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FORMS AT PLAY: EXPERIMENTS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL WRITING

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

MUHAMMED BERKAN ŞİMŞEK

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Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Ebru Kayaalp

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ÖZET

BİÇİMSEL OYUNLAR: ANTROPOLOJİ YAZININDA DENEYSELLİK

Anlatı ve biçim, antropolojinin doğal öğeleridir. Antropolojinin hikâye anlatıcılığıyla olan yakın ilişkisiyle bağlantılı olarak anlatı ve biçim sorunu her zaman için önemli ve temel bir tartışma noktası olmuştur. Dolayısıyla etnografik kayıtları ve vaka çalışmalarını içeren ifadeye dayalı metinlerde biçim ve tarz da ciddi şekilde değişkenlik gösterir. Bu durum, genellikle kurgusal edebiyatta rastlanan hipermetin ya da doğrusal olmayan anlatılar gibi belirli deneysel eğilimlerin, içeriği doğru bir şekilde ve tam olarak yansıtabilmek adına alışılageldik uygulamalardan daha fazlasını gerek duyan akademik antropolojik çalışmalarda da karşımıza çıkmasına yol açar. Bu deneysel eğilimleri tespit edip tanımlamak yalnızca konuyla ilgili süregelen tartışmalar için bir kaynak oluşturmakla kalmayıp, akademik çalışmaların anlatı ve biçimine dair de yeni ve özgün bir perspektif sağlayabilecektir.

Bu tez, yakın zamanda yayımlanan belirli antropolojik çalışmaların anlatı ve biçim bakımından kurgusal yapıtlarla benzerlik göstererek deneysel bir yaklaşım izlediklerini öne sürmektedir. Deneysellik ve antropoloji yazınındaki güncel yönelimleri derinlemesine inceleyebilmek adına seçilen iki eser, bu çalışma kapsamında tartışılacaktır: Annemarie Mol'un yazdığı *The Body Multiple: Oncology in Medical Practice* ile Ana Lowenhaupt Tsing'in *The Mushroom at the End of the World* isimli kitabı. Yapılan incelemeyle birlikte bu çalışma, kurgu ile kurgudışı yazın arasındaki interaktif bağı ortaya koyarak mevcut akademik çalışmalardaki deneysel anlatı ve biçimleri de açığa çıkaracaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: deneysellik, anlatı, biçim, antropoloji

ABSTRACT

FORMS AT PLAY: EXPERIMENTS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL WRITING

Narrative and form are intrinsic parts of anthropology. Due in part to anthropology's close relation with storytelling, the problem of narrative and form has always been one of the most relevant and prominent points of debate. When a study includes a story-focused approach, such as an ethnographic recount or a case study, reliance on the narration and other writing elements is included but not limited to form and style increases dramatically. This causes the use of experimental inclinations that can be fundamentally encountered in fictive literature, such as hypertexts or non-linearity, in anthropological studies on the occasion that the content requires to exceed the orthodox practices. Tracing and identifying these experimental inclinations would contribute to the ongoing arguments on the issue, as well as providing a fresh and original perspective towards the narrative and form of academic works in general.

This thesis argues that specific recent anthropological studies show an experimental tendency with their narrative and form in a similar way with the fictional works that embrace an experimental approach. In order to analyze the experimentalism and the current shifts in anthropological writing in depth, two works that reflect the aforementioned tendencies have been selected: *The Body Multiple: Oncology in Medical Practice* by Annemarie Mol and *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* by Anna Tsing Lowenhaupt. By reviewing these works, this study will prove the interactive relation with fiction and non-fiction, as well as illuminating the change towards an experimental narrative and form in the current academic works.

Keywords: experimental writing, narrative, form, anthropology

ÖNSÖZ

Bu tezin yazım aşamasının başından sonuna kadar değerli öneri ve katkılarıyla bana rehberlik eden sevgili danışmanım Doç. Dr. Ebru Kayaalp'e, sabrı için eşim Firdevs Ev'e ve araştırma süreciyle ilgili akademik yönlendirmeleri için Merve Şen'e teşekkürlerimi sunarım.

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İstanbul, 2021

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"Self-consciousness about modes of representation (not to speak of experiments with them) has been very lacking in anthropology." (Geertz 1973: 19)

"As a young woman I'd wanted to be a writer, but I became a cultural anthropologist." (Behar 2011: 108)

INTRODUCTION

Representation

In her short essay "Believing Anthropology as Literature", Ruth Behar recalls the intriguing dialog she had with her editor before the publication of her book, *An Island Called Home*. Her editor suggested that they should consider omitting the line in the blurb stating that the book is a work of "cultural anthropology," since it would not appeal to the general reader, and scare them away by giving the impression that it is a textbook-like academic work – or as Behar's editor puts it, "boring stuff" (ibid: 108). This straightforward conversation caused Behar to reevaluate her approach towards her two different "identities" as an anthropologist and as a writer, and discover the balance between them. She frankly admits the fact that her work does not represent "what most anthropologist consider anthropology"; however, she also does not cease to defend the necessity for comprehensibility, and embraces the idea that "artistic longing feeds the creative spirit in anthropology." (ibid: 108) She does not merely approach her work as academic texts, but considers them as an output of a creative writing process.

Undoubtedly, Behar's inquisition regarding anthropological writing is not a new phenomenon. Following the refiguring in social thought, anthropology has also adapted a "new understanding of the complexity of language" and "attention is given to the significance of communicative interaction." (Costa 1999: 137) With the introduction of the linguistic turn, anthropological work has gained a fresh perspective, and became more than merely "keeping good field notes, making accurate maps, 'writing up results.'" (Marcus 1986: 2) This new understanding led anthropologists to embrace the idea that "the boundaries between art and science are permeable and to recognize that ethnography is, at its best, a partial truth, consisting of subjective representations and constructions of reality." (Frank 482) Of course, the anthropologists' experience of the linguistic turn was slightly "more eventful" than of historians, since the arrival of a literary consciousness to anthropology "leaves disciplinary debates to focus upon and problematize both the textual expressions of knowledge and the career process that generates them." (Marcus 1986: 263)

Since the first appearance of anthropology as a scientific study, "narrative" has been one of the most problematic and debatable topics regarding the context of the term. The anthropologists' stance between the fictional narrative and academic study has been regularly disputed over due in part to the anthropological case studies' tendency towards fictional works as a result of the **field's interests**[1] and data collection methods, such as personal narratives. This intertwined relationship of anthropology and fiction has been thoroughly investigated by researchers from both fields (among them Levi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz as the prominent names), and whether it would be the use of anthropological methods as a mean to create and build a story, or taking advantage of fiction's ability to create a solid atmosphere and an intriguing narrative in order to make a work of anthropology more appealing. One of the most striking examples of such experiments is Katherine Frank's account in which she writes a short story based on her research on sex industry and her participant observation, as well as an article depicting her narrative choice between a work of fiction and an academic study. In this work, she states that fiction works better as a tool to "portray the complexity of a situation", "broaden the researcher's audience", and "affect readers at an immediate and emotional level." (Frank 2000: 483) Through such experiment, she argues that "writing fiction has the potential to restructure [her] ideas about the issues that [she] study," and she would not "advocate anthropology as a literary enterprise," though fictional techniques may be used in an academic study to "evoke a mood, conversation, or setting" as long as this fact is "explicitly stated." (ibid: 485)

Experimentalism

Thus, in relation to debates on anthropological narrative, I argue that the intertwined relationship between fiction and anthropology, the permeability of their scope and the obscure line in-between that often tends to disappear do not merely affect the anthropological studies' narrative, but also affects the "form" as well. As a comparative, adaptable, and intertextual field, anthropology highly remains under the influence of newly emerged literary movements, the unprecedented narrative

[1] ...field's interests: Just a quick review of even the first sentences of books which have been awarded with The Gregory Bateson Book Prize, one of the most distinguished honors within the academic scene of anthropology can provide the necessary example regarding the close relationship between anthropology and fiction.

The winner of the 2018 Gregory Bateson Book Prize, Louise Meintjes for *Dust of the Zulu: Ngoma Aesthetics after Apartheid*

First Sentences (which may easily be the opening sentences of a captivating novel): "A summer afternoon in Msinga, wind. The rasping against the ear. The wrapping around the body. The covering of the voice. The lift and billowing of dust." (Meintjes 2017: 1)

The winner of the 2017 Gregory Bateson Book Prize, Susan Lepselter for *The Resonance of Unseen Things: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny*

First Sentences (in which Lepselter seems to directly states that the book consists of stories): "This is not a book about UFOs. It's not a history of UFO belief, nor a sociology of believers. Rather, this is a book about a vernacular American poetics, something you can hear building up in the stories I will tell." (Lepselter 2016: 1)

The winner of the 2016 Gregory Bateson Book Prize, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing for *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

First Sentences (again, a highly personal anecdote with a strong sense of fictional narrative rather than an academic study):

> "What do you do when your world starts to fall apart? I go for a walk, and if I'm really lucky, I find mushrooms. Mushrooms pull me back into my senses, not just –like flowers– through their riotous colors and smells but because they pop up unexpectedly, reminding me of the good fortune of just happening to be there. Then I know that there are still pleasures amidst the terrors of indeterminacy." (Tsing 2005: 1)

methods appear along the line of these movements, and contemporary media in conjunction with **technological developments**[2]. These aspects, of course, take place in an experimental manner, which end up being correspondingly adapted by anthropology.

Of course, it would be quite irrelevant to assume that anthropological study would be out of the reach of developments within experimental narrative as well as the changing nature of the concept of writing.

> There are shifts in the forms of scholarly communication, or at least in the ecology of the present expansion of digital possibilities, and their effects on the ethnographic genre of research and writing […] Less baroque forms of ethnography must find their richness, I argue, outside now established theoretical traditions of critical ethnographic writing, and the appeal of alternative forms of articulating thinking, ideas, and concepts inside or alongside the challenge of situating and managing the fieldwork process […] (Marcus 2015: 36)

As a result, throughout my thesis, my focus will be on determining these experimental elements in anthropological studies, and their effect on form and narrative.

Before proceeding, for the sake of the argument and scope of the topic, it is quite essential to resolve and provide a specific definition of narrative and formal "experimentalism". Undoubtedly, at this point, it would be quite beneficial to refer to the broad volume of *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*, one of the most comprehensive books that show the limits and context of textual experimentalism along with its historical development and background.

> Experimental literature […] is irreducibly diverse. Unfettered improvisation and the rigorous application of rules, accidental composition and hyper-rational design, free invention and obsessively faithful duplication, extreme conceptualism and extreme materiality, multimediality and media-specificity, being 'born digital' and being hand-made – all of these, and many others, are ways of being experimental in literature. (Bray, Gibbons, & McHale 2015: 1)

Although such a definition gives us a thorough explanation of what *is* experimentalism, it also leaves us with quite a broad range, since the definition basically proposes that experimentalism cannot be merely contained within the limit of the "act of writing". Thus, in terms of determining the concept's borders, the question of "how" carries significance as well.

[2] …technological developments: Though it sounds vague and far-fetched, it is not such a challenging task to find exemplary cases that support the argued impact of technological developments on anthropological studies. As it will be also mentioned on the first chapter in detail, hypertext, which has been invented by Ted Nelson, who "attempted, as a term project, to create a 'writing system' that allow[s] users to store their work, change it, and print it out" in order to "keep track of all the divergent paths of […] thinking and writing" (Wolf 1995), has caused anthropologists to question the necessity for a linear narrative within their studies. The hypertext format, which has been the root of the very Internet we use today and allows authors and readers to follow different reading paths, had the "potential to capture the complexity and multi-layered character of culture and experience better than a linear account". (Fiadotau 2015: 59) Two anthropological works that will be the basis of this thesis's argument, *The Body Multiple* and *The Mushroom at the End of the World* may also be considerable examples of hypertextuality in non-fiction for reasons that will be explained in detail in respective chapters.

> In terms of their basis, textual experiments can be divided into two categories: some experiments remain "within text", and use this discipline's own sources. […] Some experiments, on the other hand, make use of other discipline's accumulations, their advancements and their very own experiments. (Akaş 2003: 44)

Through these **definitions and the limits they provide**[3], I will trace the reflection of textual experiments that have taken place in literary texts on anthropological studies, their narrative and form.

