Anthropologica

Hopeful words for our time

Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier, Sue Frohlick et Karoline Truchon

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As we finalize this thematic issue, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary published its 2022 word of the year: gaslighting, defined as "the act or practice of grossly misleading someone, especially for a personal advantage." According to the 2022 dictionary's compiled searches, gaslighting became "the favoured word for the perception of deception."[1] Meanwhile, the Oxford Dictionary just identified "goblin mode," in reference to the state of being "unapologetically self-indulgent, lazy, slovenly or greedy," as winning the popularity vote for the 2022 word of the year.[2] Both dictionaries relate the recent popularity of these words with the troubles generated in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

Our current thematic issue, "Dignity, Conviviality, and Moral Contests of Belonging," with guest editor Maisa C. Taha responds to these difficult times. In inviting our readers to reflect on how we can live together with, across, and despite our differences, the issue also reflects on how we might also fail to do so. Based on long-term ethnographic commitments, the six contributions of this thematic issue question the concept of morality based on instances of conflict and failed etic/emic experiences. Jessica Jerome's research in Northeastern Brazil provides a critique of conviviality in exploring the material, political, and infrastructural realities that shape ideals of hospitality and autonomy as well as memories of a past convivial time. After conducting fieldwork among older women, congregants of a Toronto Presbyterian church, Lisa Davidson speaks to the limitations of racially structured realities in highlighting the tension arising between White women congregants and their racialized counterparts who are involved in community mealtime preparations. Maisa C. Taha thinks about the centrality of conviviality among young Moroccans in a national context –Spain –where peaceful coexistence across diversity is promoted, but where tolerance and civility mean something else. Taha shows, with the help of a secret audio recording of a confrontation, how conviviality needs to be

considered as a relational concept which depends on various competing logics. Antonio José Bacela da Silva looks at mundane Brazilian "convivial humour" or *brincadeiras* that reproduce divisive ideologies of exclusion and privilege based on race, class and gender. In adopting a linguistic anthropological approach to discourse, he explores how these jokes are being increasingly dissected by the anti-racist movement. Brendan O'Connor illustrates how teachers and students in two distinct regions of the US-Mexico border treat social differences as a resource for moral stancetaking. And, in looking at the ideological concept of ummah –a united, global community of all Muslims –among young Muslim-Americans active in social justice, Haleema Welji highlights the need to address the intra-group polarization and hierarchical dynamics present in Muslim communities. Last but not least, the piece by Jennifer Ashley, which we feature in our *Film and Exhibit Review* section, converses beautifully with our thematic issue. Ashley looks at how artists supported protesters' call for dignity, respect, and empathy during large protests in Santiago de Chile in 2019. In reflecting on the unique contributions of this thematic issue, in her afterword, Martha Radice eloquently shows how the mechanisms of conviviality and dignity are active and based on social relations that may weave but also provoke social rupture.

As we are progressively thinking about the journal's "multimodal turn," we are extremely pleased to include three pieces in our *Anthropological Reflections* section. The three contributions adopt creative forms of thinking through ethnography. Sue Frohlick proposes a touching and reflexive approach to the process of listening while she commemorates the life of Yoko, a friend and research collaborator. Emma Bider adopts a unique and inspiring poetic approach to thinking about the relations between people and trees. The photo essay by Francisco Rivera looks at urban odonyms and public art that refers to the Chilean dictatorship in Toronto, Laval, and Montreal, and suggests that these artifacts speak to the experiences of the exile community in Canada.

On a final note, our editorial team is growing; we recently welcomed our new associate editor, Dr. Karoline Truchon, who will be supporting us in our "multimodal turn" project, which we hope to complete in 2024. More exciting news will follow shortly.

We wish you the most convivial end of the year, despite all tensions and deceptions. It is our hope that for the years to come, we can take time and energy to "make kin," care, and relate with people who cross our paths.

Notes

1 https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/word-of-the-year. Last consulted: December 6, 2022.

2 https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/goblin-mode-oxford-dictionary-2022-1.6674878. Last consulted: December 6, 2022.