

an Indigenous society in Amazonia: the creation of adoptive bonds, declinations of master/dependant relations, conceptions of cultural diversity, and requirements of symmetrical bonds between individuals. However, Costa's book does not deal with questions outside of the ontological turn. In a sense, the author's ethnographic enquiry responds to existing theoretical insights rather than raising novel concerns. Costa formulates his insights solely on the basis of the feeding/predatory paradigm, and does little to elaborate on competing interpretative paradigms. This work helps make sense of his ethnographic data, yet fails to explore wider analytical possibilities, which, ultimately, weakens his claims.

Despite this, *The Owners of Kinship* represents an excellent ethnography of the Kanamari people, and its emphasis on the Kanamari language and Kanamari concepts adds depth and strength to the analysis. Still, the very last pages of the book are disconcerting. Costa returned to the field in 2015, and affirms that the Kanamari have forgotten their legends and that the universe he describes is now lost. In only a decade, one is left to wonder how things could have changed so fast. Costa suggests that money transfers from the state contributed to the loss of the feeding relations he described, but such an abrupt ending requires more field investigation and a different theoretical analysis. Still, the book is clearly written and accessible to anthropologists of various backgrounds, interests, and stages in their careers, especially those working on kinship, indigenous societies, and cosmologies.

## References

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Dussart, Francoise and Sylvie Poirier, eds., *Entangled Territories: Negotiating Indigenous Lands in Australia and Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017, 269 pages.

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Dussart and Poirier have edited a timely collection of 11 essays set in Canada and Australia that concern the circumstances Indigenous peoples face in reorienting their relationship with the state, and in protecting their relationships with the land and all the beings on it. The volume uses a distinctive and effective strategy of an opening foreword by John Borrows, which establishes the grounds the authors will visit, and, at the end of the book, a succinct and insightful essay by Michael Asch, who provides his view of the major debates in anthropology that have led up to the current positions taken in the volume.

Borrows writes, "Essentialism has great appeal because it allows for the telling of a less tangled story. It is an attempt to embroider the truth with a few simple stitches. This book is an antidote to these proclivities" (viii) and "To be alive is to

be entangled" (ibid.). Borrows concludes, "As such, each essay effectively illustrates how Indigenous people reconstruct their distinctive identities, notwithstanding ongoing colonial encounters" (ix).

The editors have built the volume around the concept of entanglement – following Nicholas Thomas's 1991 book, which supposes that relations are unpredictable, unexpected, unseen, emergent, also harmful, decomposing and reshaped, and, they say, allows inquiry into the dialectical and dialogical dimensions of these encounters. Collectively the authors engage a whole bag of related and competing theories and test them out with detailed accounts of their own fieldwork with Indigenous peoples. These efforts to understand the complex relations between the Indigenous world and the mainstream population in the age of modernity include concepts of relative autonomy, hybridity and resistance, and intercultural concepts. In her own chapter, editor Poirier takes note of entangled territorialities, and says she calls on the concepts of relative autonomy, coloniality, ontological obstacles, political ontology, senses of place, multilocality and multivocality of place, relational ontology, and naturalist ontology to build her argument (p. 215). It's a lot, and the editors and most of the contributors try to make the case for the utility of the concept of entanglement.

I point now to chapters that concern the relations between anthropologists and Indigenous communities, although many chapters have a lot to say on other topics. Nicholas Peterson, an anthropologist who works in central Australia, raises the provocative question of whether there is a role for anthropology in the reproduction of Indigenous cultural knowledge. In particular, Peterson is concerned with the practice of mapping by anthropologists and with members of a society, the Warlpiri, who practise secrecy and economising regarding the transmission of information between generations. He notes that younger people assume that older people hold knowledge, and that more is known than is told them. He writes that he is questioned by these younger people about what he might know. It's an awkward position, and one anthropologists often face. Peterson also wonders about the use of ethnographic film and recording songs in restoring ritual. But it isn't just recording information in various modalities that is at stake. Peterson writes of how the use of the term "culture" spread across the region where he works, inspiring Indigenous people to speak of "my culture" in a new way. This term brings the potential to reorient the encounter with the state, noted in this volume as entanglement.

Peterson asks what the role of an objectified and codified account of some small part of Indigenous knowledge recorded by an anthropologist might be. Further, do we have an undefined responsibility for what we have learned from elders? Also, he observes that the balance of knowledge shifts between generations with the publication of maps and place names, making public the knowledge that the elders once held. While Peterson doesn't put it this way, he evokes the old problem of knowledge without wisdom, a dilemma that came with the invention of writing. Reading a map cannot replace walking the landscape or listening to stories, and maps can undermine this prior system of intergenerational transmission. Peterson, though, argues that the value of mapping lies in sustaining an ever-changing cultural identity.

