

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Cambridge Handbook of the Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality

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Introduction

This handbook documents the impact of the study of gender and sexuality upon the foundational practices and precepts of anthropology. It explores how the tense, productive, but enduring engagement between the discipline and Gender and Sexuality Studies (GSS) has had profound transformative effects upon anthropological theory and practice. The volume challenges the assumption that GSS's main contribution is to have enriched anthropology topically, leaving its essence unaffected. Rather, it shows that anthropological work taking inspiration from feminist and LGBTQI movements has created, absorbed, disputed, and otherwise grappled with GSS, and in so doing changed the discipline profoundly.

This process is ongoing. Key frameworks and practices within the discipline are being transformed. Evidence of this is everywhere. One cannot do fieldwork only by talking to male elders; one cannot study kinship without taking gender and sexuality into account, nor study capitalism without considering the role of domestic labour; one cannot ignore moral economies of gendered personhood when investigating public politics. Anthropologists now recognize that biological body processes are simultaneously social and historical; sexuality is not limited to a universal urge that generates myriad differing cultural expressions, but treated as biosocial, a situationally emergent complex of desire and physicality. To arrive at the normatization of these research practices and analytical concepts required far more than mere topical innovations. These shifts in the epistemological and ontological grounds of the

discipline itself are due, in large part, to the energy generated through friction with GSS, often coming from what would seem like the fringes of the discipline.

The deeper contribution of GSS to anthropology has often gone without due recognition. One only need consider how contemporary textbooks on anthropological theory frequently mention feminist-inspired work in a short section, alongside such topics as post-modernist and interpretivist approaches, to which it is associated. Even as credit is given (for problematizing key analytical categories, for instance), GSS is relegated to the status of a ‘special interest trivia’ and ‘expendable “add and stir” elective’ (Harrison 2010a: 7); as one area among many, or as a particular style of critique or deconstruction alongside others. Moreover, it is treated as practiced by a specific kind of anthropologist – for example, by members of queer minority communities - to immediately downplay any ‘broader’ theoretical insights. Some critics consider that feminist anthropology self-marginalizes, participating in this process of delimitation and limitation. But more is involved here than meets the eye. There are specific underlying processes in operation, which give rise to the curious syndrome whereby, as advances occur, their genealogy is compacted to a point of fade-out.

Communication between domains of activities

Whenever feminist or queer studies produce substantial methodological and theoretical work that resonates sufficiently to alter the terms of anthropological debate, these alterations are absorbed within a relatively short timeframe and their origins are disavowed and often expurgated from the record. As the story is told and retold, or, to use Roy Wagner’s terminology, as the resulting innovations upon conventions are absorbed and applied, the memory of their creation is progressively wiped clean. We cite as an example of this syndrome the manner in which Marilyn Strathern’s concern with gender is frequently omitted

when discussing and drawing upon her ideas. Rather than a mere male bias at the root of the problem, it seems, another dynamics is at work here (or an additional one— since no doubt, androcentrism has not disappeared). The misrepresentation of the unsettling, transformational effects of feminist and queer anthropological work reflects the way that what counts as ‘theory’ within a discipline such as cultural and social anthropology is framed, created, sanctioned and perpetuated. Erasures can occur also, as Faye Harrison observed, whenever contributions of women and of ‘minorities’ are ‘cited for reasons other than their theoretical import’ (Harrison 2010a: 7). At stake are the dynamics involved in constructing particular notions of ‘proper theory’ – or proper theorists - as hegemonic, then maintaining them as such.

If one thinks of ‘doing anthropology’ (rather than simply ‘anthropology’, as in a *fait accompli*) then these dynamics come into greater focus. Doing anthropology involves engaging in processes of communication and the sub-plot of this engagement is work of continuous purification. At the interface where communication between anthropology and GSS is the most intense, at the many points of direct contact, the stage is already set for readjusting the lens, so to speak, leading to subsequent misrecognition. Thus, when an ethnographer examines questions raised by GSS during her fieldwork, the tendency is to frame her analysis in terms of the currently influential cultural theories she absorbed before heading for the field. At other moments, when a fresh look at her old data is required, or mobilisation of her ethnographic sensibility demanded by the contemporary debates within GSS, she is *force majeure* required to do so via a reformulation of established anthropological theory.

Yet though convergences play out as a form of purification, this process of communication between anthropology and GSS is a recursive one. This means that when an impetus to rethink a theory in GSS is inspired by ethnography, it sets in motion a new chain

of ethnographic inquiry and theoretical development. Thus, Judith Butler's work, in part built from Esther Newton's ethnography, influenced thinking about gender and sexuality within anthropology. As Sarah Franklin observes, Butler's *Gender Trouble* is a turning point that simultaneously expressed ideas that were being developed in parallel by feminist scholars, especially in science studies, at the time: 'it made something appear before your eyes even though you knew it was already there' (Franklin et al 2020: 171). Subsequently, thanks to a certain 'legitimizing effect' (Rubin 2002: 40), a theorist's conceptual apparatus becomes incorporated into general anthropological theorising and vocabulary refocusing ways people look at their ethnographic data. Rubin discusses this 'legitimizing effect' that causes 'an all-too-common and oversimplified attribution of many ideas' (2002:39-40), in relation to the reception of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* within US academia (and given its' status, global academia, too) in the 1980s. During the period 'many scholars were arriving independently at similar formulation' on the social construction of sex, however. Rubin suggests that Foucault's reputation as the originator of an approach has to do not only with Foucault's reputation as a major thinker and with the undoubtable quality of his work, but, more insidiously, also with the fact that 'concurrent developments within gay history were sexually stigmatised, intellectually segregated, and more readily ignored by mainstream academicians' (Ibid. 40).

The history of anthropology of gender and sexuality is replete with such stigmatisation, segregation, disavowal, and consequent genealogical purification, and these extend into the present. Queer organising within professional associations, from the Association for Queer Anthropology (AQA), which is part of the American Anthropological Association, to the European Network for Queer Anthropology (ENQA), which is part of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) has historically sought to address the marginalisation of queer scholarship within the discipline, in contexts where queer

studies, including anthropological approaches, have had very varied degrees of institutionalisation. In this respect, queer and trans scholarship continue to largely lack any degree of institutional recognition within anthropology academic units across Europe. When this scholarship gains recognition, it is often as a result of the legitimating effect of an endorsement extended by a prominent figure.

The creative process of doing anthropology therefore depends on constant acts of recursive communication, often at the margins of the discipline, through which the difference between anthropology and GSS is ever reasserted. When Strathern famously differentiated feminism and anthropology (1987), the purpose was not to identify pure types and origins, but in order to relate them better through bringing forth their operating principles; thus did she raise new questions. More commonly, however, reassertion of this difference is done without making the moves explicit. This takes place, largely, through the medium of ethnography, as part of the process whereby theoretical discussion is bound into the doing of research and writing. Indeed, as Michelle Rosaldo (1980) already observed, the most explicit interventions (expected) from anthropology in GSS usually take the form of either challenging or substantiating particular claims (such as universal male domination) on the basis of ‘ethnographic evidence’, which in turn reifies the ideal of empirical data and its separation from theory and analysis (Weston 1998). Of course, other kinds of evidence, such as archival records or statistical data, may also be deployed, but these gain relevance by being subjected to an anthropological focus – one that is heavily marked by the perspective gained through doing and reading ethnographies. This focus leads to a number of recognizable habits: thinking comparatively; considering context; presupposing the systemic inter-locking of different social domains considered in the present tense; highlighting total social facts; searching for specific cultural logics; respecting difference; reflecting on one’s positionality –

and so on. This focus is how one arrives at ‘the anthropological ground’: a terrain forged, in short, by the historic centrality of ethnography.

About this book

On considering how to structure the book, we came to realize that it is important to develop these ideas and awkward relations explicitly at the outset. For this reason, the first two chapters are of a more general nature than those that make up the bulk of the volume. Chapter 2 explores the relation between methodology and epistemology and Chapter 3 covers that between ethnography and theory. The remaining 19 chapters are concerned with thematic areas within which research and writing from feminist and/or LGBTQI perspectives have resonated out into anthropological theory and practice more widely. As they survey specific thematic areas, and discuss particular topics, authors examine the transformative work of GSS upon the foundational practices and precepts of the discipline. Throughout, they ask: What difference does it make (to an account of anthropological theory and practice) to bring to the foreground the way GSS research and writing has reshaped it, not just in terms of what anthropology takes as its object, but also how such objects are framed?