Works

In order to accomplish this, I will fundamentally focus on two anthropological works that shows the relationship between the experimental approaches regarding narrative and form quite distinctly with their different aspects. The first one is *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice* (2013) by Annemarie Mol, a study of medical anthropology published by Duke University Press. In *The Body Multiple*, through various philosophical and anthropological aspects, Mol investigates the process of diagnosis and treatment of atherosclerosis, a disease that prevents the vessels to carry blood due to plaques occluding the vascular access – it can be basically defined as thickened vessel walls. Considering how she refers her book as a "work in empirical philosophy" (Belek 2014) despite its apparent inclination towards medical anthropology, her method of research also diversifies, and follows two separate but related pathways. The first path includes Mol's ethnographic approach, her description and analysis of the "ethnographic material" of interviews, field reports, and remarks on certain case studies. The other path, on the other hand, provides a literary review of relative fields: consideration and critique of other academic studies on the subject in question. What makes Mol's work valuable for this study, however, is its *form* that seems to be quite extraordinary for such a study, rather than the context or content. In *The Body Multiple*, the two aforementioned perspectives reflect on the form of the book, and show themselves as two juxtaposed

[3] …definitions and limits they provide: One of the most detailed account regarding the characteristics of experimental texts (or "multimodal literature", as it has been said) can be found in Alison Gibbons' work, *Multimodality, Cognition, and Experimental Literature*. In the book, she lists the peculiarities of novels as follows:

1. Unusual textual layouts and page designs
2. Varied typography
3. Use of color in both type and imagistic content
4. Concrete realization of text to create images, as in concrete poetry
5. Devices that draw attention to the text's materiality, including meta-fictive fiction
6. Footnotes and self-interrogative critical voices
7. Flipbook sections
8. Mixing of genres, both in literary terms, such as horror, and in terms of visual effect, such as newspaper clippings and play dialogue (Gibbons 2014: 2)

All in all, it seems way more explanatory and useful than the sources I mention in inline text in terms of limitation. However, these very same traits also have the potential (or risk, if I may) to make a distinction between experimental literature and non-fiction almost impossible. As it will be presented in the following pages, most academic studies already use a fair number of these characteristics attributed to experimental literature, either to provide a better understanding for their audience (such as unusual page designs and varied typography), or as a natural structure of a non-fiction work (self-interrogative critical voices and mixing of genres that can be found in many interdisciplinary studies). Thus, rather than an item-by-item analysis, it would be most efficient to use a definition of experimentalism that at least "supposes" a distinction between fiction and non-fiction.

texts, one flowing at the top of the page and one at the bottom simultaneously, creating a duality that provides a peculiarity noticeable with a single glance at the page, as well as an unusual reading experience. (See Appendix, Image 1)

In the Preface to her book, Mol draws a comparison between the book's form and the habit of frequently changing channels while watching television, giving us another strong point that illustrates the effect of technological developments and the routine they create on writing style and form.

> Readers who regularly surf between television channels will find this book easier to read than those who don't, since they are likely to find out how to shift between the upper text and the subtext more quickly. Others will have to invent a way of reading that works for them from scratch. (Mol 2007: ix)

Nonetheless, this format proves *The Body Multiple* a worthy explanation to be reviewed through the perspective of experimentalism in non-fiction.

The second work I will use to support my argument, which suggests an intertwined relationship between forms of experimental literature and anthropological studies, is *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (2017) by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, an anthropological quest in the pursuit of the most valuable mushroom in the world published by Princeton University Press. In the book, Tsing follows the great adventure of *matsutake* mushroom from production to consumption, illuminating the agents involved in the process. She uses an anthropological approach to analyze the lives and motivations of the communities and people who harvest and pick matsutake. It embraces a political economic approach to understand the capitalist arguments that legitimize the exploitation that is taking place behind the curtains, and an ecological approach to make clear the destruction (or more relevantly the *use* of destruction) of nature.

The Mushroom at the End of the World is included to this thesis again for its form that is not radical but quite unusual indeed for an academic study. In her book, Tsing's way of writing and her design of chapters as well as the rule of segmentation she embraces show her efforts to make the work more reachable and interesting in addition to the topic's vague allure. The book is structured as short chapters (some of them as short as two pages) that build the story in a fragmented way. (See Appendix, Image 3) Just like Mol, she explains why she chose such a design in the introduction of the book, as follows:

> Unlike most scholarly books, what follows is a riot of short chapters. I wanted them to be like the flushes of mushrooms that come up after a rain: an over-the-top bounty; a temptation to explore; an always too many. The chapters build an open-ended assemblage, not a logical machine; they gesture to the so-much-more out there. They tangle with and interrupt each other – mimicking the patchiness of the world I am trying to describe. (Tsing 2017: viii)

As it can be realized, the form of the book has been highly affected by the context, and their interrelation along with the permeability reflected upon the text as an experimental element that influences its form, and manifest itself as a tool that influences the length of the chapters.

A similar conclusion can be reached through the "image captions" placed at the beginning of each chapter rather than the usual format in which they are included below the relevant image. (See Appendix, Image 3) These captions do not only provide emphasis for a segment that needs to be highlighted or tends to be overlooked by the reader, but also function as stopping points to change the perspective towards the text and (inevitably) the story. *The Mushroom at the End of the World* is quite a visual study with strong descriptions of many components from matsutake mushroom itself to the lively buyer's market.

> I couldn't have imagined a more unpromising-looking forest. The ground was dry and rocky, and nothing grew except thin sticks of lodgepole pine. There were hardly any plants growing near the ground, not even grass, and when I touched the soil, sharp pumice shards cut my fingers. As the evening wore on, I found one or two "copper tops," dingy mushrooms with a splash of orange and a mealy smell. (ibid: 13)

While creating a picture with the use of text, the sudden interruptions of the images and the brief explanations force the readers to reverse their process, putting them in a position in which they have to work their way through from the image-to-text with a clue as little as a caption. (See Appendix, Image 4) This technic provokes the readers' interest, and establishes a formative dysfunction on the page due to its alienated placement, in terms of academic writing, creating yet another **experimental aspect of the text**[4]. This relationship between content, narrative, and form proves *The Mushroom at the End of the World*'s suitability for a study trying to determine the experimental leaks into academic writing.

Method

In order to elaborate and prove my argument, I will divide my thesis into three main parts. The first chapter will provide a basic literary review regarding the narrative background of the anthropological studies: what have been said and what have been discussed. In this chapter, I plan to focus on the connection between the fiction and non-fiction on the basis of anthropological studies, simultaneously followed by footnotes regarding literary development of experimental fiction that will

[4] ...experimental aspect of the text: While I was in middle school, I bought a copy of *Paradise Lost* by John Milton. While I was going through pages, I found myself quite enchanted by the book not because of the story of the mesmerizing language that I learned to appreciate years later, but because of the fact that the lines were irregularly disappearing from the pages, leaving time to time page-long absences. It took a while for me to realize the book was *not* originally designed as such, and it was just a printing error.
Accordingly, be it an error or a publishing decision, it is always a frustrating process to determine whether an experimental element is initiated by the author, or caused later on with an inconsequential reason in mind. However, for the sake of the argument, and for there is nothing to oppose us to think contrarily, in this paper, I will assume that all experimental attempts are the result of the deliberate choice of the authors.

support my initial argument. The two consecutive chapters will include the narrative and formative analysis of the two works mentioned above, *The Body Multiple* and *The Mushroom at the End of The World*, within the given borders of the academic writing.

As it has been foreshadowed in the introduction section that you are reading, time to time, the main text will lead to different paths, which I hope to keep it out of the playground of my own argument in order not to disturb the linearity of the thesis; however, they can be pursued in the footnotes I provided without infiltrating the limits of the thesis structure.

Why

Despite the defined approach towards experimentalism and its proposed interrelation with anthropological studies, the fundamental question regarding such an argument still remains: Why experimental literature relevant to anthropology? Why is it significant to determine the influence of certain literary narrative and formative techniques on the academic works of anthropology? Apart from a good deal of personal reasons, such as my own inclination towards experimental literature and any experiment on a textual level in general, or being desperate to catch a glimpse of like-minded scholars on the academic scene, it is also apparent that the aspects that we used to consider irrelevant has become quite functioning elements in the endeavor of a text's academic and literary success. As it has been mentioned, with the current movements as well as the appearance of varied media and technological developments directly or indirectly related to textuality, the way of writing and the reviewing of the already existing materials have changed dramatically. Postmodernism changed our approach towards the narrative point of view; hypertext challenged our outlook on linearity, and we have, as writers and academics representing both sides of fiction and non-fiction, reached to a point in which our texts cannot be merely evaluated with what they tell, and each and every element that we can associate with the text should be also taken into account before we come to a conclusion about it. Times are a changing: we will never be the same, and neither the texts we create. Thus, it carries quite a significance to realize this link, acknowledge it, and take it into consideration during the creation or evaluation process. Furthermore, although the relationship between literary texts and anthropological studies has been referred frequently, the aspect of experimentalism and its effects so far remained unmentioned on an academic level. I hope that this thesis will shed light on the apparent connection, and will become an encouraging starting point for those who wish to study the narrative opacity in regards to experimental forms and narratives.

I. EXPERIMENTS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL FORM AND NARRATIVE: A BRIEF HISTORY

> Humans are story-creating and story-telling animals. We live by stories, we remember by stories and we dream by stories. In a very real sense we domesticate this wild world of ours by narrative. It is little wonder that anthropology, as the holistic study of the human animal, would find a place for narrative within its disciplinary boundaries, even if it is at the fringes. (Reck 1983: 8)

This short quotation does not fail to represent our deep connection with storytelling, as throughout the history of humanity, we created stories, we made them a source for further analyzing, turned them into a study, shaped our lives around them from time to time or some of us were able to keep their distance with them, remaining in an objective position while still feeling their lurking presence. We tell and are told by stories. What Reck's argument fails to mention, however, is the changing nature of the act of storytelling. Just as our stories change, the way we share them do as well. In a **Queneauian loop**[5], the manner and form of narrative is constantly developing, for good or bad, and to me, forcing us to become aware of this process and review our academic approach depends highly on the toolset of storytelling.

In this chapter, instead of trying to demonstrate the history of the development of anthropology as a scientific field, which would be an inadequate attempt on any account, I will focus on its transformation as a narrative mean. My main objective here is to present the relevancy of experimental forms and narratives with anthropological studies, as well as providing a core knowledge that would help to make sense of the further review of the aforementioned specific texts.

Looking into the debates around the anthropological narratives and their study on an academic level, it can be realized that the real shift in anthropological writing has been experienced came with the appearance in of postmodernist approach in mid-20th century. In order to understand what postmodernism really means for anthropology, we may take a look at Alan Barnard's enlightening work, *History and Theory in Anthropology:*

> Postmodernism constitutes a critique of all 'modern' understandings. Postmodernists define what is 'modernist' as what is all-encompassing; they reject both grand theory in anthropology and the notion of completeness in ethnographic description. On the latter score, they oppose the presumption of ethnological authority on the part of the anthropologist. Thus reflexivity, and ultimately embodiment, came to the fore. In a wider sense, postmodernist anthropology takes its cue from critical studies of 'orientalist' writing and levels its critique at the creation of the 'other' (and consequent definition of the 'self ') as the driving force of all previous positions in the

[5] ...Queneauian loop: In his book *Exercises de style* published in 1947, Raymond Queneau tells the same paragraph-long story in 99 different forms, making the title a goldmine for anyone who is remotely interested in experimental writing, as well as fundamentally proving why the way we tell stories as significant as what we tell.

> discipline. Postmodernism is also a logical development of both relativism and interpretivism, so much so that it is difficult to isolate these perspectives except superficially – by chronology, vocabulary, or style of writing. (Barnard 2004: 182)

This explanation also states clearly that postmodernism "challenge[s] ethnographic authority … with some claiming that the much-touted new experimental ethnographies are indistinguishable from literary fiction." (Darnell 2008: 50) As mentioned in the epigraph of this chapter, too, the boundaries between anthropology and fiction have always been blur. Anthropology's dependency on life histories, for instance, inevitably give even highly academic studies a fiction-like character. One of the strongest examples to support this argument would also be the fact that "many of the pioneers of American anthropology felt quite comfortable, even compelled, to write ethnographic fiction," since they fondly believed that "such fiction can make to the broad anthropological goal of understanding all facets of the human experience." (Reck 1983: 9) Accordingly, with the rise (or discussion) of the postmodernist approach where the narratives multiply, the linearity is disturbed, and unfamiliarity reigns either in terms of narrative or form, the humanities were affected and the studies have begun to reflect these elements attributed to postmodernist fiction. At this point, the main concern of many anthropologists, such as Barnard himself who claims that the "real postmodernist challenge to the discipline" is seeing anthropology merely as a "kind of writing" (Barnard 2004: 177), becomes preserving the core anthropological methods and scientific thought while taking advantage of the forms provided by new movements and understandings.

