

Dána-Ain Davis and Christa Craven, *Feminist Ethnography: Thinking through Methodologies, Challenges, and Possibilities*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 193 pages.

*Reviewer: Sally Cole
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Feminist Ethnography is an inspiring, lively and well-crafted textbook that provides a useful structure for an undergraduate course. Authors Davis and Craven are seasoned ethnographers, activists and teachers. They track the genealogy of feminist scholarship in the history of anthropology, its meshing with the emergence of queer and critical race theory, its engagement with transnational movement building and its contemporary influence in a wide array of interdisciplinary fields. They take a problem-based approach to teaching and learning with a twofold goal: to inspire critical thinking about everyday experience and to help students think through how to plan and implement a project, from the original asking of a question or set of questions through the design of feminist methodologies, ethics and writing and the circulation of results. The text offers a solid resource and support for teaching in today's classrooms and will inspire readers, if they aren't already doing so, to develop and teach a course devoted to feminist ethnography – or to urge their departments to ensure that such a course is offered.

Integral to Davis and Craven's approach is the motif of conversation. In each of the eight chapters, Davis and Craven place their own discussions in conversation with three textual features they call "Spotlights," "Essentials" and "Thinking Through." "Spotlights" are excerpts from more than 30 interviews they conducted with scholars and activists, old and new, including graduate students and postdocs, over ten years of fieldwork and participation at nearly 40 conferences as they worked together on this book. "Essentials" are excerpts from influential texts in the development of feminist ethnography. Over half of these profile the work of women of colour. This is the authors' direct effort to rectify the under-citation of this scholarship and the marginalisation of women of colour in academia. Queer scholars are central. And male ethnographers who integrate and acknowledge the contribution of feminist methodologies and scholarship in their work are also included. Photos and bios accompany each Spotlight interview as well as each Essential text. These visual features further engage the reader in personal reflection. Finally, the textual feature "Thinking Through" offers prompts for fun activities that will help students to work with the concepts that the text is introducing and will inspire them in their personal development of a feminist sensibility. By "feminist sensibility" Davis and Craven mean "the ability to appreciate and respond to the complex intellectual and theoretical influences of feminist theory, thought, practice and politics" (5). "It is the feminist sensibility – the commitment to paying attention to previous scholarship, and both respond to and integrate the complexities of feminist intellectual influences – that produces feminist ethnographic inquiry" (48).

The book is organised into eight chapters. Chapter 1, "What Is the 'Feminist' in Feminist Ethnography?," orients the reader to the shifts feminism has undergone and to the practice

of internal critique that feminists are continually engaged in. Here Davis and Craven offer a useful working definition of feminist ethnography as incorporating the following five dimensions: "1) involves a feminist sensibility, and commitment to paying attention to marginality and power differentials; these include not only gender, but also race, class, nation, sexuality, ability, and other areas of difference; 2) draws inspiration from feminist scholarship – in other words, our feminist intellectual genealogy is important; 3) challenges marginalization and injustice; 4) acknowledges and reflects upon power relations within the research context; 5) aims to produce scholarship – in both traditional and experimental forms – that may contribute to movement building and/or be in the service of organizations, people, communities, and issues we study" (11). Davis and Craven further explain that the challenge feminists face in working through tensions and contradictions is "itself a source of knowledge." That there are no uniform perspectives about the role or meaning of feminism across race and ethnicity and no singular feminist analysis of issues within transnational politics or across the political spectrum presents challenges, they say, that are themselves "the *work* of feminism" (1–2, emphasis in original).

Chapter 2 elaborates a history of feminist contributions to the development of the craft of ethnography in anthropology, the discipline within which feminist ethnography emerged. They chart the development of feminist ethnography – the project, process, product and outcomes – as a field of social justice work in the academy. Chapter 3 outlines the debates and interventions of feminist ethnographers during and following the explosion of feminist scholarship in the late 1980s, including insider/outsider dilemmas, the challenges of exercising a robust reflexivity, the role of citational politics, and the importance of acknowledging intellectual debts and of seeking out innovative scholarship that is often ignored because of structural inequities (67). Chapter 4, "How Does One *Do* Feminist Ethnography?," explains what makes a project and research design "feminist" and outlines the methods that have been most useful to feminist ethnographers. Chapter 5 presents concrete examples of the ethical challenges and logistical constraints feminist ethnographers have faced in fieldwork and writing as they endeavour to acknowledge power, develop collaborative and participative research relations, "give back," and contribute to social change movement building. Chapter 6 explores further ways that ethnography can be engaging, accessible and widely circulated, including via ethnographic texts, blogs, novels, film and performance – again offering concrete examples and useful tips. Chapter 7, "Feminist Activist Ethnography," discusses what it means to be a public scholar and ways to contribute to movement building, advocacy and public policy. Chapter 8, on the future of feminist ethnography, captures the energy, excitement and possibilities that teachers and students can discover in feminist classrooms. Michelle Télluz tells us that she asks students "to ask themselves: why are they doing what they're doing? This is it. We have this one life to live. Are we going to add the tallies to whatever checklist we are supposed to be following, or do we want to be committed to a life of balance, harmony, and justice? I think feminism is often misunderstood, but it's really a place where we can critique. It's not just about women, it's about gender, and it's about transformation, it's about transnational politics, it's about experiences, and abilities ... it's a place of possibility" (169).