Since ethnography provides the anchoring point around which the dynamics of recursive communication between anthropology and GSS turn, chapters approach questions of theory through discussion of the ethnographies and related studies that deal with particular regions, peoples and topics. Many focus on one specific geographical or ethnographic region in greater depth: Amazonia (Chapters 6 and 20), South Africa and the Zulu-speaking region more specifically (Chapter 8), the Circumpolar North (Chapter 14), the United Kingdom (Chapter 22), South Asia (Chapters 9, 12 and 18) or the US and the Atlantic African diaspora (Chapter 13). Other chapters adopt a comparative or thematic approach to consolidated and

emerging areas of anthropological debate and scholarship: anthropological perspectives on the biosciences of sex (Chapter 5); the postmodern moment in gender studies and anthropology (Chapter 7); debates on gender, language and performativity (Chapter 10); masculinities (Chapter 11); the gendering of global approaches to poverty in historical perspective (Chapter 17); multispecies and more-than-human worlds (Chapter 19); transgender studies (Chapter 23) and anthropological futures (Chapter 23). Overall, the book reviews a wide range of ethnographic studies that provide insight into key topical areas in the social and cultural anthropology of gender and sexuality, within a framework articulated around central debates in anthropological theory and through the established methodological practice of ethnographic analysis.

Since this is a field marked by political inspirations as well as disciplinary concerns and academic logics, we knew that it was important to include authors from diverse backgrounds: from a variety of geographical regions, nationalities, racial/ethnic backgrounds; and with distinct approaches, understandings, and interests in the social and cultural anthropology of G&S. With this in mind, we brought together authors from a range of locations and traditions of anthropological scholarship in the hope of contributing to the project of a global anthropology. Invited authors had considerable autonomy. Some chose to write a revision of the literature (for example Donner in Chapter 3, McCallum in Chapter 6, Green and Pulkinnen in Chapter 7, Scheibelhofer and Monterescu in Chapter 11 or O’Laughlin in Chapter 19); others approached their topic from the perspective of analysis of their own original ethnographic research (Rudwick in Chapter 8, Channa in Chapter 9, Tschalaer in Chapter 12, Barnes in Chapter 13, Rivkin-Fish in Chapter 15, Boyce and khanna in Chapter 18, McCallum and Belaunde in Chapter 20 and Edwards in Chapter 21); whilst others placed greater focus on an exploration of theoretical questions raised by particular anthropological and/or GSS debates (Mulla and Davies in Chapter 2, Cruz in Chapter 4, Cova

and Swanson in Chapter 5, Leap in Chapter 10, Ulturgasheva in Chapter 14, Broch-Due in Chapter 17, Gonzalez-Polledo in Chapter 22, or Sanabria in Chapter 23). The standpoint and situatedness of each author shaped the contents and arguments in their chapter, in some cases explicitly, and in others less obviously.

Cross-cutting Themes, Recursive Debates

Across this collection contributors explore a number of broad cross-cutting themes. They address partial connections and frictions in the anthropologies of gender and sexuality. They reconfigure genealogies of analysis and theorising by querying how sex, gender and sexuality have emerged as objects of anthropological knowledge (Moore 1988, 1994). An important set of concerns rests on the ways postcolonial, decolonial and intersectional perspectives have criss-crossed anthropological analysis historically, and on how these intersections are animated today, and in visions of the future. They generate particularly resonant debates at present, when renewed calls for decolonizing the anthropological enterprise have emerged (Allen and Jobson 2016; Harrison 2010). These demands insist on the treatment of counter-hegemonic or native anthropologies as legitimate and authoritative, but also on concrete action for change in institutional practices and alignments. Student-led movements that call for higher education institutions to address the colonial roots of scholarly traditions and re-think epistemological foundations, methodologies and pedagogies accordingly have galvanised these critical projects. Protests against British imperialist Cecil Rhodes' statue at the University of Cape Town, South Africa in 2015, highly symbolic of local struggles and broader political upheaval, led to its eventual removal. Demonstrations subsequently emerged on campuses across the global South and North, such as at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, or in Bristol, where students toppled the statue of slave trader Edward Colston.

Within anthropology these events echo long-standing debates that have acquired renewed urgency in the wake of demands for a radical rethinking of how the discipline is framed, taught and practiced. As the epistemic authority of anthropological knowledge has progressively eroded, and the divides between academia and activism and between injustices ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ academia have been questioned, anthropological scholarship on gender and sexuality has provided new avenues for a reflexive critical engagement with the discipline’s past, as well as vibrant new propositions for the future. In the anthropology of gender and sexuality more specifically, these debates have been fraught yet generative, as Mulla and Davis (Chapter 2) and Ulturgasheva (Chapter 14) show by tackling genealogies of Black and Indigenous feminist anthropological scholarship respectively, and as Tschalaer (Chapters 12) and Barnes (Chapter 13) address through a focus on strategies of resistance and empowerment inspired by Chicana and Black feminist theory and activism, drawing on Afro-Caribbean feminist transnational and diasporic frameworks.

These chapters also discuss points of friction that arise because the discipline is associated with colonial epistemologies seen to be inextricably tied to oppression. They became manifested, for instance, as tensions or moments of incommensurability between anthropological enquiry and Indigenous Studies and Native Studies (Todd 2018). From this perspective, an anthropology of gender and sexuality provides one entry-point into epistemic violence (Spivak 1988), revealed in the analysis of the proximity between anthropological knowledge and settler knowledge formations and settler knowledge practices. Native Studies challenge Indigenous dispossession and social scientific discourse simultaneously, including ‘forms of ethnographic entrapment’ (Simpson and Smith 2014: 5) that have been the foundations of anthropological accounting. Decolonizing anthropology – and the ongoing, open-ended project of decolonizing the anthropology of gender and sexuality in particular – therefore entails confronting deeply entrenched as well as residual assumptions that are

steeped in ‘colonial common sense’ (Stoler 2009) and settler colonial knowledge formations (Morgensen 2011). In this respect, Jobson (2020) poses a number of related and equally urgent questions, arguing that anthropology should move beyond liberal presuppositions, and that settler colonialism and chattel slavery are the underpinnings of liberal humanism and hence central to the anthropological enterprise.

This is a moment of reckoning with anthropology’s colonial roots, of challenging ongoing complicities with militarism and with (neo)imperial and settler projects in diverse historical contexts globally. Thematic foci might have shifted, but problems with questions of positionality endure. As the chapters in this collection show, anthropologists increasingly seek to address colonial epistemologies and their persistence in anthropological knowledge formations. Colonial epistemologies continue to haunt the anthropological enterprise, notably as it engages the domains of gender and sexuality. In turn, transnational feminist scholarship (Grewal and Kaplan 1994; McClintock 1995; Mohanty 1988) continues to inform these critical efforts. Several contributors to the volume directly foreground such critical perspectives on the anthropology of gender, sexuality and personhood in Lowland South America and the Circumpolar North (McCallum in Chapter 6, Ulturgasheva in Chapter 14, and Belaunde and McCallum in Chapter 20); in multispecies thinking (O’Laughlin in Chapter 19); and the future (Sanabria in Chapter 23).

A related problematic connects to emerging challenges to anthropological liberal humanism in the context of a fundamental reappraisal of the exclusionary character of conceptualisations of the human, as incisively argued by philosopher Sylvia Wynter (2003) and extensively discussed by scholars working across the interdisciplinary fields of Black Studies, Science and Technology Studies (STS), multi-species approaches and non-representational ethnographically grounded research (e.g. Atanasoski & Vora 2015; Jackson 2021; Kind 2020; McKittrick 2015; Shange 2019; Weheliye 2014). These areas have

intersected critically with sociocultural anthropology to renew feminist and queer theorizing. They have opened up spaces for trans- and interdisciplinary endeavours where anthropology, with its emphasis on ethnography and recursive knowledge practices, can make a distinctive contribution, as Donner (Chapter 3), O’Laughlin (Chapter 19), Gonzalez-Polledo (Chapter 22) and Sanabria (Chapter 23) show. Debates over the legitimacy of the anthropological enterprise have broad contemporary resonance; they also evoke past controversies over ‘the proper object’ of feminist and queer anthropological analysis as questions of theory, method, pedagogy, and ethical and political commitment (Allen and Jobson 2016:129; Harrison 2010; Moore 1994; Weiss 2016). As Allen (2016) has argued with reference to articulations of race and sex more specifically, the process here is one of ‘renarrativizing anthropological analysis.’