Following postmodernism, another query for anthropology has been the use of digital studies. As computational sciences have become quite a strong asset for many different research methods, anthropologists have become increasingly concerned with the intersection between culture and technology in the twenty-first century. (Underberg & Zorn 2013: 4) The main problem here was the involvement of the anthropologists in their studies. In a world where even the most complex deductions would be easily made with the correct data by the computers, what would be the function of the researcher other than simply to collect the said input?

Still, today, digital ethnography has an undeniable place among anthropological narrative, and it is a valuable method for "representing real-life cultures through combining the characteristic features of digital media with the elements of story." (ibid: 10) In its acceptance, the most significant role falls into its efficiency. As Underberg and Zorn puts, "Whether in the realm of using computer tools for data analysis, using hypertext itself as a distribution and communication medium for scholarship, or contributing to culturally oriented database design, anthropologists are finding digital media increasingly useful in their research." (ibid: 86)

And there **comes experimentalism**[6], which had a similar reception just as the appearance of digital ethnography. It should be emphasized that since the beginning of the twentieth century, anthropology has put an incredible effort to prove its scientific approach and general utility. For instance, in Britain, "the first part of the twentieth century saw repeated attempts by anthropologists and the Royal Anthropological Institute to convince the Imperial government that anthropology served a useful purpose." (Mills 2006: 56) As a result, during this fragile time in which the balance between the researcher and the researched (object, subject, and participant) has been established and anthropology has developed a neutrality towards its own creation (and production), the necessity of experimental methods that have reached a general though still limited appeal remains debatable for the discipline. Despite this uncommitted stance, their usefulness is still discussed.

> I believe that there could be multiple modes of experiment or experimental forms that ethnographers might develop within research processes. Such research processes might involve experiments with participants, or with research partners from other disciplines. They might involve non-conventional (for ethnography) forms of doing and authoring research, such as using the workshop as method. (Pink 2018: 207-8)

As can be seen, experimentalism is transcended from content, narrative, form, and method. Furthermore, all these elements are interconnected, and it would not be plausible to separate them from each other while discussing one. Thus, from this perspective, experimentalism is just a way to develop a new kind of relationship between these elements, rather than being an unnecessary attempt to make things more complicated and chaotic. As Gibson states, narratology is long "steered away from an old-fashioned conception of 'form' as always in some sense subordinate to 'content' to a new concern with the 'content of form,'" (Gibson 1996: 32) making experimentalism another consequence, another link that ties the **content and form**[7].

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[6] ...comes experimentalism: The experimental tendencies in literature has quite a long history, and "certain text display [the experimental] feature far more prominently than others, quite regardless of period;" (Motte 2018: 1) however, for the sake of this study, we will limit the experimentalism with "deliberate effort" firstly, meaning that we will start the experimental literature with the conscious choices the authors have made in order to be free of the "used-upness of certain forms" or "the exhaustion of certain possibilities," as Barth defined the "literature of exhaustion." (Barth 1984: 64) In order to avoid the early examples of experimental literature according to its aforementioned definitions such as the abjad numerals in Arabic poetry or the early examples of frame narrative, we will limit the topic with post-war examples of experimentalism, since many of the general features, and even some of the specific practices, of experimental literature of the second half of the century were anticipated by the avant-garde groups of the period from just before the Great War." (Bray, Gibbons, and McHale 2015: 4)

[7] As it has been mentioned before, there is an unfortunately unfair tendency to consider experimental writing as things that "look funny on the page." (Cheuse 2012). Gerald Prince, for instance, gives a lovely description for experimental text:

> In fact, the experimental text focuses on –yes!– textual experimenting rather than the expression/constitution of a new social/individual order; it relies on continuity rather than transgression; it favors the composed, the systematic, the programmatic over rupture and rapture. If the postmodernist text is manically (or depressingly!) self-conscious and the avant-garde text hysterical, the experimental text is paranoid. (Prince 1985: 209)

Though it covers almost all grounds regarding the traits of experimental writing, I believe that it does not emphasize the strong connection between the content and form, which in failing to do so, there is always a danger to turn experimental takes into mere formative endeavors or plays. As it will be clear in the discussion of *The Body Multiple* and *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, even though it is easy to determine the experiments in form, their relation with the content is inevitably apparent.

It should be kept in mind that despite its own rules of research and methods, anthropological writing is in fact a "kind of writing" nonetheless, as Geertz would agree, and it is not independent from the process of writing. At this point, the experimental elements may also stem from the "writing" half of the anthropological writing, instead of "anthropological" half. Writing, for instance, is bound to be linear, thus the need for experiments that would break this limit. Writing creates images through words, and thus the need for breaking the ordinary cycle, and creating words through images where it is crucial to provide a different perspective.

> Unlike various other art forms – architecture, visual arts – a written text is linear. One word or image follows another; one sentence or sequence follows another; and when one has finished the book or the film is over, one has sometimes forgotten the beginning. It is even customary to speak of a double linearity: that of the text, the series of sentences or sequences; and that of the fabula, the series of events. (Mieke Bal, 2017: 68)

In the two books that will be the subject of this study, we can see the reflection of this understanding. Experimentalism, as will be discussed, is used when there is urgency for exceeding the boundaries of writing's linearity as in *The Body Multiple*, or reflecting an image of the content with the use of the form as in *The Mushroom at the End of the World*.

In *Experimental Collaborations*, Pink states that the "anthropological ethnography is beginning a new critical revisionist wave," (Pink 2018: 209) and I do not only wholeheartedly agree with this statement, but also argue that experimentalism is a crucial part of this inevitable change.

II. DUALITY OF TEXT: ANNEMARIE MOL'S *THE BODY MULTIPLE*

Presentation and Concerns

In one of his delightful performances, Irish comedian Dara Ó Briain comes up with quite an interesting observation. "Video games," he says, "do a thing that no other industry does. You cannot be bad at watching a movie. You cannot be bad at listening to an album. But you can be bad at playing a video game, and the video game will punish you, and deny you access to the rest of the video game. … You've never been reading a book, and three chapters in the book has gone, 'What are the major themes of the book so far?'" (Universal Comedy 2010)

This basic deduction immediately reminds me the frustrating academic books that I have to let go at some point, without reaching the final page, because I lacked the means to follow or understand what is presented. Non-fiction at the very least has this similarity with the video games: if you are not well equipped, if you are not knowledgeable enough, basically, if you are not good at the specific topic at hand, you will not be able to have a complete comprehension of the book. In accordance with the polemical approach towards experimental forms summarized in the introduction and the representation problems in anthropology outlined in the first chapter, the question we must ask ourselves at this point in regards to "readability," "comprehensibility," and "access," is how experimentalism could be positioned on this matter.

Though I hope that the first chapter provides a basic schematic regarding the appearance as well as the development of experimental narrative in literary and anthropological texts, there is still one crucial question stands: Why? Why do authors and researchers feel the need for complex forms, multilayered narratives, and a shattered linearity? What could be the motivation behind experiments in form and narrative?

In this chapter, I will discuss Annemarie Mol's brilliant study *The Body Multiple*, which I argue that with its unusual structure, ever-changing narrative voice and original contribution to academic storytelling, it will provide a tremendous example of experimental writing, and reify certain issues mentioned in the previous chapter, in conjunction with the aforementioned debate on reason and motivation (or to be more precise, readability, comprehensibility, and access). While analyzing the work, I will first provide a chapter-by-chapter **summary of the book**[8] along with a brief insight

[8] …summary of the book: At this point, you may inquire that why the *content* would be relevant, since the main argument of this thesis takes its roots from the *form*. Though it should be clear by now, it would quite helpful to emphasize the specific limits we have drawn for the definition of experimentalism. The *form*, or unusual formatting, both in creative and academic writing, does not assure the quality of the text, neither it is used to make a text simply "unreadable". It is obvious that the experimentalism "refuse[s] to fit to the familiar, the conventional and the already known … by defying attempts to make it yield a narrative" (Pyrhönen 2018: 4); however, it is not simply (most likely to be wrongfully quoted from Frank O'Connor) "what looks funny on the page" (Cheuse 2012) anymore. Thus, it is significant to determine the relationship between the

towards its argument and method, and then present my own ideas and thoughts on its form and stylistic preferences in order to link and include the book into the general literature of experimental writing mentioned in the previous chapter.

Summary

The Body Multiple is a *philosophical* inquiry of atherosclerosis of the leg arteries. There is a reason for my emphasis on the philosophy, because in the book, Mol has a philosophical argument as well, in addition to the anthropological one. *The Body Multiple* focuses on the concept of unity and duality, and tries to explain these aspects through the contradiction between the definitions and the enactments of the disease. Mol, in the most essential sense of the argument, suggests that there has to be a defiance of the unity. According to her, the medical profession until now has been thought to be a unity, but it is not; each disease and each treatment require its own ethnographic and philosophical approach, just as they are the concern of different medical fields. The reality, she argues, until now have been thought to be singular, yet it is multiplied as the different parties experiencing it present varied and new ways of understanding of seemingly singular facts. There is an act of *enacting* realized by the patient, as well as the disease itself.

The book consists of many sub-stories that support this point along with many more which provide a solid interpretation of what is thought to be the perception-focused reality.

> Whatever the condition of her body before she entered the consulting room, in ethnographic terms Mrs. Tilstra did not yet have this disease before she visited a doctor. She didn't *enact* it. When all alone, Mrs. Tilstra felt pain when walking, but this pain was diffuse and not linked up to a specific walking distance on flat ground. The trouble Mrs. Tilstra encountered when she tried to walk her dog did not yet have the shape that emerges when she answers her doctor's questions. (Mol 2007: 22-3)

The Body Multiple questions the patients' place in *reality* – how they affect the experience of illness, how they perceive and how this perception changes the familiar conception on a certain disease. According to Mol, the reality is not a single-layered truth, which is experienced through the same means by all the actors; rather, "reality *does* exist, but only as a perpetual, infinite process, of which the current state of affairs is merely an effect." (Belek 2014)

In the effort to support this point, the use of anthropology and ethnography remains on the level of research method. As it has been mentioned before, the fundamental focus is on the philosophical side of the issue, and anthropological deductions are not the main concern of the book. Thus, instead of developing an anthropological argument, the book simply uses the prominent

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content and the form while analyzing the experimental tendencies of a text – experiments in form are as relevant as their connection with the content.

methods of the field, such as interviews and human stories, in order to support the philosophical argument.

The opening chapter of *The Body Multiple* reveals Annemarie Mol's aims and methods in detail. She attends a hospital in the center of the Netherlands once or twice a week for four years in order to "investigate the way the tensions between sources of knowledge and styles of knowing are handled inside present-day allopathic medicine" (Mol 2007: 1) where she observes the patients' experience with and the doctors' approach towards atherosclerosis. She explains how she accomplishes to be a part of the hospital habitat that grants her access to become a part of the ongoing discussions along with a valuable position to be in contact with patients' doubts and conscious.

The second chapter of the book begins with the author's and the reader's first encounter with the main issue, a diseased foot and a leg. Mol now "moves from the pathology laboratory to the outpatient clinic to the operating theatre" (Broom 2004: 241) and make a direct observation of atherosclerosis – a disease that she has been theorizing and maybe even *idealizing* for quite some time. During this process, she gets the chance to understand the standard protocols in the initial doctor-patient meeting, and specify the first steps of the enactment of this illness by the patient: how it is presented and how it is perceived. One of the most compelling issues Mol faces in this chapter is the radical shift in the professional language and medical jargon the doctors use, since according to Mol's observation, "the requirements for enacting disease in a clinical way are no longer met once a patient is dead." (Mol 2007: 34)

Of course, due to the involvement of the operating room, unavoidable gore details also present themselves within this chapter. Mol does not hesitate to provide detailed and long, descriptive passages regarding the atherosclerosis operations and amputation cases, and an intense imagery that reminds the "medical" burden of the topic is dominant in this chapter. (See Appendix, Image 2)

Another especially significant point that we need to refer here is the language used in the subtext that seems to give itself away. Although the function of the subtext is determined as the "literature review" and "theoretical background of the issues at hand," the language fails to keep an academic form. It takes, for instance, quite an informal tone with direct addresses to the readers, and self-recognizing statements without the proper quotes. "But who put this into the literature, to draw it out again now, in a quote?" asks Mol at one point, and answers herself, "Hmm, I was one of the authors doing so." (ibid: 42) Such comments and appeals provide a much readable and fluent text without the de facto understanding of academic language.

