As anthropologists well know, rhythms and cycles contain powerful and meaningful social processes. Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale has been experiencing an important cycle in its life as an academic journal in the past two years after moving from Wiley to Berghahn as publisher and welcoming a new editorial team six months ago. It is time for the incoming team to express its gratefulness for the dedicated work accomplished by Lukas Ley, Nikolaï Ssorin-Chaikov, Lisa Pentaleri, and Jeanne Kormina, while writing the first editorial of the next cycle for SA/AS. We are delighted to walk the threshold with this issue placing a great emphasis on young researchers questioning the instable, unsteady and often contradictory fulcrums of the present world.

If we were looking for a keyword to grasp what is being put at work in this issue, reality would be an obvious choice. In this, Anna Kruglova’s review of European social anthropology journals in 2021 perfectly frames our strong concern with how to describe an ever-evaded reality which has definitely lost its anchor in social structure and historical framework to various disruptive ‘unknowable, untranslatable or opaque’ quest for it – be it utopia, multiple ontologies, or attempts at escaping it in renewed historical configurations.

Unknowable is precisely what the first paper of the issue is about. This challenging article questions the ability for anthropologists to grasp ways of not-knowing. Investigating two different ways of being confronted to the unspeakable – the absurd and the conceptual obfuscation – Diana Espírito Santo, Marjorie Murray, and Paulina Salinas put at work the discipline in its capacity to be confronted by the limits of comprehension and offer a perspective on what is not said. This ineffable, ‘beyond discursive and categorical experience’ is what the authors brand as ‘dark anthropology’. An understanding which is different from the ‘dark anthropology’ Sherry B. Ortner has been delineated when appraising 30 years of anthropology’s critical writings on neoliberalism and brutal form of capitalism (Ortner, 2016). We are not leaving the ineffable with the following paper. Building on a long-term ethnography with Iranian ‘revolutionary youth’, Younes Saramifar analyses how his interlocutors’ militant subjectivities ‘emerge in relation to . . . inordinate knowledge’: far from speeches about Islamic doctrines or Prophetic sayings, knowing the divine, the cosmos and the life at large is acquired while listening through the ghostly whispers of martyrs.

The next two articles of this issue address our engaging with the world in a different manner, less existential and more social, but still with the aim of debunking the unsaid and unseen out of it. They are inviting us to ponder about morals of smallness and morals of performance. Chakad Ojani is analyses infrastructures, environments, and practices of speculation. What is at stake in his ethnography of an NGO well-known for its fog capture installations around Lima is more than providing people with water for
domestic and agricultural use. Being an NGO implies to convince people they desire and need what its services offer. Like Espirito Santo, Murray, and Salinas, Ojani relies on his ethnography to question anthropology and its bending toward smallness/small scale as morally valued (as care) against macro-structures. These are imaginaries, he points out, ‘for smallness is a powerful epistemological trick that lends anthropology a great deal of its currency’. Kasper Pape Helligsøe and Martin Demant Frederiksen engage with another strong imaginary of our time: high performance. High performance, they argue, is not about morality, nor is it about something to attain or strategy to implement. Drawing on a comparison between professional handball players and programmers in a software company, they understand performing as a by-product of a specific engagement with near-future.

The following two papers by Céline Eschenbrenner and Dayana Lengauer address classical anthropological themes – migration journeys and interfaith dialogue – from an a-representational perspective. Challenging the ways bureaucracies and liberal agencies develop constant efforts to impose order, control and harmony over realities coined as problematic – unwanted migrants making their way through the Italian-French border, or conflicting religious views in Indonesia – both authors have developed phenomenological ethnographies to pictures other realities and forms of moral realism at stake. When reality is about conceptualization, unravelling it can be achieved by bodily practices, affects and emotions. Circumventing dominant state rhetoric centered on normative plurality, the Youth Interfaith Peace Camp studied by Lengauer reveals the vacuity of it, lest pluralism is actually enacted and experienced through verbal and bodily forms. Pluralism is more than a mere representational concept: it can be ethnographically described.

Questioning how others engage with multiple social worlds, moral realism, rhetoric about the world as it is, and utopian conceptualisations is part of the epistemological task of anthropology. It also has strong theoretical and political effects about how we theorize our practices, imagine our responsibilities to the world out there, and engage with ethical debate about it. The two pieces ending the issue illustrate this stance in a very different manner. In this final reply to Bjørn E. Bertelsen and Ruy L. Blanes (2021; 2022), Eldar Bråten argues there’s a dissonance in our thinking, a reluctance to ‘engage intellectually with socio-material verities and their formative power’. Bråten invites anthropologists to refrain from over engaging into the subjunctive appeal of coining every dissonance as ‘cracks’, as mere semiotic transgression. This question goes far beyond internal debates in the discipline as the forum convened by Elżbieta Drążkiewicz about the Russian invasion of Ukraine demonstrates. Facts as socio-material and formative power can indeed be stubborn and we need to acknowledge their inescapable effect in determining the future of Ukraine, Russia and Europe. Eighteen months after the beginning of the invasion, it is time to recollect, set out, and discuss the presumptions that have fueled controversies between European anthropologists. The forum was motivated by the need to create a space where the dialogue can take place, and SA/AS is certainly the place for it to be published if, as Mariya Ivancheva argues, anthropology is not afraid to be political and foster insights and understanding.
Isabelle Rivoal  
isabelle.rivoal@cnrs.fr  
ORCID: 0000-0003-1265-2500

Dimitra Kofti  
d.kofti@panteion.gr

**References**