In other words, work undertaken through the prisms of Black studies, Indigenous Studies and queer studies has periodically reoriented the anthropological enterprise by generating alternative accounts and reworkings of traditional genealogies of anthropological theory. In turn, feminist and queer anthropologies have been at the forefront in experimentations in the remaking and re-imagining of genealogies of research and theorizing through, for example, scholarly and political practices of citation (Smith 2021; Smith et al. 2021) as part and parcel of broader struggles towards structural transformation in the discipline and the academy. This volume explicitly builds on this important work and responds to the challenges associated with frictions and partial connectivity, looking to reimagine disciplinary domains through plural genealogies of anthropological research. Several chapters address shifts in focus from an emphasis on identities, subjectivities and performance towards a renewed interest in ‘thinking sex’ (Rubin 1984). In this her landmark essay, Rubin set out an agenda for sexuality studies, stating boldly that ‘the time has come to think about sex... Disputes over sexual behaviour often become the vehicles for displacing

social anxieties...consequently, sexuality should be treated with special respect in times of great social stress' (1984: 137-138). Reflecting on the significance and impact of this intervention, Rubin (2010) has noted that 'Thinking Sex' can be considered proto-queer, in that it anticipated a move away from a single-issue approach to sexual politics and towards the intricacies of a multiplicity of shifting positionalities and cross-identificatory dynamics which came into sharper focus through queer theory (Sedgwick 1993). Rubin's ground-breaking work remains a key point of reference for ethnographically grounded perspectives on sex in the anthropology of gender and sexuality. In our volume, the contributions by Scheibelhofen and Monterescu (Chapter 11) and Caroline E. Schuster (Chapter 16) explicitly suggest sideways readings of Gayle Rubin's oeuvre, whilst also marking the enduring legacy of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. They restage important generative intersections that emerge from a re-reading of Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Homosocial Desire* (1985), with its focus on sexual politics, sexual meanings, gender asymmetry and erotic triangles, through Rubin's 'The Traffic in Women' and 'Thinking Sex' and subsequent work on gay and lesbian leather sexual cultures on the eve of the AIDS pandemic in San Francisco (Rubin 1991).

A rich and textured archive of research on sex, sexual cultures and subjectivities has since emerged in a wide range of ethnographic registers and sensibilities, suggesting fractal modelling of race and sex, and vernacular idioms for a multiplicity of queer relationalities and desire beyond anti-normativity. In Wekker's ground-breaking analysis of 'the mati work' (Wekker 2006), for example, an Afro-Surinamese sexual culture based on self-fulfilment and not on sexual object choice engages working class Afro-Surinamese women's sexual subjectivities in the diaspora. Wekker shows that mati work is a locus of agency across sexual, economic and political domains. Wekker writes powerfully about the importance of the erotic subjectivity of the ethnographer and the task of writing across positionalities and

locations. For Wekker, the ‘politics of passion’ in anthropological research must therefore also critically confront the sedimentation of racist stereotyping that mark the representation of black sexualities; and writing should develop narrative registers that connects to Creole working class women’s figurations and aspirations. As Hendriks has argued with reference to research with same-sex loving men and boys in contemporary urban Congo, the knowledge practices of queer anthropology are therefore not explicitly or exclusively concerned with documenting sexual diversity and local sexual taxonomies, but rather, they engage in thought experiments to think through them (Hendriks 2017).

These broad themes and associated problematics are variously addressed by the volume’s contributors and they foreground conceptual and political points of friction. In an influential contribution, Tsing (2005) suggests that friction marks intersections of the local and global encounters, unsettling assumptions about universality whilst at the same time challenging a reduction of ‘the local’ to particularist logics. Tsing asks how one might hold on analytically to interconnecting without resorting uncritically to universality and liberal humanist projects – questions which resonate with ongoing challenges to conventional anthropological categories and ways of knowing. Partial connections, as Strathern (2004) has argued, are another way to frame the work of anthropological analytics and forms of accounting and continues to offer a generative entry point into ethnographically oriented approaches to the study of relations, modes of sociality and knowledge formations. Next, we turn to a description of the five sections that comprise the volume, through a brief account of each chapter’s contribution.

Openings and Orientations

The first set of chapters discuss openings and orientations in the anthropology of gender and sexuality with reference to a range of contexts, themes and approaches. The volume opens with a powerful essay on methodology by black feminist scholars **Sameena Mulla** and **Dána-Ain Davis** (Chapter 2) that re-centres feminist scholars traditionally excluded from the anthropological canon. By re-staging and re-writing histories of the discipline to take account of these marginalised perspectives, Mulla and Davis illustrate the potential for transformative anthropological knowledge practices as political praxis to challenge oppression, notably white supremacy. The analytical strategy here is one of ‘remixing’, that is, intersecting different interventions and propositions in new configurations that accentuate the situated character of knowledge claims and their rootedness in experience. Emphasising the importance of reflexivity, Mulla and Davis illustrate the ground-breaking contribution made by Black feminist anthropology in experimentations with auto-ethnography as ‘self-inscription’ as key moments of epistemological and methodological innovation. Reconfiguring the field/s of the anthropology of gender and sexuality in the way Davis and Mulla suggest entails a fundamental reframing of the discipline/s as already constituted by those cast in the position of the ‘observed’ in colonial anthropology’s imaginaries.

Whilst such reconfiguring has been at the heart of feminist, gender and sexuality perspectives in anthropological scholarship from the very inception of the discipline, the critical thrust of these perspectives intensified at particular moments. It is possible to trace exemplary ‘critical events’ through a review of landmark volumes and debates such as the crucial response to the postmodern turn towards reflexivity and formal experimentation in ethnography, *Women Writing Culture* (Behar and Gordon 1995). This collection of essays directly harnessed feminist, queer of colour and more specifically Chicana scholarship, as well as a range of other minoritized subject positions which, when considered together, in fact constitutes a sizeable albeit heterogenous group. Students of anthropology and

anthropology faculty, the editors of the collection argued, found themselves negotiating masculinist academic structures of power and prestige, and their interests and contributions were often largely unacknowledged, undervalued or deemed to pertain to less prestigious sub-fields, peripheral research areas or overly interdisciplinary remits (Behar and Gordon 1995). Ruth Landes, whose ground-breaking research on gender, race and Candomblé religion in Brazil (Landes 1947; see also Cole 2003) continues to influence the field, held precarious appointments throughout her career. In the same period, Zora Neale Hurston's pioneering anthropological research into Afro-American lives in the South of the USA, her auto-ethnographic writing, and her literary work, achieved recognition, yet she remained marginalised and eventually died in poverty and obscurity (McClaurin 2001). Esther Newton, whose field-defining early work established the foundations for queer anthropology, has written powerfully about the experience of marginalisation within institutional disciplinary spaces (Newton 2000, 2018; see also Boyce et al. 2016, Mohr 2016). Invoking ancestors is not an innocent practice. Rather, it is tied to processes of ongoing field-formation, which often include significant field-defying moves (Posocco 2021).

Women Writing Culture explicitly claimed a space for minoritized subject positions as legitimate active producers of anthropological knowledge. Grounding anthropological analytical and critical positionalities in situated experience, they drew on the path-breaking collection *This Bridge Called my Back* (1981), edited by Chicana scholars Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, and women of colour theorising, including the celebrated essay by Audre Lorde, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House' (Lorde 1984). As Black Lives Matter movements globally are challenging systemic, structural and spectacular racisms and forms of exclusion and 'wearing out' of racialised subjects and populations (Berlant 2011), these works connect directly with the increasing recognition of

Black feminist scholarship. They also resonate with calls for decolonising the discipline in the context of new and enduring forms of vulnerability and precarity (Han 2012).

To underscore how the emergence of feminist anthropological perspectives from the margins of the discipline paved paths for the consolidation of the anthropology of gender and sexuality and the building of anthropology and anthropological theory, it is important to return to collections such as di Leonardo's *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge* (1991). As Moore (1988, 1994) cogently argues, questions about gender, sexuality and power have always been a central preoccupation of anthropological theorizing. Research oriented by these foci has been at the forefront in the development of conceptual and analytical tools to open up gender and sexuality as key domains of situated experience. It has also been the ground for the articulation of 'ethical imagination' and experimentation for thinking questions of relationality and social transformation (Moore 2011). For many, anthropology continues to be a precarious occupation (Fotta, Ivancheva & Pernes, 2020). In the incisive 'Cite Black Women: A Critical Praxis (A Statement)', Smith et al. (2021) tackle these questions through an insightful analysis of citational politics in the academy and propose to challenge heteropatriarchal white supremacy within and beyond anthropology through reading, acknowledging, citing and making space for Black women.