Third chapter of *The Body Multiple* presents the duality of the disease for the first time. The initial example Mol provides here to support the idea of "multiple body" is the contradiction between the physical deficiencies and the professional's diagnoses. The cases Mol witnesses during her time at the clinic apparently show the fact that the patients' complaints do not collide with the findings of the

doctors and technicians – in which the situation requires to merge the *multiple bodies*. "In the hospital," explains Mol, "*the body* (singular) is *multiple* (many). The drawing together of a diversity of objects that go by a single name involves various modes of coordination," which in this chapter it involves "*add up* test outcomes" and the "*calibration* of test outcomes." (ibid: 84) In relation to this discussion, the identification process of sickness and the decisions for the proper treatment is also debated through the new developments in atherosclerosis remedies.

There are two fundamental aspects that we, as people who will be essentially interested in the form of the book in the following pages, need to focus on. First of all, the discussions inevitably include a highly academic language full of medical and technical jargon. We have mentioned before that the actual challenging episodes of *The Body Multiple* is presented in the subtext, and the organization of the chapters depended on the simple division between the case studies and literature review. However, in the third chapter, the language takes a defying form that arouses a necessity of dictionary. This shift may be interpreted as the transmissivity of the main text and the subtext. They are not mutually exclusive, but in an interrelation. Secondly, the paratext elements also become apparent in the third chapter. The readers are exposed to a series of images and patient files, which are not in correlation with the main "storyline," and used as they are, rather than a descriptive tool. These unusual visual uses strengthen the idea of experimentalism in form considering their detached stand from the text.

Fourth chapter remains as a supporting pillar for the multiple body theory. The first discussions include the cases in which atherosclerosis left incoherent instead of merged into one. Regarding the significance of these cases in regards to multiple bodies, Mol explains: "In treatment practices, atherosclerosis is not turned into a singular reality, either something to be circumvented, or something to scrape away or something to push aside. It's all three of these realities. But not all three at once." (ibid: 102) Throughout the chapter, we are introduced four different types of distribution of atherosclerosis: first, in diagnosis (some identifies the problem directly with x-ray, some uses interviews and examination), second, in treatments over patients (some suggest the necessity of exercise and drugs, some directly proposes vascular surgery), third, about whether atherosclerosis is a "poor present condition" or "gradual process of deterioration", and fourth, over conditions of possibility (a possible drug to cure the problem) – all a part of the reality which we call atherosclerosis. Distributions "multipl[y] the body and its diseases – which hang together even so." (ibid: 117) In addition to these, the internal quarrel between the doctors about the efficiency of specific treatments/distribution of treatments is also emphasized in a way that establishes the duality even more.

Chapter five of *The Body Multiple* basically concerns with "intransivity." So far, the non-human actor was atherosclerosis, and the mentioned duality was about its enactment. However, Mol's sudden realization suggests that the countless "other subjects and objects are present on the scene …

get their actuality" (ibid: 121) as well – be it other diseases or personal affairs that play a significant role in the enactment of atherosclerosis though are not directly in relation with it.

The fifth chapter also homes a strange coincidence that could be interpreted on the same line of the book's duality. During her observation of the atherosclerosis operations, Mol talks about the "switches" she witnesses. "They turn the operation from an intervention in one or more arteries into an intervention in one or more lives. They do not zoom out from the details under the skin to the patient as a whole, but move the camera sideward and focus it on another object." (ibid: 124) Though there is a risk of over-interpretation, it would be also naïve to disregard the correlation between these narrative changes Mol refers as "switches" and the dynamic dual form of the book. Just as the focus of the doctors closely dealing with the problem of atherosclerosis, the book's approach constantly shifts from the case studies to academic review and vice versa. Taking into account our argument regarding the interrelation between the experimental form and the content, this may be a crucial example to emphasize.

More than being a compiling episode that puts all the arguments suggesting "different enactments of a disease entail different ontologies" (ibid: 176) and reality is varied (and *dual*, at the very least), the sixth and final chapter also provides unusual postmodernist inclinations – an uncommon feature when the matter is academic studies. Following the completion of the main material, Mol shares the story of her attempts to have it **reviewed the final product by the professionals**[9]. She discusses her concerns regarding the book's accuracy of the medical term, interrelations between the doctors and the hospital bureaucracy, and the representation of the actors taking a part on different stages of atherosclerosis. In order to create as thorough story as possible, she takes the professionals' opinion about the book, and includes their reviews to the book that enable a more objective approach towards the work.

Form

When we turn our focus into the "form" of the book, it becomes apparent that there are two fundamental questions that need to be answered in relation to the general argument of this thesis. First, how can we position *The Body Multiple* among the varied though limited experimental literature of

[9] …reviewed the final product by the professionals: In 1954, a long and a very strange story called *Ayışığında "Çalışkur"* [Moonlight "Çalışkur"] by Haldun Taner has been published as a separate book. The first part of the book does not differ from its contemporaries in the sense of form and narrative: it basically depicts the life of the people living in an apartment named Çalışkur with a highly colloquial speech. The second part, however, includes the letters involving the reader's reactions to the story, concluded with a third part involving the updated version of the initial story according to these very reactions. The story, obviously, is shaped according to the "duality" of the author and the reader with an absurd attempt to creating a singular outcome through these different realities, where "Taner presents both his own reality along with the readers'." (Mengi 2012: 23) This duality is also emphasized within the experimental form of the story, since the pages on the left shows the original story whereas the right-hand pages exhibit the updated version. First with its page structure that allows the author and the reader to follow two separate paths, then with its inclusion of the "user-reviews" that intervenes with the original text, it would be quite strange not to point out the eerie resemblance of *The Body Multiple* with *Ayışığında "Çalışkur"*.

anthropological works? And secondly, how can we review Annemarie Mol's bold narrative attempts in connection with experimental fiction? In order to tackle these problems in an orderly manner, in this subchapter, I will mainly try to explain the "reasons" of *The Body Multiple*'s experimental inclinations, determining its relevance within the fictive experiments, as usual, in the footnotes in the meantime.

a. Duality

> The footnote is a typical example of a structure that can be seen as both uni- and multicursal. It creates a bivium, or choice of expansion, but should we decide to take this path (reading the foot note [sic]), the footnote itself returns us to the main track immediately afterward. Perhaps a footnoted text can be described as multicursal on the micro level and unicursal on the macro level. (Aarseth 1997: 7-8)

Aarseth's remarks on footnotes, apart from their unique approach, are interesting and relevant for this study for two reasons, which I plan to expand in the following pages. The first point I will focus on is its strong connection with Annemarie Mol's narrative choice in *The Body Multiple* regarding the "main track" and "parallel tracks."

Of course, the most obvious experimental method used in *The Body Multiple*, as it has been and throughout this paper will be, is the divided pages where the case studies are presented on the above-half, and the literature review including references to previous studies as well as relevant academic subjects provided on the below-half. Above, we read a "story" written in an almost-chronological order, having its own plot and development. It shows a great **resemblance to a novel**[10] with its varied characters, the continuous change in their strengths and weaknesses, and the narrative frame that almost provides an introduction, body, and conclusion along with many fictive elements such as conflicts and (mostly ethical) dilemmas, as it has been summarized in the previous subchapter.

Even on a superficial review, it would be quite obvious that the form is not simply an authorial choice, but a consequence of the narrative diversity. We can make a deduction with a very

[10] …resemblance to a novel: In the current status of the literary world, we are in a very strange position when it comes to determining the written works' authenticity – whether they are real or made up, whether they are fictive or informative, especially when you consider the fact that there are reviews that feel the pressure to correctly categorize or explain the books as what they are.
"One can see how misunderstandings might arise," explains M.A. Orhofer, for example, in a review of Peter Senges' exquisite work, *Fragments of Lichtenberg*.

> [It] is a novel, but hardly straightforwardly so. It is a study of Lichtenberg and his work – yet one that is far too freely imagined to be considered academically sound or 'reliable'. There's a great deal of invention here – not just interpretation to the nth degree, but actual fabulation (not that literary scholars don't often indulge in that as well as they read into works and lives…) – and yet the result is a profound (if not, in the academic sense, exemplary) scholarly meditation on Lichtenberg and his work. This is not fictional biography -- nothing like most fictional biography, in fact – and yet the picture of Lichtenberg readers are left with is likely a more complete one of the man and his work than can be found in any traditional (or other fictional) biography. (Orthofer 2015)

Or there are also some realizations regarding the "true" nature of what is fictive and what is scientific: "On closer examination, "realist" fiction and scientific method share certain characteristics: omniscient point of view, separation between subject and object, linear causality." (Lang 2017)

low margin of error that Mol's essential aim was to separate the "fiction-like" and "non-fiction." This simple deduction also proves a very basic point that initially required us to provide a brief summary of the book even though our main concern was the "form" rather than "content". The experimental element, as we may describe it, is the *result* of the content, instead of being a stand-alone characteristic of the text or an artistic intervention. Unlike certain examples of experimental fiction, in this sense, *The Body Multiple* enact experimentalism not for the experiment's sake, but for the benefit of the content, due in part to the elemental distinction between non-fiction and fiction, since the former has to be open, clear, and understandable, whereas the latter may sacrifice the comprehensibility for artistic value. A detailed explanation that would support this commentary without question can be found in Mol's preface, too, which I will refer again further on as well.

> The book draws on a variety of literatures: in philosophy, anthropology, science and technology studies, feminist theory, sociology, political theory. This is the present state of theoretical work: disciplinary boundaries get blurred. And yet I wanted to give you, the reader, a good sense of where this book is situated. I wanted to ground it not only in empirical "material," but also in the intellectual traditions of which it is a product. After hesitating for quite a while about how to do this, I have turned this question into a topic. Throughout this book you will find a subtext, in which I relate to the literature (or, more exactly, to exemplary books and articles) while self-reflexively wondering what it is to do so. (Mol 2007: ix)

Another interesting fact that we can emphasize the mesmerizing relationship between the content summarized above and *The Body Multiple*'s unusual form is the *duality* which can be traced again both inside and outside. In the book, Mol suggests a "duality" which institutes the main argument of her anthological study. As Todkill also emphasizes in her review, *The Body Multiple* proposes "a deep and dualistic divide, as between body and soul" (Todkill 2003: 450), and this division reaches even further levels throughout the book, creating multiple layers each having two separate sides: a duality of disease and treatment, of patient and doctor, of sick and healthy, and on the most intense level, of reality and truth. Taking this contextual fact into account, the dual formatting of the book becomes a much more relevant choice of form, rather than a spoiled manifestation of a creative crisis. The dual formatting, this two-layered narrative is a direct representation of the general theme, presenting a **connection of the form and content**[11] that gives a stronger sense of the necessity of the experimentalism. In this sense, we can see that the choice of the multilayered narrative was not an "experiment for the sake of experiment," but it had a motive that would link the extraordinary

[11] …connection of the form and content: From a literary sense, it is not uncommon to come across with certain applications in which the form and content are intertwined, and they are used as interdependent elements serving to a single cause the book set off to tell. One of the most outstanding examples is, undoubtedly, *The House of Leaves* by Mark Z. Danielewski, which includes an ambitious practice of ergodic play. Throughout the book, "the dynamic interplay between words, nonverbal marks, and physical properties of the page work together to construct the book's materiality so that it functions as a mirror to the mysterious House" in the story. (Hayles 2002: 124) Every form-related experiment, such as the "analogy between the labyrinthine physical form of Chapter IX and the House" (ibid: 122) in footnotes, or the set type where the words are reversed as it would be seen "from the inside of a barbershop window decorated with text" which is "meant to be read from the outside," (ibid: 123) directly relates to the specific points of the story, the content.

