VINCENT DEBAENE, *Far afield: French anthropology between science and literature* (transl. Justin Izzo). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014, xv, 398 pp. ISBN 978-0-2261-0706-6.

Far afield traces the interactions between anthropological writing and literature in France from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the 1970s, with an emphasis on the tension between 'science' and 'literature'. Written by a literary scholar, Vincent Debaene, the book is remarkable in its detailed concern with the rhetoric of French anthropological writing until the 1970s and its depth of investigation into the historical links between anthropology, humanistic scholarship, social science, cultural critique and fiction. Originally published in French as *L'Adieu au voyage* (Gallimard, 2010), the book also translates a different history of anthropology to that traced in the Anglo-American canon, which offers valuable comparative insights to the historian of anthropology as well as the social anthropologist.

The book's central object is the phenomenon of 'second books' peculiar to French anthropologists in the lineage of Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. Marcel Griaule, Michel Leiris, Alfred Métraux, Claude Lévi-Strauss – all these authors have tended to produce two books based on their fieldwork experiences: an initial, 'scientific' monograph, and a second, more literary work to complement the initial one (or in some cases, to anticipate the upcoming monograph). Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes tropiques* and Leiris's *L'Afrique fantôme* are well-known exemplars of this trend, but Debaene surveys many more works in the same genre, extricating in the process some common ground between these works, and explaining how the boundary between science and literature is reframed through them.

Far afield is structured around this 'second book' phenomenon and is broadly divided into three parts. The first part defines the historical and rhetorical specificity of interwar French anthropology; the second part delves into detailed case studies of well-known 'second books' (including *Tristes tropiques* and *L'Afrique fantôme*); and the last part explores 'disputes over territory' (p. 249) between the social sciences and the literary field in France, with some attention to the shifting position of anthropology in these disputes. The reader with an interest in the history and theory of anthropology will find the first two parts most directly relevant, although the third part contains some valuable passages as well, including a clarification of the difference between Lévi-Straussian and Barthesian structuralism (pp. 296-307).

More specifically, and without undervaluing the book's overall merit, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 seem to present the most original insights. Chapter 3 examines the tension between

'document' and 'atmosphere' in interwar French anthropology. While the former designates the basic data on a given society gathered and classified by anthropologists, the latter designates the society's ineffable life, which cannot be grasped by the dead document. The recurring yet insoluble tension between document and atmosphere in the writing of interwar French anthropologists explains, in part, why they sought to write 'second books' to describe this atmosphere and compensate for the document's lack of liveliness. Yet, the document remains a powerful epistemological category in so far as the notion still inflects the ostensibly more literary style of 'second books', some of which have sought to become 'evocative' or 'living' documents (pp. 71-3).

Chapters 4 and 5 examine anthropological rhetoric in more detail. Chapter 4 explores how indigenous texts were incorporated by French anthropologists into their 'second books', arguing that this incorporation attempted to evoke the society's atmosphere in a documentary spirit (with limited success, given the absence of common ground between the text and the reader). Chapter 5, for its part, situates ethnographic writing in relation to travel writing, arguing that the rhetoric of distinction adopted by anthropologists against travel writers is similar, in some respects, to the rhetoric adopted by these writers against one another. Debaene thereby illustrates how the anthropologist's disdain of travel writing might obscure the common ground between these two discursive fields in France.

Setting aside their own substantive merits, these chapters bring into perspective how anthropology's insertion in – and interaction with – broader discursive fields varies across national contexts. The French case is interesting in this sense, because there were numerous interactions, if not borrowings, across the divide between science and literature in the course of the twentieth century, whereas in the English-speaking world this boundary has been less porous, in terms of both institutional contact and stylistic influence. One should notice, moreover, how the very terms '*science*' and '*littérature*' did not cover the same discursive fields in France as they did in the English-speaking world (see Debaene's preface to the English edition, pp. ix-xv). This illustrates how histories of anthropology, just as much as the anthropologist's own work, need some cultural translation to convey how different historical contexts shape the discipline's discourses and institutions in different ways.

This translation, moreover, enriches assumptions about the discursive fields within and across which anthropology has been situated. The circumstances in which French anthropology was written and received until the 1970s contrast heavily with the British or American cases since WWII. In the latter contexts, the professionalization of social anthropology has created an insular institutional and discursive space where anthropologists

talk to one another, without being integral to social scientific or literary circles, as they have been in France. Thus, the contrast between the way in which anthropology is written and practised today is more remarkable when one considers the discipline's earlier phases or, better yet, its earlier phases across national borders. This is arguably the great benefit in reading the history of anthropology as a contemporary anthropologist, and *Far afield* affords this possibility in a dense but well-written volume.