The concerns of feminist and queer scholarship in anthropology have therefore encompassed experiences of marginalisation, oppression and dispossession alongside challenges to logics which framed these questions as marginal concerns. Feminist anthropology has from its very inception contested minoritizing logics through a range of interventions ranging from tactical deployments of anthropological theory to ask questions about gendered subordination (Ortner 1974) to innovative developments of conceptual strategies to address gendering operations across domains of knowledge and social practice (Strathern 1988). Feminist anthropology has been engaged in theory-building enterprises

through fashioning concept-metaphors and tracking their trajectories in registers of abstraction and lived experience (Moore 1994; 2004). In Chapter 3, **Henrike Donner** skilfully charts these multiple genealogies focussing on ethnographic theory. Through a detailed review of the archive of feminist and queer anthropology, Donner argues that ethnography has offered solid methodological groundings to address questions relating to gender and sexuality. Feminist anthropologists problematised complex inequalities across domains of social activity noting how they could be documented ethnographically, consequently raising fundamental questions about the status of oppression, the role of social institutions, and so on. They mobilised conceptual approaches and ethnographic data to develop analytics that could tackle the seemingly simultaneous universality and particularity of forms of subjugation and their grounding in gendered social relations and symbolic systems. Since domains as varied as economic activity, political representation, ritual practice and kinship systems appeared to be gendered as well as key sites of gendering, ethnography yielded insights into sex/gender systems (Rubin 1975). Ethnographically grounded anthropological knowledge approached gender and sexuality through the lens of lived experience, calling into question Eurocentric understandings. Donner emphasises how these were not only nuanced and astutely observed empirical contributions, but theory-building exercises. Such ethnographies opened up notions of sex, gender and sexuality to critical scrutiny. Anthropologists working ethnographically on gender and sexuality, Donner argues, have continued to ask incisive questions about epistemology, positionality, location and power. They move beyond assumptions of binary genders, heterosexual matrixes and ethnocartographies of desire to develop critical ethnographies of gender and sexuality that are the site of methodological and formal experimentation. Donner suggests that queer and feminist modes of ethnographic accounting such as autobiography and collaboration – together with an ongoing commitment to ‘write against culture’ (Abu-Lughod 1991) –

continue to be pillars of methodological innovation and reflexive analytical anthropological praxis.

In Chapter 4, **Resto Cruz** focuses on kinship and relatedness as key analytics tied to the analysis of gender and sexuality. Cruz charts the progressive shift away from the anthropological concern with kinship understood in terms of systems of classification of consanguinity and affinity integral to the discipline since its inception and reaching into the present (Parkin 2021). Cruz notes the anthropological interrogation of Western ontological categories as predicated on an underlying assumed opposition between the biological and the social (Schneider 1984) and foregrounds the emergence of an interest in ‘cultures of relatedness’ (Carsten 2000). Relatedness in this context is a term that aims to capture a more capacious and expansive understanding of relations and relationality than kinship previously allowed. In these new kinship studies, the making of biological facts is as important as the making of kinship relations, as biology becomes the ground for fashioning ties and a particular kind of knowledge and truth (Strathern 1992; Franklin 1997; Franklin and McKinnon 2000). Through a focus on the everyday, Cruz illustrates how anthropological accounts centred women and their enterprises, highlighted the generativity of kinship, including the generation of enmity and other negative affects. The chapter argues that idioms of relatedness have periodically re-centred the challenges of mutual obligation and care. These are ongoing concerns, as feminist theory and anthropological theory recast key questions about how persons and collectivities figure relations of interdependence and alterity. Cruz vividly illustrates this point drawing on extensive ethnographic research on sibling relations in the Philippines and important emerging scholarship that re-writes understanding of kinship in the light of ethnographies of gender and sexually non-conforming ways of life (Saria 2021).

Victor Cova and Heather Swanson (Chapter 5) tackle debates on materiality and biology in anthropological scholarship on sex and gender. The authors note that anthropological research has historically sought to problematise and challenge biologism understood in terms of biological essentialism and biological determinism, that is, as the grounds for reductive assumptions about the stability and fixity of social categories such as ‘sex’ and ‘race’. Whilst feminist scholars consistently worked to denaturalise sex, gender and the naturalisation of difference, inequality and oppression, Cova and Swanson show that this has led to a cautious engagement with biology. The chapter offers an overview of foundational debates in feminist anthropology over the status of sex, gender and their alignment or misalignment with the categories of nature and culture; and feminist and queer approaches to biology. It then reflects on a systematic collaboration between the biological and social sciences, specifically focusing on one such approach in biology which has emerged through a sustained engagement with feminist studies, namely eco-evo-devo. Echoing debates in feminist technoscience (Haraway 1991), eco-evo-devo emerges at the intersections of biology and feminist studies with important implications for the anthropology of gender and sexuality. Cova and Swanson illustrate this argument through a rich discussion of hormones. They suggest that hormones, as signalling molecules that transmit signals, are both material and semiotic, and dependent on other entities – e.g. proteins – for their functioning. Hormones as material-semiotic relational molecules have been implicated in scientific understandings of sex, gender and sexuality over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries. An eco-evo-devo understanding of organisms as porous, multiple and processual contributes to a rethinking of normative assumptions about the status of bodies, including mechanisms of sexuation and reproduction.

Knowledges and Domains

Questions of personhood have been central to various streams of feminist thought. This is because at the core of the hegemonic modern juridico-political statist order and of liberal ideology lie interconnected ideas about full moral and legal persons, or ‘humans’, who can exercise rights or who create civil society together. Feminist, black and indigenous thinkers have repeatedly highlighted the patriarchal and racialised character of these conceptualisations. Anthropologists have also been involved in these debates, as Cecilia McCallum argues in chapter 6. Feminist anthropologists have a particular concern with how these interconnected ideas are imposed onto ethnographic descriptions. They have shown, for instance, how, in describing kinship systems, mid-twentieth century anthropology’s focus on juridical and political ‘roles’ and ‘statuses’ centred on adult males of reproductive age produced a skewed picture, which invariably reproduced Western assumptions about societies, public spaces or individuals. McCallum’s chapter discusses the work of Marilyn Strathern to show how it has helped to displace such conceptualisations, especially in British social anthropology. A defining characteristic of Strathernian anthropology is to see persons and sociality as co-produced together rather than to treat individuals as atoms of a ‘society’. Sociality is relational, that is, the capacity of making relations is the very condition of sociality. Looking at her own Cashinawa ethnography and re-reading that of other Amazonianists in this light, McCallum shows that relations are not external to Amazonian ‘cumulative humans’. If in Strathern’s analysis of the Melanesian ‘dividual human’, gendered aspects of the self are constantly transacted to create social relations, in McCallum’s ‘cumulative human’, ‘true men’ and ‘true women’ of the Cashinawa are gendered bodies that are made as products and productive of sociality. This understanding of indigenous personhood enables a different conceptualization of the process of claiming of rights, especially women’s rights, and of the ways it extends care to non-humans or territories. From

this angle, McCallum argues, it becomes inadequate to see the adoption of rights-discourse in Indigenous struggles as a creative appropriation of the dominant discourse, even if meant charitably. Such a view hides the fact that this is not a mere extension, but a resignification through which emergent persons and socialities are constituted.

In Chapter 7, **Sarah Green and Tuija Pulkkinen** provide a critical overview of ‘the postmodern moment’ in the anthropology of gender and sexuality and in gender studies. The authors posit that these are to be understood as distinct domains of knowledge production and conceptual innovation that have engaged with one another thematically in important ways. Green and Pulkkinen define ‘the postmodern moment’ specifically in relation to the emergence and circulation of French continental philosophy in Anglophone contexts and the flourishing of anti-foundational thinking associated with poststructuralism across the humanities, social sciences and disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarly domains. Rejecting and challenging the idea of foundations or essences, anti-foundational thought stressed instead the importance of the relation between power and knowledge and, following philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, inquiries into accepted categories of thought through the development of new methodologies to critically investigate knowledge formations (Foucault 1961,1966) and deconstruct objects of knowledge and related epistemic claims (Derrida 1967). In anthropology, poststructuralism’s attention to discursive formations as power/knowledge engendered a reconsideration of key moments in the history of the discipline and critical interrogations of truth claims in anthropological modes of accounting, most notably in ethnographic writing. Reverberations of the postmodern turn in feminist theory and feminist anthropology resulted in vibrant and innovative conceptual developments that took gender theory and anthropological theory beyond analyses of masculinist bias, patriarchal bargains and the cross-cultural variability of gender systems and sexual meanings. Poststructuralist debates across feminist theory and anthropology converged in anti-

foundational approaches to gender and sexuality which resulted in a plurality of formulations and directions, as new divergences emerged over, for example, attributions of fluidity to gender and sexuality, their philosophical underpinnings and implications in the domains of theory and politics. The chapter highlights the renewed interest in the study of kinship in the postmodern moment alongside the emergence of the rich and increasingly confident scholarship in queer anthropology in its aftermath. Whilst for some the postmodern moment in anthropology and in gender and sexuality scholarship was suspect as a dilution or retreat from the political, the authors stress the radical transformations that ensued from it in anthropological theory and practice.