formatting to the content. The aforementioned "duality" does not remain on a superficial level; it is not just been *told* but also *shown* – it presents itself in the form. This experiment, above else, helps Mol to "situate[s] herself methodologically and conceptually," (ibid: 451) making the book "whole" in the true sense of the word. Separation, that would ordinarily be considered as a downside in regards to the unity of the text in this case metamorphose into an unexpected method that ties and tidies the otherwise dispersed elements of the text.

b. Fragments

Apart from the page structure, perhaps one of the most apparent characteristics of Annemarie Mol's *The Body Multiple* is its resemblance of a collection of short stories, fragmented pieces of flash fictions. Basically, the story in *The Body Multiple* does not follow a linear path consisting of a single storyline, but keeps developing under a **common thematic**[12], which is the duality of atherosclerosis disease and its perception. The method Mol uses in order to accomplish this is providing not one but a series of case studies that would allow both her and the reader to grasp the aforementioned argument at hand. Though all of the case studies (stories) take place in the same hospital where Mol has chosen for her study, and the doctors (protagonists) remain the same despite the ever-changing patients (supporting characters) in a meta-narrative in which Mol is the main narrator, the stories are highly fragmented, and they echo the influence of flash fiction, since they are straightforward, plot-driven, and mostly pragmatic. Mol, again proving herself as one of the most self-aware non-fiction authors in terms of narrative and style, explains this tendency way better that I can ever do:

> This is a story about practices. About events. And one might not even want to call it a story, for there is no smooth ongoing narrative. Instead, I present you with sketches of separate scenes. With snapshots. They are juxtaposed to each other by way of specification or point of contrast. (Mol 2007: 53)

In addition to this, the use of diverse forms can be interpreted also as a presentation of fragmented structure. Throughout *The Body Multiple*, several different forms can be recognized within the main text such as patient files, letters, interviews with doctors, and prescriptions in a similar way that is the works of postmodernist fictions in which different forms and types of writing are used as the fragments of a larger story. Interestingly, the function of these separate forms do not merely

[12] …a common thematic: This, in fact, in no way a new approach, especially if we consider certain practices of this method in fictional works as well. One of the most profound examples of collected stories interconnected with a single thematic is undoubtedly, Nicholas Mosley's *Impossible Objects*, which includes eight short stories that are loosely in relation with one another, mostly through minimal details that do not mean much. These non-sequential, seemingly irrelevant parts somehow get together in an Escher-like dimension where everything is linked though nothing is actually connected, providing the fact that the "concept" has been to create this multilayered, multiverse-d narrative. Another book that we may mention is a more recent, more avant-garde and more suitable one; *The Facts of Winter* by a fictional Paul Poissel. Consisting of a series of half-a-page stories, *The Facts of Winter* depicts the dreams of Parisian people during the winter of 1881. The stories have nothing in common except that they are "dreamed" in the same geography around same time. Mol's *The Body Multiple*, too, I believe, can be observed from the same perspective as these titles – connected in topic, differs in content, with metafictional commentaries in between.

provide the evidence in accordance with the non-fictional writing practice, but also to *set an atmosphere* that will haunt the text and its philosophical inquiries, considering their frequency (there are way more interruptions than a standard narrative would allow, since the interferences with the main text is tended to be frowned upon), and format (rather than providing these fragments in-text, they are represented in a different style, sometimes page-long italics or full-page scanned visuals). These fragments have the ability to represent the work independently, while creating a non-linear story together on a different layer.

Fragmented literature has been a subject for quite some time now, though it is officially linked with electronic literature, and shares the same ground as hypertexts, which is "a strategy for organizing textual fragments in an intuitive and informal way, with 'links' between related sections of a text or between related parts of different texts in the same retrieval system." (Aarseth 1997: 12-3) In relation to this, "different from the linear and most of the tree-like non-linear narrative structure, fragmental narrative structure breaks the concept of time flow, information of the plot are broken into pieces of debris." (Wang 2017: 65) As such, fragmented structure has the possibility to provide a wide range of opportunities for non-fiction narratives where the main pillars of the argument and text take their roots from independent case studies or interconnected, topic-based examples. More than anything, fragmented structure allows multiple voices in a narrative to be heard. This "polyphony" enables a "chorus of voices and narrative styles to create a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts," it gives meaning at the "intersection of seemingly random plot lines." (Lukas 2013)

When it comes to the medical studies, it can be also observed that narrative competence is a serious component as well, "since not only the story of an illness, but the illness itself unfolds as a narrative," (Charon 2012: 202). Within a literature where the two crucial elements, "treatment" and "suffering" (ibid: 203) have the potential to be in fragments, it would be irrelevant to argue that fragmented narrative is an unorthodox practice **within this literature**[13].

Thus, fragmental narrative is already a part of the medicine. The medicine does not lack plot altogether, and it is inevitable that this *plot* will fall into pieces in a postmodern society. The

[13] …within this literature: Of course, considering its broad impact on the competence of narrative, the use of fragmented structure in non-fiction works is not limited with *The Body Multiple* or medical studies. The most profound examples of this type of structure, for instance, can be found in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractacus Logico-Philosophicus*, where the "decimal numbers assigned to the individual propositions indicate the logical importance of the propositions, the stress laid on them in [Wittgenstein's] exposition." (Wittgenstein 2002: 5) Another great work that should be mentioned is Roland Barthes enviably named autobiography, *Roland Barthes*, including chapters organized in alphabetical order in which small, episodic parts of the author are presented again in a flash fiction-like way. "It must all be," says he in the beginning of the book, "considered as if spoken by a character in a novel." (Barthes 1975: i) Or we can also provide more recent examples, such as David Shields' *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto* first published in 2010. In a way that would merge both Wittgenstein's and Barthes structural practices, this "series of short, sharp provocations: 617 in all, arranged under alphabetical, rather than numerical, chapters," (O'Hagan 2010) tackles the problem of reality and culture, trying to draw a line between fiction and non-fiction in the meantime rather meaningfully in accordance with our thesis. Anthropology, too, as it has been mentioned in the first chapter, has been the object of fragmented structures, since "there have been suggestions of turning anthropology in the direction of a more literary, narrative, usage of metaphors and synecdoche, … oxymoron, … and finally fragmenting, non-continuity, and multiple points of view." (Łebkowska 2012: 32)

fragmental narratives are not a separation, nor they are the fallible pieces of the reality – they are natural causes.

> By definition, a narrative has a plot; that is, it is not only announces [sic] a series of separate events or states of affairs, but also asserts meaningful casual relations among them. ... The engine of narrative is its urge to make *sense* of why things happen, its longing to find or imagine connections among things, either through motive or cause. This might even be true of fragmented postmodern texts that find 'sense' by reconciling to the absence of connections among things. Myths, legends, novels, historical accounts, and admission notes in a hospital chart search for reasons for events, their purposes, their antecedents, their consequences and encode these reasons in their plots. (Charon 2008: 48)

The Body Multiple's arguments, its aims, and its inclination towards "storytelling" rather than being "didactic" make it suitable for such a fragmented narrative.

In the conditions of the contemporary literature, for both fiction or non-fiction, it would be naïve to assume that a piece written in a fragmented structure would be labeled as "experimental," since what we used to considered as experimental such as the radical shifts in time, character jumps, changes in perspective and basically the disturbance of the linearity now just ordinary parts of the mainstream creation. Accordingly, fragmented narrative does not solely and exclusively cause a text to be considered as experimental; such a position though can be achieved through the fragments' relation with other textual elements, as well as its application. *The Body Multiple*, in this case, is *already* divided, as it has been reviewed before. Each chapter, each sub-story and each reference serves to a specific purpose, to a meta-argument that will connect the fragmented pieces both in terms of content and form. Along these lines, it would be irrelevant to disregard the strong experimental annotations of the *Body Multiple*, or exclude it from the borders of experimental oeuvre.

c. Reading Method

As it may be remembered, I have used a quotation from Aarseth about the function of the footnotes while mentioning the duality of the text. "It creates a bivium," it said, "or choice of expansion, but should we decide to take this path (reading the foot note), the footnote itself returns us to the main track immediately afterward." (Aarseth 1997: 7) I have already reviewed how this specific observation can be perceived in regards to the dual form of *The Body Multiple*, and now it is time to see what that means in relation with establishing a reading method.

There is a specific part in *The Body Multiple*'s preface that we keep turning back. In this part, Annemarie Mol briefly explains what to expect from the unique form of the book, and advise the readers about how it can be experienced.

> Readers who regularly surf between television channels will find this book easier to read than those who don't, since they are likely to find out how to shift between the upper text and the subtext more quickly. Others will have to invent a way of reading that works for them from scratch. (Mol 2007: ix)

It is obvious that Mol, or the text she created, *forces* the reader to choose a reading method, since it is not a simple book that can be read from cover to cover in a linear manner. One either prefers to read all case studies on the upper text then switch to the subtext, or they can be read interchangeably according to their references. Regardless of the method chosen, the text's imposition cannot be ignored. This fact, in its essence, supports the argument that *The Body Multiple* does in fact have an interactive narrative that directly affects the **user experience**.[14] From this perspective, *The Body Multiple* can be considered as a very loose example of hypertext, since it embraces a practice "in which the reader chooses the structure and unfolding of the text in her reading actions." (Goody 2011: 122)

Though it is certainly a part of a limited conception, *The Body Multiple*'s generous offer for alternative reading methods does not stand the sole example of reader-focused non-fiction works. Rather, it is an exquisite illustration in a long line of the multiple possibilities that can be applied to the text. While thinking of parallel works that would help us to understand and appreciate the intentions of *The Body Multiple* in terms of its experimental form, one of the first titles would be *Nu dog du: bombernas århundrade* (*A History of Bombing*) by Sven Lindqvist, which is a devastating review of the human condition from the perspective of history, political sciences, cultural studies, and sociology. In the book, apart from providing a personal as well as a cultural report of aerial bombing, Lindqvist also comes up with a messy writing method that would be suitable with the devastation and chaos of the mass destruction weapons:

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[14] …user experience: As a matter of fact, inclusion of alternative reading method is somehow a common trait in fragmented narratives, due in part to their common grounds with hypertexts where the "text chunks are interlinked into a non-linear, interactive, associative network." (Goody 2011: 122) There are a few examples that we can provide to specify what is meant with alternative reading methods.
The first one is B.S. Johnson's famous "box-novel" *The Unfortunates*. The book "comes in a box of 27 unbound chapters … The "First" and "Last" chapters are designated as such. The intervening 25, ranging from 12 pages to a single paragraph, are to be read in any order we choose." (Taylor 2008) This method, which has been imitated and used later on by different authors as well, such as Robert Coover, brings the "incidental" into the reading experience: the story is the same, eventually, but how to perceive the story is completely random.
The second is Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch*, where the linearity of the story is broken, and the reader can jump in between chapters however she likes. While reading, "the reader must also explore, by making strategic choices about alternative paths," (Aarseth 1997: 64) though these choices do not affect the set story.
Another example we can mention in terms of different reading experiences is *Arcadia* by Iain Pears. The book is initially published as a phone application, and among the many intertwining storylines that greets you at the very beginning, "the app allows to choose whichever line you want to follow." (Bultheel 2017: 12) Here, in contrast with Johnson's and Cortázar's use of format, the alternative reading method is provided to ease the reader's practice, and make the already confusing storyline more comprehensible.
Finally, *Running Flat*; a web novel created to exploit the full possibilities of the digital format. The novel has been published on a website, and the reader is able to read their preferred part of the story, instead of being imposed of the storylines they are not interested in.
As it can be realized, these works do not necessarily fall under the category of the aforementioned hypertext, since it would mean a certain ability to affect the story or the ending as a reader. The storyline is "crafted and fixed," as it is with the case of *Running Flat*, and what is within the capability of the reader is to decide "how to experience the story." (Maywar 2015)

> *A History of Bombing* consists of 399 short numbered passages – all less than a page long and organised chronologically. … Having established his chronological sequence, he sets about disturbing it, throwing zigzag paths across it and even joining lanes that would normally be running in opposite directions. The result is a labyrinth, every one of the first 22 passages representing an entrance. At the conclusion of each is an arrow, indicating the next passage to be read, often far into the book. Once embarked on one of these "narratives", each of which casts a distinct perspective on the wider history, the reader will almost certainly get lost. (Wright 2001)

With a formative style similar to Choose-Your-Own-Adventure series in which the reader jumps in-between different pages and sections, Lindqvist gives the reader an option to read the story in a chronological order, or in a way that would allow mostly subconscious connotations. This example, which already suggests that Annemarie Mol is not the only author that experiments in form, strengthens what *The Body Multiple* is set to do by standing at the same front with it: providing a unique, topic-based reading experience.

d. All in All Relevancy with Experimentalism

As discussed, the case stories in *The Body Multiple* are quite well written. They do not merely remain on an academic level that would only appeal the academicians working on the not-so-terribly-overcrowded field of "medical anthropology," but are also able to grab the attention of the general reader. Thus, it can be humbly argued that unlike the popular opinion, experiments in form do not always alienate the readers but *allow* them to engage with the text. Here, the references and the literature review of the topic at hand are not a requirement to follow or *grasp* the text in Mol's double-layered study. They are separated for the attention and consideration to the academicians and researchers without interrupting the story. By using such a method, Mol turns the ever-frightening experimentalism as an element that strengthens the text, increasing the "readability" and making the original, reader-based reading experience possible. This fact is especially noteworthy, since experimental narrative, as also presented in the first chapter, considered to cause a "frustrating unreadability" and "readerly disorientation," (Bekhta 2018: 18) evoking "feelings of discomfort, fear, or worry." (Alber 2009: 83) Mol's "experiment" singlehandedly proves that it is in fact *not* a de facto outcome of experimental forms when applied as such. There is no general rule regarding that each and every experimental "trick" will make the text unreadable. When we compare this fact with Dara Ó Briain's anecdote, it may be said that *The Body Multiple* "gives the access" to a non-academic reader, and it accomplishes this with an experimental form.