Finally, the authors have made a concerted effort to identify and engage the work of feminist ethnographers in other disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. And, while acknowledging that they are limited to English-language work, they do make an effort to integrate international scholars (including Canadians and northern Europeans). The text could easily and productively be used in Canadian classrooms, with additional ethnographic readings assigned to address Canadian issues and contexts, notably the experiences of Indigenous, immigrant and refugee women, rural women and women living in poverty. Leslie Robertson and Dara Culhane's *In Plain Sight: Reflections on Life in Downtown Eastside Vancouver* (Talonbooks 2005) comes immediately to mind as a complementary text.

Denielle Elliott and Dara Culhane, eds., *A Different Kind of Ethnography: Imaginative Practices and Creative Methodologies*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017, 147 pages.

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A Different Kind of Ethnography: Imaginative Practices and Creative Methodologies is a wide-ranging book that honours and experiments with anthropology's foundational practice of fieldwork and representation. Chapters on imagining, writing, sensing, recording and editing, walking, and performing offer creative visions for ethnography, which is conceptualised as a research process and product, such as a text or film. The presumed audience is researchers and teachers, as well as students embarking on research. Integrating theory and practice, each contributor includes exercises to try out. In a volume that valorises embodied and imaginative ways of knowing, it is fitting that we, the readers, are invited to experiment too. This volume is academic and activist – it aims to mobilise and inspire emerging and experienced researchers to know and evoke the world in new ways.

The editors, Denielle Elliott and Dara Culhane, are founders and “co-curators” of the research collective Centre for Imaginative Ethnography, as are the other contributors. Their fieldwork spans Canada, Cuba, Ireland, Italy, Kenya and Poland. While their projects are varied, they share creative practices grounded in an appreciation of honest, ethical and reflexive engagement with others, whether this be in the field, in classrooms or in daily life. Subversively, this book valorises classrooms as sites of knowledge co-production; such a claim disrupts standard hierarchies of the academy. It is uncanny how timely this volume's call is for ethical and creative engagement. For instance, its argument that lived and embodied experience must count as knowledge could not be more pertinent considering the crises of “unfounded” sexual harassment cases in police departments across Canada. *A Different Kind of Ethnography* proposes the arts as a toolbox for a more humanist, politically engaged anthropology.

In her chapter “Writing,” Denielle Elliott argues that ethnographic writing has more “effect and affect” (24) when it is imag-

inative, poetic, personal and even fictional. She explores how “mischievous writing” (32) – like tweeting and Instagram posting and other emerging forms of communication – are valuable experiments. Writing exercises such as creating an Instagram or a haiku to evoke a research setting or problem combine creativity with constraints in productive ways. Challenges of “speaking for others” and “giving voice” are hallmarks of anthropology and part of our contemporary cultural zeitgeist, yet they are discussed rather briefly.

Dara Culhane's chapter “Sensing” introduces sensory ethnography as an alternative to anthropology's focus on writing and speaking, arguing that “we come to know ourselves and each other through multiple avenues, including cultural traditions, political/economic relations, familiarly and individual biographies, and sensory experience and communication” (46). She translates this theoretical statement into practice by proposing exercises that require that we pay attention to our ways of sensing the world. Her commentary on sensory dimensions of colonialism and resistance (such as in Kwakwaka'wakw underground potlach dancing) are excellent examples of how power and politics pervade sensory experience. This argument preempts reactionary claims that sensory anthropology is too touchy-feely.

In “Recording and Editing,” Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier pushes back against popular complaints that our lives are too saturated in media. She shows how good practices with audiovisual technologies can “stimulate spatial awareness” (82) as well as other senses such as memory. Like her co-contributors, she provides exercises for practising listening and evoking spaces through sound. Particularly useful is her nuanced discussion of the range of sonic approaches to ethnography – for example, “purist sonic approaches” (78) versus montage strategies that seek to evoke complexity through fragments and disorientation. Recording and editing require aesthetic and epistemological decisions that demand self-awareness.

Christina Moretti takes us “walking” as she reflects on her fieldwork in Italy. She situates her chapter in relation to investigations about public space, a field that is especially strong in urban anthropology. Who uses, inhabits and claims public space? Can public space foster political, cultural and social engagement? Moretti is inspired by artistic interventions in public space, and she effectively demonstrates the value of following her subjects as a practice of co-imagining not only a route and place, but feelings that are attached to it. In a poignant anecdote, two migrant women who worked as nannies and caregivers show Moretti the art of the city to assert their aspirational sense of belonging.

In the final chapter on performing, Magdalena Kazubowski-Houston describes her creation of an “ethnographic fairy tale” as requested by her long-time interlocutor and collaborator, an elderly Polish Roma woman named Randia. The challenge becomes how to make the fairy-tale genre work as a story about transnational migration, aging, loneliness, blindness and resilience. Kazubowski-Houston demonstrates reflexivity and depth of research, a trademark of this volume, as she explores how to subvert the fairy tale to challenge her audience and honour her subjects. As she discusses her creative process, we are keenly aware (pace Fabian) that “no collaborative process is ever exempt from issues of power” (125).

A Different Kind of Ethnography is inspirational for emergent and seasoned scholars who want to experiment, collaborate