Stephanie Rudwick's chapter 8 returns to some of the foundational debates in the anthropology of gender reviewed in the introductory chapters, to specifically focus on gender and sexuality in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. In these rich and dynamic interdisciplinary fields, anthropologists have played a key role in challenging ethnocentrism and highlighting the problems tied to universalist assumptions in linguistic research. The chapter offers a detailed overview of key paradigms – specifically deficiency, dominance, difference and social constructivist models – and reviews how a focus on gender, sexuality and intersectional approaches have increasingly stressed multiplicity, fluidity and flexibility in language, gender and sexuality forms. In this respect, works by queer anthropologists in the 1990s such Kira Hall, William Leap and Don Kulick, are exemplary of the theoretical and ethnographic advances in the field. In turn, Judith Butler's work continues to inform linguistic anthropology's research into gender and sexuality in profound ways. These conceptual developments are then carefully traced and richly illustrated in an extensive discussion of linguistic identities among Zulu speakers, South Africa's largest ethnolinguistic group. Drawing on long-term anthropological research on the Nguni language isiZulu and its entanglement with other South African languages, and particularly English,

Rudwick shows how linguistic practices play roles in the formation of gender and sexual identities. Doing gender and sexuality is tied to different forms of speech. Language here can be mobilised to create resources to challenge patriarchal arrangements. Three varieties of isiZulu are in use in contemporary South Africa and each indexes way of being gendered in particular ways, informing different styles of constructing gender and sexuality. Rudwick analyses language usage, focusing on different modalities of politeness and respectful forms of address as they emerge and are deployed and challenged. These forms of address appear to be distinctly gendered and sexualised and as such act as markers of gender inequality or asymmetry. In turn, isiNqumo is a South African variety spoken by Zulu men who engage in sexual activity with other men and is tied to queer expression and worldmaking in KwaZulu-Natal. Finally, the isiTsotsi style is associated with urban contexts. Originally spoken by men, isiTsotsi has increasingly been appropriated by women in counter-normative linguistic practices tied to the emergence of new femininities. Rudwick's account of the three linguistic styles powerfully illustrates how linguistic expression is entangled with a multiplicity of expressions and practices of doing gender and sexuality.

In Chapter 9, **Subhadra Channa** approaches the body as a key site where notions of hierarchy and gender are constituted across a range of domains of knowledge and experience. Channa draws on a wide range of cultural approaches to the phenomenology of the body which offered diverse understandings of materiality, embodiment and corporeality. These arguments are explored with specific reference to South Asia, where historical and ethnographic literature offer rich archives of local indigenous framings and experiences of human and non-human bodies and the ways bodies are situated in power hierarchies. The central role of the body in the constitution of power hierarchies directly informs insights in the field of gender and sexuality studies. Against a background of great variability across and within social formations, Channa foregrounds how interpretations and representations of the

body, the symbolic and ritual valence of bodily parts and substance, and bodily aesthetics are implicated in the organisation of hierarchies and inequalities. Eurocentric assumptions concerning mind-body or mind-soul dualisms are therefore complicated by cross-cultural variability and socially, culturally and historically situated conceptualisations which place emphasis on holism or fragmentation. The Hindu view of the anatomical and physiological body, for example, combines two complementary parts, namely a ‘subtle body’ (sukma-sarira) and a ‘gross body’ (sthula-sarira), each with manifold components which are organised in non-binary and non-unitary manner. Amerindian perspectivism provides another salient illustration of non-binary approaches in Channa’s discussion. Because they are in constant transformation, Amazonian human bodies’ difference from animal bodies must be actively produced and constantly safe-guarded. Channa notes the cross-cultural relevance of such concerns; vegetarianism in South Asia is underpinned by a belief that the same reincarnates itself into different beings, human as well as non-human. Whilst Amazonian Huni Kuin bodies are ‘cumulative’ entities (McCallum 2016; also Chapter 6 in this volume), for the Jad Bhotiyas of the Upper Himalayas the properties of the body are cyclical. Channa shows how sexuality is implicated in cyclical understandings of bodily states and the processes of gendering that ensue as a result. In the Upper Himalayas, gender, race and caste organise the differentiation and hierarchical positioning of bodies which determine inequalities and symbolic and material asymmetry in the organisation of relations.

In Chapter 10, **William Leap** opens the archive of queer anthropology as it has intersected with linguistic anthropology historically. Leap’s chapter considers how performativity theory has shaped the anthropology of gender and sexuality through a focus on language and offers a detailed analysis of a range of case studies which richly illustrate the relations between language, subject formation, and the operations of ideology and normativity. It reviews formative debates in gender, sexuality and queer studies to illustrate

how linguistic enquiry in anthropology has been profoundly shaped by these fields of interdisciplinary research and, in turn, has made important contributions to them.

Performativity theory has informed accounts of how identities, desire and intimacy are created through ‘doing and being’, that is, they are social, political and linguistic practices (Butler 1990, Muñoz 1999). Leap highlights two key dimensions in these dynamics. On the one hand, language is tied to ideological operations which are evident in the interpellatory force of words entangled in processes of identity constitution and identification. Any identity category is therefore enmeshed in normativity, but is also an opening into the second important dimension, that is, processes of citation and resignification. Performativity therefore points to the open-ended possibilities that emerge in social practice, as terms are continuously re-contextualised and given new meanings. Leap analyses in detail selected ethnographic scenes that illustrate processes and dynamics of resignification, agency and subject constitution and where gender and sexuality are imbricated in racialisation. Questions about ‘male speech’ and ‘female speech’ are also shown to be systematically marked by class differentials, which subjects navigate in myriad ways often through strategies of refusal. The story of Mary Jones, an African American male-bodied, female-attired sex worker from the early 19th century, powerfully illustrates the negotiation of gendered and sexual disidentification through refusal, against intense regulatory control and heightened forms of racialised vulnerability. Leap notes the seemingly overwhelming normative frames which seek to place and hold subjects in fixed subject positions, but also stresses the dynamism of *being* and *doing* in gender and sexual performative processes of identification and disidentification that engender resistance and survival. In turn, performative inquiry suggests critical perspectives on highly restrictive gender and sexual binaries, whilst insisting on the importance of an analysis of the linguistic dimensions of lifeworlds tied to gender and sexual variance.

Paul Scheibelhofen and Daniel Monterescu's Chapter 11 offers a detailed overview of anthropological research on masculinities. They address debates on the so-called 'crisis of masculinity' critically drawing in anthropological research that highlights ways masculinities are constructed relationally (e.g. Monterescu 2007). Through a range of rich ethnographic examples, Scheibelhofen and Monterescu illustrate the contingent and processual character of masculinities in context. They provide a thorough guide on interdisciplinary research on masculinities and a detailed overview of the emergent field of critical masculinity studies. At the heart of their analysis is an exploration of the political, social and cultural logics subtending such claims about 'crises in masculinity' or 'troubled masculinities', and their implications for understandings of gender and sexuality. The authors consider anthropological approaches to understanding masculinities and stress the ways in which masculinities are produced at the intersections of multiple relations of dominance. Specifically, the chapter focuses on ways economic change entailing incorporation into the capitalist market has impacted existing understandings of manhood and masculinity., It further explores how colonial and postcolonial dynamics, nationalism and migration have led to adoptions of certain forms of masculinities and their racialisation. When reflecting on how anthropologists have approached what it means to be a man and how an in-group of "real men" is forged in a given context, Scheibelhofen and Monterescu rely primarily on the 'major' works (e.g., Bourdieu 2001; Connell 1995; Herzfeld 1985; Herdt 1981). But they also disturb this rendering, by bringing in queer scholarship, the influence of which is less commonly acknowledged in anthropological accounts of masculinities. The queer literature has recentred sexuality and the erotic in the construction of masculinities, homosociabilities and gender orders (e.g., Rubin 1992; Sedgwick 1985), and unsettled the assumption which permeates such accounts, namely, that masculinity is the property of those with male bodies (Blackwood 1998; Halberstam 1998).

Resistances and Intersections

In many respects, **Mengia Hong Tschalaer's** contribution, Chapter 12, which focuses on everyday forms of resistance, can be read as an elaboration of concerns raised in the opening chapters. The chapter is inspired by the work of feminist anthropologists who in the 1970s theorised women's resistance to patriarchal power relations while embodying this resistance in their own practices and lives (for instance, by organising collectives or working in anti-war movements). Building on the work of feminist and queer scholars, however, it argues that to understand often contradictory forms of everyday resistance we need to rethink theory and to adopt approaches that pay attention to intersecting forms of oppression and hegemony and to ways they are experienced and challenged. Drawing on the work of Chicana/Latina and Black feminists, in particular, Tschalaer argues for the need to centre the margins and to cultivate 'oppositional consciousness' (Sandoval 1991) and to recognise subversion and resistance as emerging from consciousness of a hybrid self and from practices that break with dominant ideology while speaking from within it. The chapter provides a useful overview of ways anthropologists, especially between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s, looked at interconnections between resistance, power and hegemony. It covers the work of the key authors, in particular James Scott (1986) and Sherry Ortner (1995), but also discusses in more detail the ways legal and Black feminist anthropology address the workings of hegemony and power. Tschalaer's own ethnographic analysis derives from her fieldwork on Muslim women's rights activism in the city of Lucknow in northern India (Tschalaer 2017). By entering public spaces, these Muslim women engage in more easily recognisable forms of protest, while they are simultaneously vernacularising human rights discourse and extending the boundaries of Muslim womanhood. Their resistances are multi-layered and paradoxical, however: they

assert agency and enact resistance by embodying piety and by using pious language, and their vulnerability becomes a tool of subversion.