There indeed are certain ideas regarding the "nobility" of the academic work, and even some horrible advices suggest that "anthropologists should probably resist the temptation to indulge in the rich and evocative language of creative writing." (Eriksen 1994: 194) According to what we have

learned from Annemarie Mol and her brilliant experiment in form, the fictive elements that leak into academic writing and creative narrative do not necessarily devalue the scientific significance of a text. The current trends in academic works and contemporary inclination towards the new methods of writing readily proves that experimentalism is now a valid *choice* for the academic circle, rather than a taboo that needs to be avoided for the sake of the scientific arguments.

III. MAXIMALIST VIGNETTES: ANNA LOWENHAUPT TSING'S *THE MUSHROOM AT THE END OF THE WORLD*

Presentation and Concerns

When I explain that my thesis is about experimental forms and narratives in anthropological writing to initially curious people, they usually slide over the issue with a polite "Hmm," meaning they have absolutely no interest in further elaboration and they are certainly not among the target audience of this paper, which contains about three people. Considering my own experience, I can easily imagine the reception of Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* by the indifferent readers that I was a part of a little while ago. I am not an avid enthusiast of mushrooms, and my relationship with them remains on the "ingredient" level. They have never been a source of curiosity for me as I have never before even questioned their historical development or process starting from gathering and production to sales. Still, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* instantly triggers the attention since it is not only a book about mushrooms, but "also grappling with specific contemporary ecological problems in what is truly a critical point in human history, requiring experimental methodologies and ideological formulations." (Verinis 2016: 131)

The questions regarding the anthropological narratives that have been mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis is still as relevant as ever; there is a "strong tension between the very 'lively' experiences of fieldwork and the 'deadening' process of writing them down afterwards," causing the ethnographical writing to be "surprisingly boring." (Hovland 2007: 1) Furthermore, the ethnographic books are also blamed to be "dull and technical, brimming with neologisms and tedious theoretical digressions that obscure valuable insights. (Ghodsee 2016: 2) In such environment, experimental narratives and forms become even more relevant and necessary in order to bring another aspect, a new layer to the text as well as the study. Accordingly, I strongly believe that *The Mushroom at the End of the World* is one of the most profound examples of this endeavor and tendency. Despite the fact that there are **other studies**[15], which would very suitably be a part of this thesis due to their highly

[15] ...other studies: Before deciding on Tsing's *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, I have considered many anthropological works with experimental tendencies, as the field does not lack the relevant examples. One of the strongest candidates was *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* edited by yet again Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, as well as Heather Anne Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt. This title, which "tells critical stories about humaninduced environmental change and how it threatens multispecies livability," (Cutler 2019: 1) includes a very clever trick in its form: in order to change between the two parts of the book, "Monsters and the Art of Living" and "Ghosts on a Damaged Planet," the reader has to turn the book upside down. In order to emphasize this necessity along with the diversity between these chapters, both sides of the book represent a cover, and one is always reversed.
This method is not uncommon, too. One of the most prominent names of the experimental Turkish literature scenes, Cem Akaş, uses the same technique in his 1992 novel, *Suç ve Ceza* [Crime and Punishment]. The book is fundamentally about the relationship between murder and literature, and one side of the paperback talks about the issue through the fictional accounts of the protagonist, whereas the other side consists of non-fictional contemplations on the subject.

experimental use of form, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* is the perfect book to enlighten the allure of the experimental narratives and methods even in (seemingly) dull topics.

Summary

In James Joyce's modernist classic *Ulysses*, the soap is first mentioned at page 105. One of the protagonists of the book, Mr. Leopold Bloom goes into a chemist, buys soap at the expense of four pence, and puts the wrapped soap into his hip pocket. (Joyce 2000: 105) From then on begins the soap's own odyssey. Mr. Bloom forgets its existence though it is always there with him, then it changes pockets at certain points only to appear again and become a seemingly vague contribution to the main plot. It is there but it is also constantly reminded. What it actually serves is that

> repeated, scattered fragments of its self-effacing but disruptive appearance succeed in becoming something of a fractured objective correlative of Bloom's day, often signifying his mental […] and physical […] state, as well as the mood and texture of the particular imaginative universe it happens to be located in the moment. (Majumdar 2004: 228)

Fundamentally, to follow the soap is to follow the protagonist. The non-human object constitutes a parallel storyline that develops in the same manner as the main storyline (of course, if such thing exists) of *Ulysses*.

The Mushroom at the End of the World starts off its journey in a very similar way; in this case, instead of the soap, the non-human element takes the form of a mushroom, namely, *matsutake*. Throughout the book, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing follows the footsteps of matsutake, of course with a little bit more self-consciousness compared to Leopold Bloom, and investigates this much valued mushroom in all its phases from its gathering to consumption. Considering the episodic structure of the book, rather than providing a chapter-by-chapter summary, I will first provide the essential points of the work, and later on investigate certain aspects that will be useful while determining the relation between the context and the form.

The first point that we have to emphasize about the book is that it is not merely an anthropological study of ecology from an anti-capitalist perspective, but a thorough work that identifies historical, cultural, environmental, and economical aspects of a single object, and offers realistic approaches as well as probable solutions. *The Mushroom at the End of the World* initially "takes up the story of precarious livelihoods and precarious environments through tracking matsutake commerce and ecology;" (Tsing 2017: 4) however, it soon exceeds the limitations of such objective. With quite an impressive writing and ambitious narrative, Tsing explains her aim as follows:

Although it is quite tempting to analyze such technique, it is safe to assume that more subtle uses of experimental forms are significantly more grounded, and provide more data to evaluate the general appeal, as can be seen in *The Body Multiple* and *The Mushroom at the End of the World*. Otherwise, a dominant form may create a risk of tunnel vision while studying the topic while preventing to come up with original approaches towards the text.

> …I seek histories through which humans, matsutake, and pine create forests. I work the conjunctures to raise unanswered research questions rather than to create boxes. I look for the same forest in disguise. Each appears through the shadows of the others. … Precarious living is always an adventure. (ibid: 163)

Basically, taking its diverse perspective into account, it can be considered as "an adventure in the production of postmodernist anthropological theory." (Verinis 2016: 131) At the very beginning of the book, we are given a detailed historical account of matsutake, covering the topic on all grounds. Tsing starts off by explaining the etymological origins of the word, and then gives a brief explanation regarding its place throughout the history. Then the scenery moves into the ethnographic account of the pickers. Tsing is not only capable of getting acquainted with very interesting people working in this independent industry still dependent on labor force and human interaction, but also able to write these interactions with a vivid and captivating storytelling.

The inevitable capitalistic take on the issue comes next, as matsutake is a "capitalist commodity that begins and ends its life as a gift." (ibid: 128) Further on,

> Tsing shows that it is difficult to make a clear division between processes of capitalism and gifting, observing them as constantly mingled and messy. Gifts and commodities, capitalism and the freedom of mushroom hunting are constantly being joined like different patches, distanced from each other or forming an entanglement from which different lines can take different directions, continue together or form a knot. (Mölkänen 2016: 75)

One of the most striking chapters of the book recalls the human disturbance of forest, be it war or capitalistic greediness. It investigates the very essence of being by focusing on "what makes a place livable" while studying "polyphonic assemblages," (Tsing 2017: 157) as it uses ethnography as a "poetics of polyphony and negative capability" (Kim 2017: 138) as well. She tells the stories of the landscapes, and reaches the conclusion that "disturbance might initiate a story of the life of the forest," as it is "not always bad – and not always human." (ibid: 160) It does not necessarily destroy, but it reforms, providing a chance to bloom for varied organisms; she considers disturbances as an interaction. From a personal perspective, I may argue that the fundamental factor that helps the book to stand out among similar works is this exact approach: it does not antagonize any actor in the adventure of matsutake; rather, it advertises a balance despite the destruction, which may be an advocate for fertility. Relatively optimistic ending of the book is also a strong point that may be given as an example to support such an idea:

> Without stories of progress, the world has become a terrifying place. The ruin glares at us with the horror of its abandonment. It's not easy to know how to make a life, much less avert planetary destruction. Luckily there is still company, human and not human. We can still explore the overgrown verges of our blasted landscapes—the edges of capitalist discipline, scalability,

> and abandoned resource plantations. We can still catch the scent of the latent commons—and the elusive autumn aroma. (Tsing 2017: 282)

In addition to its content, one of the most significant characteristics of the book that we should mention is the fact that it dwells around the local legends while studying the topic throughout the book. This intertwinement between the reality and urban fiction provides a unique atmosphere for the book, in which all tales are supporting sources and all arguments are "lessons of the story." For instance, in the fifth chapter of the book, "Open Ticket, Oregon," Tsing begins a story as "One cold October Night in the late 1990s, three Hmong American matsutake pickers huddled in their tent." (ibid: 73) With quite a dramatic and equally eerie tone, she writes about how these pickers lose their lives because of asphyxiation caused by the stove they left open before going to sleep. Through this anecdote, she mentions the campgrounds haunted by the dead pickers' ghosts, and how their death has affected the behaviors, actions, and psychology of other people working in the field, as well as the governmental prosecutions issued to prevent such incidents. The language she uses, however, visibly changes while she shifts the narrative between the myth (local legend, personal account, life story, or even gossip according to the case) and argument, eventually tangling both. These "open-ended vignettes, creative writing, and … good jargon work[ing] to paint a science-fiction-like picture," (Verinis 2016: 131) and even goes as further as talking from the point of a worm for a whole paragraph: "Call me *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*. I'm a tiny, wormlike creature, a nematode, and I spend most of my time crunching the insides of pine trees. But my kin are as well-traveled as any whaler sailing the seven seas. Stick with me, and I'll tell you about some curious voyages." (Tsing 2017: 156) Just as the content has a dynamic focus, the language also takes different forms and metamorphoses.

Form

To begin with, Tsing's work does not include a straightforward experimentalism as it happens in Mol's *The Body Multiple* in which even a quick glance would help to figure out the differentiating form. Instead, from a visual perspective, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* merely includes multiple chapters full of intervals as well as supporting images. In-line references are almost non-existent, giving the impression of a work of fiction rather than a highly academic study from a first impression. Therefore, in order to detect the experimental elements in its form, the book's narrative methods have to be investigated and discussed, as there are many signs these methods leave on visual level. In order to accomplish this, I will examine two main aspects of *The Mushroom at the End of the World*: its vignette-like form that takes advantage of images and captions as well as establishing a strong bond with its content, and the maximalist approach it embraces while reviewing its main topic.

a. Vignettes

"Chaos, entanglement, complexity, ambiguity are not popular, yet they are praised by those who have the patience to follow their intricacy," says Ruth Tringham in her enlightening piece "Creating Narratives of the Past as Recombinant Histories." (Tringham 2015: 27) Although her chapter in essence discusses the use of the digital technology in the creation of fragmented (vignette) narratives, her main argument as an avid supporter of the method remains the same: she believes that the specific technique that presents the text in smaller, diverse pieces help the readers to have a better understanding of complicated and sophisticated narratives.