Overall, *Far afield* is an excellent contribution to the history of anthropology and specifically, the history of anthropological writing in France. Given the breadth of the book's scope, it would be too harsh to criticize it for including too little detail on the institutional politics of French anthropology, or for reducing the French anthropological tradition to the canonical lineage of 'Durkheim-Mauss-Lévi-Strauss-Bourdieu' (p. xii). The book is well researched, well translated, and will interest all scholars with a keen interest in the French anthropological tradition or the history of anthropology more broadly.

Reviewed by CHIHAB EL KHACHAB

Junior Research Fellow, Christchurch College, University of Oxford. Address: Christchurch College, St Aldate's, OX1 1DP, Oxford, UK. Email: chihab.elkhachab@chch.ox.ac.uk

MARK FLANDREAU, *Anthropologists in the stock exchange: a financial history of Victorian science*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 2016, xix, 421 pp. ISBN 978-0-2263-6044-7.

Scientific research has always been used and abused by its own practitioners. In *Anthropologists in the stock exchange*, Marc Flandreau explores the dark side of the growth of anthropology in the nineteenth century and shows how that growth fuelled personal ambitions and nationalistic goals.

Flandreau delves into the murky history of the beginnings of the Anthropological Society and its connections with the imperial ambitions of Great Britain under the leadership of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. He describes the symbiotic, if fraught, relationship between the Anthropological and Ethnological Societies and their opposite places in the political divisions of the times.

In Chapter Two Flandreau describes the ascent of an 'alpha male' clique within the Anthropological Society, known as 'the cannibals', whose collective racism and sexism was in

full view in the minutes of the Anthropological Institute. Flandreau takes great pains to point out the differences between the ethnologists and anthropologists and comes down squarely on the side of the Ethnological Institute, accusing the Anthropological Institute of racism and condemning its zeal in supporting Britain's imperial polices of the time.

In support of his thesis, Flandreau details an episode known as the 'Abyssinian Affair'. This tempest in a teapot began in 1864 with the capture of several Protestant missionaries and a British counsel by the Abyssinian ruler, Emperor Tewodros II. Following a series of unsuccessful rescue missions and the fall of Lord John Russell's government, the situation festered, growing beyond the normal parameters of a minor international incident and taking on a life of its own. Thus, in 1868 Prime Minister Disraeli dispatched soldiers from India on a military campaign along with 25,000 camels, elephants, horses and donkeys to resolve the hostage crisis by force. In the end the men were rescued and Emperor Tewodros II committed suicide. Despite the obvious overkill, Prime Minister Disraeli was praised for 'saving the Empire'.

Flandreau discusses the role played by learned societies in this crisis, particularly the Anthropological Institute. In the chapter entitled 'The violence of science' he describes the rise of a new understanding of the influence of anthropology in the political sphere. For the first time, anthropologists were consulted and relied upon for their scholarship and guidance regarding foreign cultures and the decision-making processes of key leaders in foreign cultures and states.

Flandreau goes on to question the timidity of the Ethnological Society in the Abyssinian Affair. He accurately points out that the only learned voices to be raised in the affair came from the clique of cannibals, the group's overt racism playing an instrumental role in the strong-arm resolution of the crisis.

Through the Abyssinian Affair and several other imperial entanglements, Flandreau eventually brings the reader to the heart his work, namely anthropologists and the City of London. The stock market in Victorian Britain embodied all that was associated with a sprawling empire, one nearing the zenith of its preeminent century. This was a time when the British Empire reached not only economically but also socially around the globe. In describing how British dominance was secured in this far-flung empire, Flandreau peels back the social and economic layers to reveal the involvement of anthropologists in the economic empire-building of Disraeli's government.

Flandreau highlights one scheme, the case of the Miskito Indians, an indigenous people who lived on the east coast of Nicaragua. Their territory included an area which had been selected for a proposed railroad to the Pacific shore. Through the personage of anthropology promoter Beford Clapperton Pim, the Anthropological Institute became the British Empire's point man,

negotiating with the Miskito Indians, using his academic knowledge and expertise to obtain permission from a relatively unsophisticated indigenous people to build the railway. This, in turn, paved the way for the financing of a lucrative railroad project, seamlessly attaching the science of anthropology and anthropologists to the London stock market and, ultimately, to British colonial ambitions.

