies in Turkey, considers the origins and relationship of qualitative thought to ethnography. Kartarı also outlines the historical development of qualitative research methodology through examples from various disciplines and approaches as well as investigating ethnography's place in them.

The current issue also includes two articles outside the main theme. First, in "On the Remains of Guesses: Searching for a Philosophy of Communication in Academia", Burcu Canar shares some initial findings from her long-running, comparative fieldwork (in the USA and Turkey), which problematizes the philosophy of communication. Turning her attention to academia, Canar highlights the paradoxical nature of philosophy of communication, which paradoxically becomes less clear the closer we approach it. Through testimony by academicians from departments of philosophy, communication, and media studies, and her own rich observations, she investigates the

potentialities of a new method (*Case of Ulysses*) to conduct research in this field. The article can be considered as a manifesto for this new method..

Ozan Çavdar, in “Place and Collective Memory: The Sivas Massacre and Madımak Hotel”, traces the experiences of the relatives of victims of the Sivas Massacre in relation to its site, the Madımak Hotel. By participating in commemorations in front of the hotel, making observations, and conducting in-depth interviews, he explores the relationship that individuals develop with space within the frameworks of memory and ritual. Drawing on concepts like trauma places, collective memory, and the spatial establishment of memory, he enables us to hear the voices of the victims’ relatives.

In our book introduction section, Rabia Harmanşah and Z. Nilüfer Nahya share the experience of their new compilation, “Ethnographic Stories: Field experiences in Turkey” (Metis, 2017), in which they return the “details” that are generally discarded during the writing process to their deserved place - to the center of the ethnographic story. The contribution of this very valuable approach becomes clearer in the shadow of an ethnographic wave that trivializes and instrumentalizes the field experience.

Our book review section includes three essays. First, in “A Killjoy Feminist: Sara Ahmed”, Aksu Bora draws on two of Sara Ahmed’s books that have been recently translated into Turkish, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* and *The Promise of Happiness*, to invite the reader to gain an insight into the main concerns of Ahmed’s complete works and, from there, to an informative discussion on the horizon of the sociology of emotions. Drawing our attention to parallels between Ahmed’s writings and the issues she experiences in her life, Bora offers Ahmed’s works to those searching for crystallized examples of a phenomenological approach that defines personal experience as the source of knowledge, and the courage we need faced with that knowledge.

In “Social Media Usage in Rural China: The Conflict Among Networked Publics and The Construction of Moral Frameworks”, Mutlu Binark discusses Tom McDonald’s book, *Social Media in Rural China: Social Networks and Moral Frameworks*, which reports on McDonald’s ethnographic fieldwork that he carried out in Anshan town in China over 15 months. Binark provides a detailed review of this study regarding its approach to social media and methodology before recommending the book to researchers planning to conduct ethnographic studies on social media. The book also forms part of Daniel Miller’s fieldwork, “Why We Post”, which we discussed with Miller in this issue.

In “Reading Images: Ethnography and Art”, Cem Koray Olgun reviews Nermin Saybaşıllı’s book, “Art in the field: Ethnographic Knowledge in Visual Culture Studies”. Referring to theoretical and methodological discussions as well as Saybaşıllı’s view of

art as an ethnographic object, Olgun touches on the relationships between art, artist, and ethnographer. He notes some shortcomings in the book from his perspective.

Emel Uzun and Göze Orhon wrote about the 3rd Political Psychology Conference that took place in Ankara on 11-12th May of 2017 with the title “Concurrence of Politics and Desire in the 500th Year of Utopia: Utopias”.

In presenting this issue, which we really enjoyed preparing, we hope that extensive discussion on ethnography also increases and proceeds across various platforms in Turkey. We are grateful to our beloved Gaia (almost five years old) and Sarp (17 months) for their “intense” attention towards us during the issue’s preparation. We are also grateful to Tim Ingold and Daniel Miller, and to all our authors, reviewers, and the publication team for their valuable contributions.

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