It can be easily realized that the form *The Mushroom at the End of the World* has a similar motive as well, since Tsing also provides a likewise idea by claiming that "ethnographic fragments ask us to pay attention to details." (Tsing 2005: 271) As it has been briefly mentioned in the summary, the book investigates its topics through various perspectives in distinct areas. To put it simply, the book is "not tidy. It's not a clear, linear argument. It's not meant to be. It's a set of interrelated explorations around a collection of themes – precarity, assemblage, capitalism, ruin, salvage, noticing, and, above all, matsutake mushrooms and the forests they inhabit." (Hirschman 2018: 539) Within the limitation of this term, a fragmented narrative would be of course much preferable in comparison with a block of text that constantly jumps into different ranges.

Even though this would be a simple enough explanation for the form of the book, Tsing provides us with more, making it possible to synch the form with the content. Here, we are obliged to repeat the same citation as in the Introduction of this thesis where Tsing explains the idea behind the book's form:

> Unlike most scholarly books, what follows is a riot of short chapters. I wanted them to be like the flushes of mushrooms that come up after a rain: an over the-top bounty; a temptation to explore; an always too many. The chapters build an open-ended assemblage, not a logical machine; they gesture to the so-much-more out there. They tangle with and interrupt each other – mimicking the patchiness of the world I am trying to describe. (Tsing 2017: viii)

This three-sentence description not only clarifies the reason for the use of vignette-like narratives, but also allows us to make a connection with ergodic literature that takes advantage of the "spatial" aspects of the writing. As a result of poststructuralist endeavor, the term of ergodic literature was proposed by Espen J. Aarseth. It is defined as a "process," in which the "user will have effectuated a semiotic sequence, and this selective movement is a work of physical construction that the various concepts of 'reading' do not account for." (Aarseth 1997: 1) He continues to this definition with ergodic literature's relationship with the reader: "In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text." (ibid: 1) In *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, the chapters remain separate from each other; they rarely includes interlinks in between, and does not

require a high level attention in terms of continuity and retrospective thought. Therefore, the readers in fact are free to choose among its many chapters to read. Although the author does not specifically proposes such a reading method, the book can be read out of sequence in different arrangements.

There is also another layer to this fragmented approach supported by ergodic tendency of the book. According to Tsing's explanation of form, on a **visual level**[16], if you imagine *The Mushroom at the End of the World* as a horizontal forest, an aerial close-view would show a series of independent mushrooms scattered on the landscape, not touching one another despite certain alignments and groupings, each representing a different aspect of the topic – connected by the same object yet separated with their focus and area.

This brings us to another element that we see within the text: use of images. The book is designed to allow full-page photographs depicting different processes of matsutake production and consumption before each new chapter. Just like *The Body Multiple*, the images in *The Mushroom at the End of the World* do not intent to make a clear visualization of relevant concepts, and do not serve as a descriptive tool. Instead, it may be quickly realized that they have a story within, most of them establishes a new narrative of their own rather than supporting the text: "Adding another thread, the photographs tell a story alongside the text but do not illustrate it directly. I use images to present the spirit of my argument rather than the scenes I discuss." (Tsing 2017: viii) Among these photographs, there are impressively artistic shots that depicts vast landscapes and a horrifyingly honest nature, as well as very human moments, people working on their daily chores, picking or portioning mushrooms, waiting outside of a buyer's place… Furthermore, the minimalistic captions including only a few words that accompany the photographs also vivify these alternative storylines created by images. Even though it is not specifically emphasized by the author, as it is for the fragmented structure that allows the readers to shift between different narrative-plots independently, the photographs and captions also constitute an autonomous storyline presented as a new way of reading.

For Tsing, "to listen to and tell a rush of stories is a *method*." (ibid: 37) Thus, what she focuses on is indeed the stories, and this fact pushes the argument on the back of the line at certain times. The narrative follows its own route with little interruption from the author, causing specific deficiencies in

[16] ...visual level: The works of ergodic literature may present themselves in highly playful typographical experiments as well. One of the most prominent examples of it in fiction may be considered as Raymond Federman's *Double or Nothing*, published in 1971, also known as the "Noodle novel." The book, which is the result of "spontaneous performances in language and a process of careful revision and rearrangement" (Opperman 1997: 44) develops in two paths; one is the meta-fictional account of an author who decides to lock himself in with all his basic needs (which consists a lot of noodles!) for a year in an attempt to complete his novel, and the other is the novel created in the process. What makes the book interesting is that almost every page includes different typographical uses: sometimes the sentences take form of noodles, sometimes huge gaps appear in the middle of the pages, sometimes paragraphs are designed in a multi-column structure or shaped like a page-long question mark. There is always a visual reference to noodle throughout the book.
Another example that needs to be mentioned here in relation to Tsing's pursuit in *The Mushroom at the End of the World* would be a Turkish poem, "Elhan-ı Şita" [Winter Tunes] by Cenap Şehabettin, where the poet designs the verses on the page like falling snowflakes. Structurally, "there is a relationship between the way snowflakes fall and the rhythm of the poem, just like the intensity of the snow changes from time to time." (Yavuz 2020: 64) Basically, it is not a new idea to provide a "shape" through text, be it a visual one or a content-wise experiment in form.

the development of the story, and furthermore, Tsing seems to be aware of this problem in most of the cases. "I what follows, I let the thread of the story unroll quite far from matsutake," she says at some point, "Yet at each step, I need the chain's reminders to resist the lull of current erasures. This is not just a story, then, but also a method: big histories are always best told through insistent, if humble, details." (ibid: 111) With an enviable self-reflexivity, she advocates her method despite its probable shortcomings.

b. Maximalism

While mentioning Flaubert and his successors, James Wood explains their ideal of writing as "a procession of strung details, a necklace of noticings." (Wood 2008: 77) With *The Mushroom at the End of World* chapter called "Arts of Noticing" devoted entirely to the discovery of matsutake that remains only as a small detail within a vast landscape full of distraction may help us to establish a connection of the maximalist choices made in the book.

In maximalist works, the "narration is hypertrophic and ultra-dense; the stories and characters that populate it are innumerable, as are its digressions and themes. One finds oneself face to face with something similar to that 'inflation of discourse.'" (Ercolino 2014: 71) With the "pressure to include everything and to represent the world in such high definition" (Levey 2017: 3), the maximalist author "refuses to overlook, and as a result is one who tends to *over*-look, becoming obsessed with the importance of an unwavering attention to detail." (ibid: 5) Tsing's study is colossal: it talks about *everything* regarding matsutake mushroom sparing her audience no detail. It does not stick to a single field as well, and links itself to "basic genres of anthropological work, such as economic anthropology, … ethno-historical identity, … race, … solidarity and trust, … ethnography, … and the aesthetics of desire." (Verinis 2016: 131) Throughout the book, the sudden realization suggesting that everything in these little stories constituting a monumentally detailed picture is connected with a single entity: mushroom. Within the universe of the book, there is only one history, one economy, **one geography**[17], and one community that is the mushroom's.

[17] ...one geography: As varied field it tackles, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* also takes place in a broad geographical spectrum. Throughout the book, Tsing visits many countries and continents such as Japan, Finland, and United States, and in each location we are provided with a different story about matsutake.
Geography has been one of the playgrounds of experimental literature as well, and the latest experiments establish it as a door for interactive narratives by making use of applications and navigational technologies. Prominently, Eli Horowitz's *The Silent History* is the result of a similar effort. In the book, which has been originally designed and published as a phone application, there are case studies including testimonials of the witnesses of "silent phenomenon," an epidemic that is affecting children, preventing them to speak even though they are very much able to process language. Another section of *The Silent History*, however, is presented as field reports. In the book's app, there is "a navigable map speckled with red octagons" and "each of these indicates a location-specific short story … that supplements the main narrative." (Williamson 2012) In order to read this story, the reader must be physically about ten meters close to the relevant octagon. The idea is not only very interesting, but also quite applicable to *The Mushroom at the End of the World*'s structure.
Though there is not a solid way to prove the connection between the experimentalist endeavors with Tsing's choice for a multi-geographical study in a way to carry this discussion to the in-line text, I believe that it is certainly worth to mention within this thesis.

Still, it would be a challenging attempt to put Tsing's work under the maximalism category despite its obvious use of maximalist devices. In one of his short pieces published in *The New York Times*, famously maximalist author John Barth makes a brief analyze of minimalist narrative. According to him, there are three fundamental aspects that define this style. The first one is "minimalism of unit, form and scale," which determined by the length in its essence, the second is "minimalism of style," that presents itself with simplistic sentences and to-the-point rhetoric, and finally, "minimalism of material," where there is a limited number of character, scene, and plot. (Barth 1986: 1) From this perspective, it is possible to see that *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, apart from its aforementioned maximalist tendencies, carries two specific aspects attributed to minimalism: it has a minimalistic style with vignettes and fragmented chapters, and there is essentially only one topic it is interested in, which is matsutake mushroom, creating a minimalism of material.

Consequently, it is very likely to consider *The Mushroom at the End of the World* as a near-perfect merge of minimalist and maximalist elements: it is minimalist in terms of its language and style, and it is maximalist considering the vast, almost encyclopedic content. Tsing does not fall into the mistake of being a blind follower of either. As Barth puts it, "There truly are more ways than one to heaven. As between minimalism and its opposite, I pity the reader – or the writer, or the age – too addicted to either to savor the other." (ibid. 1)

c. All in All Relevancy with Experimentalism

In Chapter 11 of her book, probably one of the most alluring sections of the book, Tsing mentions about the disturbance caused by humans, which most commonly thought as a damage for the landscapes and specifically for the forests. The stories are not always very pleasant: there are uncontrollable fires, invaded areas, exploited resources, and deliberate interference with the natural order of development. However, Tsing simply explains that "disturbance is ordinary" and "all landscapes are disturbed." (Tsing 2017: 160) What she makes out of it is the real point of *The Mushroom at the End of the World*: the disturbance, which differs according to its observer's perspective, is a trigger for succession. It causes a change, good or bad, and "creates patches each shaped by diverse conjunctures." (ibid: 161) Rather than labeling it as necessarily evil, we may be able to sense the natural order, the process behind it.

Throughout my review on Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's terrific study, I was striving to illuminate the connection between the content and the form of the book, and now, at the end of this chapter, I realize once again how its approach towards the disturbance resembles the very elements that I consider to be experimental within the text. Everything we have previously discussed, the vignettes, fragmental narrative, the use of photographs and captions as well as the curious merge of minimalism and maximalism, serves as a disturbance in the form that turns this academic study into an

unusual fiction-like adventure in pursuit of mushrooms. I believe such an analogy would help us to have a better understanding regarding experimental forms and narratives, as they are portals to new creations, and sometimes even the next logical step to make certain texts to flourish.

CONCLUSION

Since the first pages of this study, my main argument was that there is a strong bond between fiction and anthropology, and the line in between sometimes blurs, allowing certain textual practices to leak into one another's area. Since its foundation as a discipline, anthropology has always been in search of proper and efficient means of telling, and in that endeavor, researchers took advantage of the methods used by different fields and genres. It would be quite a groundless claim to suggest that anthropology was not affected by the linguistic turn that penetrated Western philosophy as well as history and other humanities later on, or the hegemony of postmodernism and post-structuralism in the mid-20th century. The argument I proposed takes its root on this obvious interaction, and focuses on its fiction front. The core of this study was the use of experimental forms and narratives in anthropological works that showed itself initially in fiction. Since experimental literature can go back to as far as Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, which was published in 1759, I limited my research to more recent developments, namely the appearance of the idea of hypertext and its reflections on printed production. Accordingly, the experimental elements I look for were mainly fragmented, maximalist, formatively "quirky" titles that also provided different reading methods for their audience. In order to accomplish that, I have chosen two specific titles in different branches of anthropology in order to bring the format in front of the content, and prove that the mentioned experimental techniques are not limited to a single sub-category of the field. With Annemarie Mol's *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice* (2013), we have seen a highly fragmented double-storyline in which the case studies are separated with the literary review visibly on the page, along with a style that gives the readers the opportunity to choose their own reading method. And in Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (2017), there is a scattered narrative told as vignettes in addition to a contradictory maximalist approach. The narratives in both books are in strong relationship with fictive plots and languages, there is an apparent eagerness to be relatable, captivating, and striking, and maybe most significantly, none of these titles attempt to hide their connection with fiction – in other words, the authors are very self-aware about their choice of method regarding narrative and form. These points, which have been investigated thoroughly in this thesis, proves the proposed argument about the influence of the experimental techniques and methods used in fictional works on the creative process and end result of anthropological works.