Brian Thom raises a related issue in his chapter. He takes up the thorny problem of belief and ontological difference. He recounts, among several narratives he uses to illustrate his

points, a story I originally wrote about regarding an Indigenous cultural leader who expressed some hesitation about the ability of atheists, in particular anthropologists, to understand the spiritual world of the Coast Salish peoples. But Thom notes that Coast Salish people share ways of coexisting with others. He writes, “My reflection on encounters in Coast Salish ancestral places reveals ways in which individuals and actors can attend to the nature of relationships and senses of responsibility within these entangled worlds” (p. 145) and open the way for imaginative possibilities for new relationships based on mutual respect. He adds, “Entanglement does not mean that our truths must merge” (p. 158). I agree with Thom; the issues of spiritual beliefs do not turn on facticity, but rather on mutual respect, as he points out.

Michael Asch identifies three major themes in the volume. One is the impact of modernity, and Asch writes that contemporary anthropologists believe that modernity has not overwhelmed Indigenous communities, despite earlier approaches, such as once-dominant acculturation studies. To demonstrate this, Asch points to the entanglement of Indigenous peoples. Second, Asch notes that modernity is based in a different ontology than that of Indigenous peoples. However, Asch argues against the incommensurability position. Third is the issue of recognition, a process that he says has not done the work intended, a failure that has led to the resurgence movement to disengage with the state. A separate movement involves the creation of linkages through entanglement, and relationality, a position the authors of this volume seem to occupy. Finally, Asch writes that cultural difference ought not be the grounds for rights to land, but has become so because we have violated “a value fundamental to the naturalist ontology . . . that one does not go on lands that belong to other people without their permission” (p. 263).

A final note: the cover illustration is a detail of a painting by Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun. This artist is known for depicting the landscape covered with Northwest Coast imagery, powerfully showing the presence of Indigenous people and their deep connections to the land. Sometimes pictures speak louder than words.

## References

Thomas, Nicholas. 1991. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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Hernández Castillo, R. Aída, Suzi Hutchings, and Brian Noble, eds., *Transcontinental Dialogues: Activist Alliances with Indigenous Peoples of Canada, Mexico, and Australia*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019, 280 pages.

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*Transcontinental Dialogues* consists of eight contributions, each of which provides a compelling ethnographic account of

contemporary Indigenous activism and contestation across Canada, Mexico and Australia. What distinguishes the volume is the commitment of its editors and authors to coupling these reports from the field with thoughtful reflections on the role of anthropologists aligned with Indigenous struggles, on the kinds of anthropology that are best oriented toward this work, and on the ramifications of such research for the discipline as a whole.

If the bulk of comparative writing on and with Indigenous movements up to now has occurred within a narrower geographic scope than *Transcontinental Dialogues* offers, this owes less to any methodological nationalism than to the specificity of the forms and trajectories taken by colonialism around the world. Moving from Canadian to Mexican to Australian colonial contexts as if these were fully interchangeable would do a disservice to those resisting contemporary colonialism. To this end, R. Aída Hernández Castillo and Suzi Hutchings introduce the volume with nimble surveys of the colonial histories of these three countries, underscoring points of overlap in the paths taken by colonisation, as well as instances where these diverge – especially in the present-day interactions between Indigenous peoples and state juridical and social forms.

The book’s chapters are divided neatly by the colonial national contexts in which their cases are embedded. Not surprisingly, almost every chapter makes some reference to Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s pathbreaking text *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012), with its injunction to make Indigenous self-determination into a research agenda. As a whole, the volume shows what this call can look like in practice, with all its attendant complexity and contradictions.

In the first two contributions from Canada, Mi’kmaw anthropologist Sherry M. Pictou and L. Jane McMillan discuss Mi’kmaw territorial struggles, taking the 1999 Supreme Court fishing rights case *R v Marshall* as their starting point. Pictou reflects here on the promises and limitations of anthropological and Indigenous alliances, especially as they pertain to a more expansive and decolonising concept of treaties. McMillan examines these issues from a legal anthropological perspective, demonstrating how researchers can “document and expedite Indigenous responses” (p. 65) through her own work with Mi’kmaw juridical frameworks. Colin Scott, in the final chapter from Canada, reviews his decades of fieldwork with Cree hunters and considers the kinds of knowledge co-production it takes to live well together. He moves beyond flattened calls for one-dimensional dialogue through a thoughtful engagement with “knowledge dialogues capable of circumventing the historical subordination of Indigenous knowledges and relationalities” (p. 98).

The three chapters from Mexico begin with R. Aída Hernández Castillo’s analysis of the tension between legal anthropology’s critiques of rights-based discourses and their emancipatory potential. Like other contributors to this volume, Hernández Castillo pairs an account of her political work and research, including alongside an incarcerated women’s publishing collective, with a discussion of her “double identity as a scholar and an activist” (p. 117). She goes on to grapple with dilemmas surrounding the expert witness reports that many activist anthropologists are asked to produce and that risk reinforcing the exclusionary authority of formal academic knowledge. From her own legal activist experience, Hernández Castillo contends that anthropologists might “seek more participatory and dialogic ways of elaborating the reports” (p. 128).