Flandreau makes it clear that anthropology was 'at the elbow' of colonial entrepreneurs in nineteenth-century Britain. In many ways the Anthropological Institute became a victim of its own success, as it tied itself to more and more colonial adventures that, although financially and politically successful, ended up tainting the Institute's independent academic profile.

Flandreau concludes: 'Anthropology was one of the techniques of globalization that developed in an age when the control of the West expanded and operated through the capital market'. This suspect financial–academic symbiosis came up as recently as 2008 when the American Anthropological Association condemned the US Army's Human Terrain System for employing anthropologists in Afghanistan. Although there were significant differences between the mission in Afghanistan and the cases cited in Flandreau's book, *Anthropologists in the stock exchange* reminds the anthropological community that acceptance of the discipline by society at large can come at a cost.

Flandreau points out that scientists and financiers have overlapping requirements. The political/financial community needed the veneer of respectability from the learned societies and the learned societies needed the funding of the financial community. A common ground to be sure, but at what cost?

Reviewed by MILAN STURGIS
Cultural anthropologist, US Department of State, Washington, DC. Email: mssturgishotmail.com

N.C. KAWA, *Amazonia in the Anthropocene: people, soils, plants, forests*, Austin: University of Texas Press 2016, xiii, 186 pp. ISBN 978-1-4773-0844-8.

Nicolas Kawa has carefully crafted what to my knowledge is the first ethnographic account dedicated to bringing to light important questions and discussions regarding our currently Eurocentric approach to the Anthropocene, a term he examines as filled with paradoxes. Throughout each argument, Kawa creatively metamorphoses his personal experiences of Amazonian rural life during his fieldwork in the municipality of Borba into gripping text and imagery, supported by academic resources and historical accounts specific to the region. This

makes for an accessible, intriguing and convincing read, one that is able to shift the reader's perception the next time they engage with the term and the implications of a quickly changing and adapting environment.

Kawa's argument is that the term 'Anthropocene' illuminates an age dominated by humans and the capacity of humans, mainly in industrial societies, to permanently alter the environment. This view results in a complete blindness to other powerful elements that have agency in this process. The understanding *as-is* not only continues to suppress the major roles of rural Amazonian peoples – or *caboclos* – essentially as 'mediators' between the root of the resources and the growth of modernity, while they reap none of the benefits, it also ignores the agency of the environment itself and the deeper non-human movements, impacts and powerful dimensions that can resist human control.

While including interesting historical accounts, lesser known facts, and addressing widespread fallacies, the ethnography importantly conveys in detail what has so commonly been exoticised and stereotyped among Western perceptions of life in the Amazon and people's lives within it. Kawa's research provides the reader with a more profound awareness of the complex scope of human–environment relationships in Amazonia, as well as pointing out flaws regarding the Eurocentric way of looking at nature and culture as divided, so commonly discussed in anthropological literature, yet still foreign to Western knowledge.

Through this, the book engages in material that delves into Amazonian people's relations with and contributions to modernity and the market economy; agriculture and surrounding fertile anthropogenic soils; the agency, influence and powerful properties of 'Amazonian' plants; and the resistance and socialization of forests, as well as other-than-human explanations for occurrences within it, mythological or other. This ethnography will make foggy readers' present understandings of human relationships with others, but in a way that could bring us back to the drawing table to properly re-conceptualize and advance what we know about global climate change. As Kawa concludes, these 'crises of ecological thinking' (131), which prioritize the human, and avoiding incorporating our relations with other elements will only hurt humanity and the future of the region.

This book is well written and enjoyable to read. It would have been interesting if Kawa had expanded more on Amazonian peoples' relationships with spirit beings, which are fundamental to maintaining social stability and equilibrium in many communities of the Amazon. Kawa expands on the significance of both the Cobra Grande and the Curupira, which are often addressed as explanations for certain landscape and environmental conditions and transformations. As already stated, both mythological subjects are embedded within

moral parameters, which will not go unpunished if humans disobey them. In an example provided for the Curupira or 'the mother of the forest', hunters can be punished if they greedily hunt more than their fair share of game (107). Going beyond this, and engaging in more literature that highlights Amazonian peoples' exchange relationships with spirit others to maintain societal and environmental balance, would have contributed to the argument centered on non-human agency and impact. Nevertheless, Kawa's ethnography provides valuable insights for anyone interested in 'the world of the Anthropocene', and it is certainly an important read for those engaged in work or research in or about the Amazonian region and its peoples.

Reviewed by AMAYA NOELLE BAYNE

Holder of an MSc in Social Anthropology, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford. Email: amaya.bayne@gmail.com