It should be once again emphasized that the exchanges between genres often proved to be fertile happenings: just as the invasion of non-fiction narratives into fictional works, be it encyclopedic use of footnotes in colossal novels such as *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace or giving the whole fictional story in the form of a poetry interpretation and criticism as in *Pale Fire* by Vladimir Nabokov, the modest appearances of fictive elements in academic studies are also a cause for celebration. All attempts in this endeavor constitute a pillar that will eventually become a glamorous

structure of future academic writing. The excitement of the authors is apparent in each work written on that line, and the much-needed innovation they provide is very obviously well received. What we need to do is, apart from being aware of their existence in our own studies as academicians or academician-candidates, approaching these experimental elements with an open-mind, with willingness to extend the scope of what we consider as academic writing that is already sprawling.

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point there were no pulsations. In the right leg all pulsations were present those of the foot included. The capillary refill left was slower than right.

Supplementary diagnostic examinations: *ankle/arm index left 0.6 and right 1*
Duplex: stenosis of more than 50 percent in the common femoral artery left
Operation: *(02–08–92) endarterectomy in common femoral artery left*
Further course: *no postoperative complications. Patient could be mobilized fast. The ankle/arm index was 1 right and left 0.9. Discharged in a good overall condition.*
Summary:
Main diagnosis: *stenosis in left common femoral artery*
Side diagnosis: none
Therapy: endarterectomy in common femoral artery
Complications: none
Discharge to: home
Control afterward: outpatient clinic hospital Z
With collegial respect,
Dr. T. F. J. Xanders, surgeon
A. J. Yielstra, surgery resident

What kind of disease did this patient suffer from? The letter mentions several diagnostic techniques that each gave an answer to this question: the anamnesis, a physical examination, pressure measurements, and duplex Doppler scan. They jointly back up a single diagnosis. This patient, they say, has a stenosis in the common femoral artery of his left leg. How is this remarkable alignment of such different diagnostic findings into a single diagnosis practically achieved?

Let's move back in the patient's itinerary, to a moment when the writing of discharge letters is still far ahead. The decision about how to treat and whether or not to admit the patient still has to be made. There we are. In the outpatient clinic again. A vascular surgeon is seeing a new patient. The surgeon has written down this patient's walking distance and the results of his physical examination in the file on his desk. Both look serious. The *clinical diagnosis* is positive (positive for: disease present—instead of negative for: no disease found). The patient reported pain on walking, and the surgeon felt bad pulsations in several arteries. In the routine course of practice in hospital Z another diagnostic technique is now brought into play. The surgeon makes a phone call to check if the vascular laboratory is available, writes a note requesting the technician to check arm and ankle pressures of both legs, hands this note to the patient, and says: "Please, come back here afterward." If we accompany this patient we come across another mode of diagnosing, and delineating, vascular disease. Pressure measurement.

The technician measures the blood pressure in Mr. Manders's arm. She inflates a cuff around it. While she slowly allows the air to escape again she uses a stethoscope to listen to the artery in the elbow. An inflated cuff stops the blood from flowing. When some air has escaped, the sound of turbulent flow becomes audible. This is the moment the blood is able to push past the cuff when it is at its peak pressure, the systolic pressure. More air escapes and then the sound disappears again. It disappears at the point where the blood starts to flow undisturbed, able to resist cuff pressure all through the heart cycle. This second point is the blood's diastolic pressure. The technician writes both the higher and the lower number on a piece of paper.

She fits a larger cuff around Mr. Manders's ankle. In the ankle the stethoscope cannot be used. Instead, a small Doppler probe has to do the job. It sends out ultrasound and receives

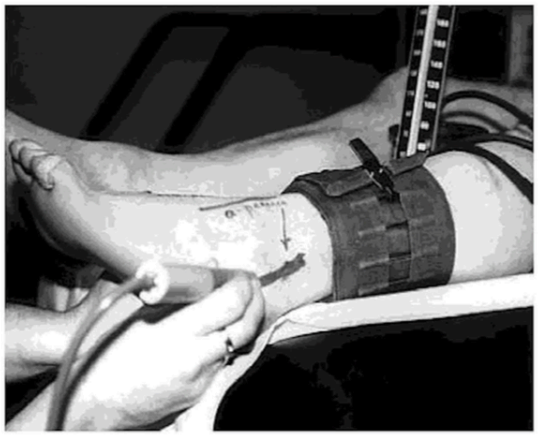
profession and a hospital system capable of operating general norms of health; it is established in the standardization of industrial processes and products. . . . Like surveillance, and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical era" (Foucault 1979, 184).

Parsons had a theory about the contribution of doctors to the maintenance of the social system. It said that it is part of the sick role that the sick must seek medical assistance. Doctors subsequently either sanction their patient's illness behavior or send them back to work again. It is in this way that physicians exert *social control*. They protect the social system from individuals who might want to enjoy the luxury of relief from their social obligations under the pretext of being unable to fulfill them. The Foucauldian concept of *normalization* also indicates that health care is important for the maintenance of social order. But Foucault's doctors do not control. They neither oblige people to stay in bed and get better nor to get up and go to work again. Instead, they set the standards of normality. They articulate what it is to be normal and to behave in a normal way. They may also actively intervene so as to bring about normal states. But unlike judges, doctors do not punish those who do not live up to their norms. Normality is not a law. Instead, those who do not manage to meet the standards of normality, the *abnormal*, are marginalized to the fringes of society. They come to find themselves in places where most do not want to be, places from which they will try to escape. Thus "normality" is something people come to positively desire, from the inside, instead of something that, like a rule, is imposed on them from the outside.

In framing his social theory, Foucault was not arguing with Parsons and other systems theorists. Instead he tried to stress—like Parsons, but without relating to him—that medicine is vital to society. It is a social power of a quite specific kind. "The power of the Norm appears through the disciplines. Is this the new law of modern society? Let us say rather that, since the eighteenth century, it has joined other powers—the Law, the Word (*parole*) and

APPENDIX

Image 1: Sample page from *The Body Multiple*



the reflections back again. If ultrasound is reflected by an object that is moving away, its reflections have a longer wavelength than the ultrasound emitted—and vice versa. This is the Doppler effect. The Doppler apparatus (to which the probe is attached) makes the difference between emitted and received waves audible. The technician moves the probe around until she's found the artery. We can all hear when she does, for at that moment the flow of blood reflects the ultrasound. "Pshew, pshew, pshew," we hear. When the cuff is inflated, this sound disappears. To come back again as soon as the systolic blood pressure is able to resist the cuff pressure. Movement. Flow. Pshew, pshew.

When blood pressure in an ankle is lower than in the arms, pressure is lost along the way. Like the pain-free walking distance of the clinic and the thickening of the vessel wall in the department of pathology, the *pressure loss* established in the vascular laboratory is a measure of the severity of the patient's atherosclerosis. In hospital Z, pressure loss is expressed as an index: the ankle pressure divided by the arm pressure. An index of 0.9 is used as the cutoff point: lower numbers are classified as pathological.

There is a story that explains how pain when walking and pressure drop hang together inside the body. The thick intima comes in, too. This is how it goes. When a thick intima encroaches the vessel lumen, resistance to the blood flow increases. This leads to pressure drop. The low blood pressure in the lower limb isn't high enough to supply the tissues with much blood. When the muscles are exercised the oxygen supply falls short. The muscles therefore burn their sugars without oxygen and produce lactic acid. This is painful. A convincing story. But does it hold? Well, it does as long as the various atherosclerosis enacted of a single patient all have more or less the same degree of severity. No, let's be more precise. We cannot know anything about the cross section of the arteries

the Text, Tradition—imposing new delimitations upon them" (184). In establishing the power of the norm, medicine is a crucial discipline, because medical knowledge mediates between the order of the body and the order of society. It is within medical knowledge that the normal and the deviant person are differentiated. It is within medical knowledge such as it has taken shape since the early nineteenth century that "disease" is no longer thematized as a species inhabiting an organism, but as a deviant state of that organism. Since that time medicine has started to set the standards that modern people want to live up to. Thus, it is medicine that allows society to mimic organisms. And its own knowledge hangs together, too. It forms an epistème: a logically coherent *body of knowledge*.

This body of knowledge doesn't emerge out of isolated scientific activities and then invade society. New knowledge is not a product of clever minds. It emerges when scientific work is done in new socio-material settings. Foucault attributes inno-

Image 2: Sample page from *The Body Multiple*

Communal agendas, Oregon. Foraging with a rifle. Most pickers have terrible stories of surviving war. The freedom of the mushroom camps emerges out of varied histories of trauma and displacement.

6
War Stories

In France they have two kinds, freedom and communist. In the U.S. they just have one kind: freedom.

—*Open Ticket Lao buyer, explaining why he came to the United States, not France*

The freedom about which so many pickers and buyers speak has far-flung referents as well as local ones. In Open Ticket, most explain their commitments to freedom as stemming from terrifying and tragic experiences in the U.S.-Indochina War and the civil wars that followed. When pickers talk about what shaped their lives, including their mushroom picking, most talk about surviving war. They are willing to brave the considerable dangers of the matsutake forest because it extends their living survival of war, a form of haunted freedom that goes everywhere with them.

Yet engagements with war are culturally, nationally, and racially specific. The landscapes pickers construct vary with their legacies of

engagement with war. Some pickers wrap themselves in war stories without ever having lived through war. One wry Lao elder explained why even young Lao pickers wear camouflage: "These people weren't soldiers; they're just pretending to be soldiers." When I asked about the dangers of being invisible to white deer hunters, a Hmong picker evoked a different imaginary: "We wear camouflage so we can hide if we see the hunters first." If they saw him, hunters might hunt him, he implied. Pickers navigate the freedom of the forest through a maze of differences. Freedom as they described it is both an axis of commonality and a point from which communally specific agendas divide. Despite further differences within such agendas, a few portraits can suggest the varied ways the matsutake hunt is energized by freedom. This chapter extends my exploration of what pickers and buyers meant by freedom by turning to the stories they told about war.



Frontier romanticism runs high in the mountains and forests of the Pacific Northwest. It is common for whites to glorify Native Americans *and* identify with the settlers who tried to wipe them out. Self-sufficiency, rugged individualism, and the aesthetic force of white masculinity are points of pride. Many white mushroom pickers are advocates of U.S. conquest abroad, limited government, and white supremacy. Yet the rural northwest has also gathered hippies and iconoclasts. White veterans of the U.S.-Indochina War bring their war experiences into this rough and independent mix, adding a distinctive mixture of resentment and patriotism, trauma and threat. War memories are simultaneously disturbing and productive in forming this niche. War is damaging, they tell us, but it also makes men. Freedom can be found in war as well as against war.

Two white veterans suggest the range of how freedom is expressed. Alan felt lucky when an aggravated childhood injury caused him to be sent home from Indochina. For the next six months he served as a driver on an American base. One day he received orders to return to Vietnam. He drove his jeep back to the depot and walked out of the base, AWOL. He spent the next four years hiding in the Oregon mountains, where he gained a new goal: to live in the woods and never pay rent. Later, when

Image 3: Sample page from *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

Part 2 of this book traces the interplay between scalable and nonscalable in forms of capitalism in which scalable accounting allows nonscalable labor and natural resource management. In this "salvage" capitalism, supply chains organize the translation process in which wildly diverse forms of work and nature are made commensurate—for capital. Part 3 returns to matsutake forests as anti-plantations in which transformative encounters create the possibilities of life. The contaminated diversity of ecological relations takes center stage.

But first, a foray into indeterminacy: the central feature of the assemblages I follow. So far, I've defined assemblages in relation to their negative features: their elements are contaminated and thus unstable; they refuse to scale up smoothly. Yet assemblages are defined by the strength of what they gather as much as their always-possible dissipation. They make history. This combination of ineffability and presence is evident in smell: another gift of the mushroom.



Image 4: Sample page from *The Mushroom at the End of the World*