Chapter 13 builds on the Black feminist anthropological tradition of constructing its own canon that is ‘both theoretical and based in a politics of praxis and poetics’ and ‘seeks to deconstruct the institutionalized racism and sexism that has characterized the history of the discipline of anthropology’ (McClaurin 2001, 2). The canon traced by **Riché Barnes** in the chapter centres on a transnational Black feminist framework that generates new theorisations and praxis from diaspora as a site for solidarity forged by women-led and gender-based political movements. Barnes starts by discussing how her own research into Black strategic mothering in the US (Barnes 2015) led to considerations of transatlantic connections and to collaborations with scholars from West Africa. Barnes then discusses ways Black feminist treatments of diaspora have challenged existing masculinist framings and forced the development of new questions about difference. The core of the chapter is an insightful discussion of how Black feminist anthropology in the US has been developing through scholars who in their work transcend US borders. Several generations of US Black anthropologists have conducted fieldwork primarily in Jamaica and the Caribbean more broadly and, more recently, in Latin America, especially Brazil and Colombia. Second, these scholars have been engaged with and responding to the work of non-US theorists and activists with whom they share experiences of living under the global influence of white supremacy in European and U.S. imperialism. This engagement shapes the canon as a whole and makes it untypical for mainstream US anthropology, which is frequently myopic while dominating the discipline globally; one only has to realise that a major US journal has to remind its authors to cite scholars from diverse traditions and countries where they have done their fieldwork.¹ For Barnes the transnational Black feminist anthropology is ‘a global

¹ <https://journal.culanth.org/index.php/ca/submission-guidelines>

endeavour that applies theory and lived experience to restructure ethnography and praxis that is engaged in an intersectional analysis of various oppressions, the simultaneity of oppression, and strategies for resistance, survival and freedom.’ Black feminists are multiply conscious (Harrison 2010b) of their positionality, in Barnes’ case as a US American scholar, while finding kindred across the African diaspora and labouring towards practicing socially responsible and politically mindful research (Bolles 2015). Echoing the discussion on autoethnography introduced in Chapter 2, then, the Black feminist anthropological canon emerges as a form of relationship to oneself irrespective of other (non-Black) anthropologists who might be observing it from the margins or even drawing some of their concepts from it. In recent years Indigenous scholars have also powerfully intervened in gender and sexuality studies. Collections such as *Queer Indigenous Studies*, co-edited by Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Biran Joseph Gilley and Scott Lauria Morgensen (2011) have set out major analytical and political challenges to heteropatriarchal colonialism. They have developed, as **Olga Ulturgasheva** puts it in Chapter 14, ways to challenge ‘ideological and epistemological traps set by the logic of coloniality and colonialism, as a method of decolonization’ (page). Much of such scholarship originates in Anglo settler colonies. Ulturgasheva, a Siberian Eveni anthropologist, engages it to help create space for developing indigenous potentialities, albeit from within a rarely considered colonial formation. Her chapter builds outwards from her knowledge of cross-gender mobility among Eveni of Siberia in order to question the implications of the colonial heteronormativity of Soviet and post-Soviet Russian instantiation, including ways such heteronormativity informs hegemonic anthropological and ethnological knowledge. Against these ‘possessory acts’ (Moreton-Robinson 2015) of the scholarship which invalidates indigenous knowledge and is implicated in indigenous dispossession, Ulturgasheva looks for new modes of knowledge informed by indigenous onto-epistemologies. The chapter draws on other ethnographies of the Circumpolar North –

from Alaska, Subarctic Canada, Greenland, and Siberia – in order to tease out indigenous gender relations and gender conflicts in response to a historical context of colonialism and to recuperate modes of ungended sociability and genderlessness. These, Ulturgasheva suggests, might not be easily recognisable since frequently within these circumpolar indigenous gender formations ‘gender per se is not problematized, and constructs of femininity and masculinity do not require constant reorganization and deconstruction’ (Page). Ulturgasheva is clear that her chapter should be read not only as an exercise in comparative ethnography or as her reflections on what constitutes decolonial scholarship, but that she intends it as guidance for emerging indigenous scholars. Specifically, she highlights the need for intersectional approaches to recognise internal differences. The chapter itself is framed by calls to be vigilant against tokenism that threatens to exculpate institutions without providing real material basis for the process of decolonisation, and against accusations of essentialism by scholars who ignore the variety of power relations and forms of dispossession at play. It ends with a powerful discussion of embodied connection to the ancestral lands, climate change, environmental sustainability, and security in the region. In this way it can be read alongside Chapter 21 by Luisa Elvira Belaunde and Cecilia McCallum. Both chapters observe how for indigenous people questions of kinship and gender relations are tied to the question of sovereignty and survival in the context of environmental degradation.

Feminist ethnographies of reproduction helped constitute major areas of theoretical innovation in anthropology, argues **Michele Rivkin-Fish**. Indeed, it is widely recognised that feminist contributions—not only by anthropologists—have galvanized medical anthropology, technoscience and STS more broadly (for partial overviews see e.g. Fishman et al. 2016; Inhorn & Wentzell 2012; Rapp 2001; Roberts 2016; Subramaniam et al 2016). In Chapter 15, Rivkin-Fish draws upon this legacy, zooming in on the question of abortion to show how ethnographic studies of abortion engaged and challenged Foucault-inspired analysis of

reproductive governance as an aspect of modern biopolitics. By reviewing selected ethnographies, the chapter outlines major ways through which feminist anthropologists engaged with this influential frame to argue that their work gives primacy to ethnographic findings and feminist politics. In studies of abortion, they engaged ‘in the political goal of demonstrating the multiple harms perpetuated by restrictive policies, while also documenting women’s creative, if often partial and compromised, efforts to resist these constraints’ (PAGE). Certainly, as Rivkin-Fish also recognises, the question of abortion (and of reproduction and family planning more generally) shaped the development of feminist anthropology especially in the US in the 1970s when it motivated feminist anthropologists to merge their politics and academic interests. And these concerns are not less pressing today. As this book was entering production the Polish parliament was debating a complete ban on abortion, including in cases of rape and danger to a woman’s health; the conservative-majority US Supreme court overturned the Roe v Wade decision that legalized abortion in 1973; and the German government developed plans to finally repeal a Nazi-era abortion law, but stopped short of decriminalising abortion. Drawing on her ethnographic research in Russia and other ethnographies of postsocialist societies, Rivkin-Fish argues against those Foucaultian and feminist approaches which, underpinned by liberal notions of ‘autonomy’ and of the state, treat abortion as primarily a question of ‘choice.’ She observes, somewhat surprisingly to many, that ‘socialist and postsocialist subjects are much more ideologically in sync with the critical insights of the reproductive justice movement, founded by women of color who sought a more holistic, socially embedded enabling of women’s lives and reproductive potentials, a vision which could potentially include state resources and empowering forms of involvement’ (page).

In the now classic introductory book *Feminism and Anthropology* (1988), Henrietta Moore observes that by the early 1980s two main approaches to the question of women’s

subordination stabilised in anthropology: analyses of the symbolic construction of gender and of the cultural valuation of categories such as ‘women’ and ‘men’, on the one hand; and sociologically oriented analyses focusing on gender as a social relationship and on the economic subordination of women. Indeed, according to **Caroline Schuster** in Chapter 16, studies that questioned sexual divisions of labour or the ways anthropology approached capitalism represent some of the most formative feminist contributions to the discipline. Chris Hann’s and Keith Hart’s *Economic Anthropology* (2011), corroborate Schuster’s observations. In the introductory chapter they point out that ‘feminists have remained at the cutting edge of critical economic anthropology’ and ‘have pioneered the reflexive critique of capitalist economy through theoretically informed ethnography of the highest standard’ (ibid. 80). Nevertheless, they discuss feminist contributions on a few pages in a separate subsection only, and do not engage with the implications that the retheorising from a gender vantage point has had for the subdiscipline. This is a version of a common problem in anthropology, that of ‘adding’ women, which as Schuster observes, disavows feminist origins and politics. Schuster’s own chapter is a magisterial account that reasserts the centrality of the continuous generation of theory out of ethnography. Ethnographic analyses continually recentre and decentre established concepts and assumptions and frequently lead to subversive outcomes. The chapter starts with the classical question of the entanglement of gender with capitalism, folds in foundational texts in feminist anthropology, synthesises debates about units and subjects of analysis, and concludes by challenging the anthropology of finance to pay attention to sexuality. Ethnographically, it is grounded in Schuster’s research of microfinance programmes in Paraguay. She asks how ‘women’s role’ (Leacock 1979) is constructed and policed under capitalism so that women and microfinance seem such a natural fit. She shows that women’s work of provisioning for the household, leading to involvement in microfinance and the debt economy, depends on and reproduces an array of gendered desires

and expectations about appropriate feminine sociality or motherhood; microfinance thus entails a process of “crediting gender” (Schuster 2015). The chapter does not stop at the deconstruction of the household and gendered subjectivity under capitalism, however. Rather, Schuster argues that analysis of microfinance (and anthropology of finance more broadly) has not paid attention to sexual subjectivities and their inequalities. Drawing on queer scholarship, she argues for the need to go beyond kinship and gender and to recognise the ways sexuality, pleasure and intimacy are ‘constitutive features of financial products like debt’ (page).

By looking at the contemporary feminized form that the abstract category of ‘the poor’ takes under capitalist welfare states and in international development, Chapter 17 by **Vigdis Broch-Due** covers some of the most recurrent themes in the anthropology of gender, such as the male-female or public-private binaries. Broch-Due proposes to explore how these binary forms interact with other structuring forms—wholes, hierarchies, networks—to organise the recurrent link between social organisation and discourse about poverty that is at the heart of conceptualizations of modernity. Rather than a historicist analysis aimed at identifying cause and effect, or structural analysis looking for deep structures, Broch-Due daringly utilises tools of neo-formalist analysis developed in literary studies. For literary theorist Caroline Levine (2015, 2) “it is the work of form to make order. And this means that forms are the stuff of politics”. Just as in literary work there is no unidirectional link between text and context, poverty is similarly not only a matter of discourse. Rather, discursive framing of the poor and of related policies hinge on ordering and structural devices (architecture, law, and so on) that constantly locate bodies, objects and ideas in their proper places. Gender forms are central to these devices since the gender binary is easily deployable across contexts, where it articulates and collides with other pre-existing forms. In its ambition, scope and kind of analysis, the chapter extrapolates the bounds of anthropological

writing. Broch-Due notes that focusing on a global discourse on poverty and tracing the sedimentations of the meaning of ‘the poor’ across several centuries—from medieval female mystics to early 21st century politics of impoverishment in Kenya—might seem flattening and generalising for many anthropologists. The aim is not to identify historical turning points in the development of a category, however, but to highlight differences in poverty scenarios and to signal how different subtexts and traces of poverty’s meanings variously play a role.

Desires and Relations

As the important work by Gayle Rubin and Gloria Wekker discussed above illustrates, anthropological perspectives on gendered and sexual subjectivities challenge the ways sex recedes into the background in anthropological accounts, to refocus attention on the socialities, subjectivities and aesthetics of community tied to desire, relations and pleasures. In Chapter 18, **Paul Boyce and akshay khanna** take up debates on the status and meanings of categories tied to gender variant sexual subjectivity through the prism of their long-standing ethnographic research in India. Drawing on research and activist endeavours, their chapter charts the emergence, circulation and seemingly impending demise of *khoti*, a term for gender alterity and ‘male-to-male’ same-sex desire in India from the 1990s to the present. The diverse meanings of the category *khoti* across registers of knowledge and experience foreground, for Boyce and khanna, the ways in which gender, rather than an intrinsic attribute of bodies and subjects, is relationally constituted through the exchange of substance or objects with gendering effects. As also discussed extensively by McCallum in Chapter 6, this fundamental insight drawn from the work of Marilyn Strathern (1988) contrasts Euro-American notions of individuality with an emphasis on ‘dividuality’, partibility and processed composition and decomposition of persons and things. In the wake of the AIDS crisis, Boyce

and khanna argue that the framing of sexuality as cultural, and hence notions of locally situated sexual cultures, fed into international sexual health promotion policies and practice in particular ways. Traversing these policy milieus, *khotis* came to be associated with heightened risk in view of putative passive role in sexual encounters and as risky subjects in themselves. This came about as a result of modes of global sexual health policy accounting and measurement. In turn, *khotis* were progressively established as archetypal figures of same-sex desiring and gender variance. They at once marked sexual and gender diversity as cultural and enabled the transnational circulation of seemingly newly fashioned sexual types across domains of knowledge and expertise ranging from public health interventions to activism. As new idioms of sexual and gender variance – notably ‘transgender’ – took hold, the emergence of *khotis* in the mid-1990s seemed to already gesture their impending demise in global health and activist spaces, revealing the intricate local valences of emerging idioms. New alignments and frictions between *khotis*, transgender and other categories of sexual and gender variance – notably *hijra* – foreground how the experience of sexual subjectivity articulates changing relationalities and exchanges.

Questions of relationality and interdependence are further explored by **Logan O’Laughlin** in Chapter 19, through a focus on feminist and queer accountings of the non-human for a multispecies anthropology. O’Laughlin challenges human exceptionalism to foreground how multispecies ethnography decentres the figure of the human to foreground instead a multiplicity of organisms whose contours are porous and fundamentally processual. Anthropologists such as Michael Fischer (2009) have noted that *anthropos* in the Greek classical antiquity conjured up through the European Enlightenment was positioned between the animal and the divine (see also Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). O’Laughlin repositions multispecies thinking directly in relation to philosophies of new materialism, Native American metaphysics, and genealogies of Black, postcolonial and decolonial feminist

critiques of ‘the human’. The decentering potential of the non-human turn is first illustrated with reference to multispecies ethnography and multispecies thinking’s insistence on focussing on the experiences of non-human entities – animals, plants and other types of living organisms such as fungi. Further, the emergence of non-human entities is shown to fundamentally complicate notions of agency centred on the individual subject. Agent ontologies foreground animacies, that is, modulated and textured modes of agency that include awareness, sentience and liveliness (Chen 2012) and that extend across entities categorised as animate (humans, animals, insects and plants) and inanimate (rocks, metals and toxins). Philosophical perspectives in new materialism and Native American metaphysics have offered compelling critiques of Cartesian dualisms. Agential realism, for example, offers an account of matter as intra-action, where the domain of the social and the domain of the natural are always already entangled in continuous becoming (Barad 2007) and interdependence (Haraway 2016) which require a renewed attention to ethics. Native American metaphysics provides an important antecedent to these debates, in view of the central place accorded to the agency of nonhumans and the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman entities. In Native American philosophy, however, entanglement and interconnectedness have a specific relation to the sacred that is not always acknowledged in new materialisms. Similarly, Black, postcolonial and decolonial critiques suggest fruitful avenues for rethinking dehumanisation within and across species in new feminist and queer relationalities that attend to the violence in distinctions between the human and the nonhuman.

Luisa Elvira Belaunde’s and **Cecilia McCallum’s** Chapter 20 intersects with calls for anthropology to pay attention to indigenous onto-epistemologies (see also Chapters 14 and 20). Although work within the ‘ontological turn’, an influential theoretical movement, is rooted in close ethnographic engagement with indigenous philosophical forms and practice

(onto-epistemologies), the chapter draws attention to neglected key aspects. It should leave the reader convinced that this international style of anthropological theorising, which became visible around 2010, has a gender and sexuality problem. Although Marilyn Strathern is recognised as a direct influence (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017), her insights into the ways gender as a relation interpellates sociality and other relations (Strathern 2016) or the queering potentials of her work (Boyce et al. 2020) remain muted. This is also true, as Belaunde and McCallum show, of another direct influence on the ontological turn—of certain kinds of Amazonian ethnography concerned with perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro) or animism (Descola). According to Belaunde and McCallum, gender was deemed an irrelevant concept for understanding the foundations of lowland South American modes of thinking and practice; and a greater focus on fabrications of the body has not led to appreciation of sexuality or the ways it is gendered. Those interested in these topics remained marginal to the anthropology of indigenous peoples in the region. This is so even though in Amazonia (in a properly Strathernian fashion) gender as relation enters into and articulates other relations (such as between humans and nonhumans). Their chapter provides an overview of a tradition in the anthropology of Amazonia concerned with women, intimacy and sexuality. It builds on McCallum's work (2001) on how gendered persons in Amazonia are made and Belaunde's work on 'indigenous hematology' (Belaunde 2006), which showed that gender is knowledge cumulatively and materially accrued to bodies, and that as blood circulates it carries thought, consciousness and emotion. The authors argue that blood flows not only underlie ways men and women are understood, but socio-cosmological processes at large. Including a focus on women's engaging in relationships with other beings and space-times (through e.g., management of menstrual blood) forces analysts to appreciate Amazonian shamanism as a shamanic-reproductive complex. This approach also acknowledges women's perspectives on these interactions, as put forward by a new generation of female indigenous anthropologists.

Blood becomes revealed as central to politics, too. For female indigenous scholars and activists, the position of indigenous women on domestic violence is tied to ongoing colonial destruction of land and livelihoods. Their work points to the intimate relationship between their bodies, administration of blood, and childbirth, on the one hand, and indigenous territories, on the other. Through ‘corpo-territorialisation’, these indigenous intellectuals argue, ‘indigenous territorialization is constituted as a body process where female bodies and fluids infect, direct and regulate indigenous interaction with and between the territory and its constituents’ (Barboza *et al*, 2019: 507).

In Chapter 21, **Jeannette Edwards** focuses on an analysis of the increasingly widespread use of plastic surgery, injections of botulinum toxin and dermal fillers into various parts of the body for aesthetic purposes in the United Kingdom. Edwards mobilises the awkward relation between feminist and anthropological perspectives on these practices of bodily modification in order to shed light on the gendered dimensions in play. Whilst feminist readings have stressed the normative dimensions of beauty standards and ideals and the differentially gendered pressures to conform to them, anthropological framings stress the variability of beauty norms and their meanings in context. The chapter defines cosmetic bodily modifications as part of the materiality of beauty practices in contemporary UK. As an exercise in ‘anthropology at home’ (Jackson 1987), the chapter offers an important methodological lesson in how familiarity and estrangement are put to work in anthropological analysis, with significant antecedents in Black feminist anthropology (McClaurin 2001) and queer anthropology (Newton 1972; Rubin 1991). For Edwards, race, class and gender hierarchically position the anthropologist vis-à-vis her interlocutors ‘at home’ and complicate assumptions about their proximity to the context and research interlocutors. Further, neutrality and suspension of judgement valued in anthropological approaches to others’ practices and worldviews cannot easily be claimed or maintained when doing research in

one's own communities, a quandary familiar to researchers seeking to account for and understand illiberal positions and life projects. What is at stake in these seemingly intractable quandaries, Edwards argues, are fundamental ethical questions concerning ethical positioning and judgement. Public concerns for the use of botox and other beautifying bodily modification procedures in the UK are shown to entail scapegoating and pathologizing working class beauty ideals, vernacular beautifying practices and aspirations – a fundamental ethical issue that normative regulatory frames, however well-informed, cannot fully address or resolve. Feminist and queer anthropological approaches turn the ethical question towards a search to 'know politically', that is, to generate and inform detailed explorations of the materiality of fillers, implants, hormones, as well as of the motivations and investments in the experience of bodily transformation of those who use them.

Recursivities and Futures

The last two chapters in the volume concern the recursivities and future horizons in debates in gender and sexuality studies and chart novel, emerging directions. In Chapter 22, **EJ Gonzalez-Polledo** tackles one salient set of awkward relations, namely between the anthropology of gender and sexuality and trans* studies. Gonzalez-Polledo shows that anthropology's preoccupation with cultural alterity articulated through sexual and gender variance led to ossified accounts of sex and gender. Ideas of a 'third gender', for example, might have been offered as a strategy to accommodate the experiences of those who cannot be neatly assigned to categories of male and female. Yet, paradoxically, 'third gender' framings have reductively explained away gender variance into a new category – the third – and in turn stabilised gender binarism as the norm. Alternatively, categories of gender variance, such as transgender, have functioned in anthropological analysis as a means to

explore how gender might amount to a structuring device in social and cultural processes globally. These entrenched pre-theoretical presuppositions and habits of thought at the heart of the discipline work against projects which seek to make space for how sex and gender, rather than exclusively or primarily taxonomic or categorical orders of knowledge, are in fact always in motion in social practice (see also, Weston 2002). Conversely, Gonzalez-Polledo shows that a kinetic framing of gender (Gonzalez-Polledo 2020; Strathern 2016) produces myriad interlocking positions through which persons become sexed and unsexed. Oscillations in gendered experience raise questions concerning how matter and thought get to be organised in social practice. The challenge for anthropological analysis, theorising and representation, then, lies in how to account for these moments of composition and decomposition in their gendered effects. The emergence of Trans* Studies – where trans* stands for a broad and diverse experience of gender variance and non-normative gender self-ascription – offers an opportunity to reorient the ethnographic record to critically re-assess how anthropology has engaged with trans* bodies, identities and experience. Further, trans* studies provide new critical and conceptual insights which might also be deployed to reconfigure the discipline of anthropology to renew the purchase of anthropological theory and anthropology's ethical commitments.

The colonial legacies that subtend histories of the discipline of anthropology are the focus of much critical reflection across the chapters in the volume. In Chapter 22, these questions are turned to inform a vision for the future for the discipline that opens into inter- and transdisciplinary knowledge formations and critical projects. Chapter 23 extends these reflections further in an exercise of speculative writing on the futures of sex and gender.

Emilia Sanabria draws on a rich and textured genealogy of speculative thinking and theorising in Black Studies, and Black feminist science fiction writing more specifically, to draw the contours of futurities in the face of endemic and spectacular crises. The writings of

Octavia E. Butler have inspired innovative experimental analytics and representational forms grounded in speculative fiction rather than traditional forms of ethnographic imagination and accounting. Speculative fiction has emerged as an important avenue for unleashing the imagination to devise future visions of social justice in the context of ruination. As part of the repertoire of the ‘arts of living on a damaged planet’ (Tsing et al. 2017), speculative fiction is not only tied to an apocalyptic anthropology (Wolf-Mayer 2019), but rather, it re-animates horizons of contestation of power regimes and enriches the ongoing engagement of feminist and queer anthropology with science fiction and the work of interplanetary anthropologists such as the writer Ursula Le Guin (Pandian 2018, see also Davison-Vecchione and Seeger 2021). Sanabria draws on feminist and queer anthropological theorizing to recast the critical unpacking of the naturalisation of gender, sexuality, and reproduction. Sanabria’s chapter returns to foundational debates in the discipline concerning, for example, the role of binary oppositions central in structuralist anthropology and subsequent feminist critiques, and proposes that ‘the future is, and needs to be, non-binary’ (page). Here the future horizon of the discipline and of gender and sexuality is recast in terms of non-hierarchical relationalities, echoing Indigenous Studies perspectives extensively discussed by Ulturgasheva in Chapter 14. Eschewing normative teleologies of ‘straight time’ (Boellstorff 2007), Sanabria invokes an analytics of regeneration to address visions of the future that rely on simplistic distinctions between utopia and dystopia, challenging and going beyond them.

Conclusion

The authors gathered in this handbook jointly bring a powerful repertoire of critique, theoretical inquiry and ethnographic knowledge to bear on a wide range of topics aligned under the rubric of the anthropology of gender and sexuality. In doing this they honour and

explore the history of this field, in its many ramifications, but do not shy away from testing concepts, theories, and forms of objectification, nor from resignifying or going beyond limits. Individually, each chapter stands as a signal contribution, grounded in original ethnographic and bibliographic research. The handbook speaks across the timescapes within which the discipline operates to address the present state of this field. It does this through focused discussion on particular issues, to be sure, yet makes proper and enlightening use of the arsenal of critical thinking and writing that is both feminist and queer anthropology's legacy to the discipline as a whole. The volume is an offering to the future – and this, in retrospect (as the editors finalise writing this introduction) is very much a trans* anthropology, in the sense that it shakes off strict boundaries, remains engaged in inter-disciplinary debate as in its origins, and thrives as open and expanding in shape and motion.

As well as encompassing distinct temporalities in the study of gender and sexuality, this volume brings together, from around the globe, anthropologists with disparate institutional affiliations and backgrounds and a variety of racial, ethnic and gender identifications. The authors have distinct standpoints and a wide range of experiential expertises. Thus, the reflections they offer upon the antecedents, current status, and future directions of the anthropology of gender and sexuality gain nuance, traction and originality. Written in the shadow of the dominance by the North Atlantic academic production, the volume seeks to lay foundations for a future properly global history of this field. To this end, it comprises an engagement with ongoing debates about the myriad topics that the chapters explore or touch upon, offering in this process a window onto the work of the contributing authors, their research, writing, teaching – and, in many cases, their activism as well. The volume has no pretensions to providing a definitive statement on the scope and nature of the anthropology of gender and sexuality, nor upon the specific topics addressed; more than an incomplete and deliberately open-ended collection (we are aware that there are lacunae), as a

'handbook' it seeks to underline that unceasing movement and critical discussion, driven by the incessant come-and-go at the interface between political concerns, academic opportunities and structural constraints, and the forms and processes involved in anthropological research and writing, furnish drive and energy to the field, even if elements of this potent mix sometimes act as a drag. Indeed, from many different angles the chapters go to show that, if at times uncomfortable, this endless movement that is driven by critical and politically charged debate is the very lynchpin of the creativity and richness of work in the Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality. Indeed, the handbook is testimony to the fact that, though much remains fraught and uncertain, the frictions that haunt the discipline are also the relations that open it up.

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