



Manuel João Ramos

Of Hairy Kings and Saintly Slaves. An Ethiopian Travelogue

Canon Pyon, Herefordshire (UK), Sean Kingston Publishing, 2019

<http://www.seankingston.co.uk/publishing.html>

A lost sketch book on a Portuguese castle rampart left Manuel João Ramos bereft, and the impulse to draw deserted him - but his first trip to Ethiopia reawakened this pleasure, so long denied. Drawing obsessively and free from care, his rapidly caught impressions convey the rough edges of the intensely lived experiences that are fundamental to the desire to travel. For the travel sketch is more than a record or register of attendance ('been there, seen that'): it holds invisibly within itself the remnant of a look, the hint of a memory and a trace of an osmosis of feelings between the sketcher and the person or objects sketched. Less intrusive than using a camera, Ramos argues drawing comprises a less imperialist, more benign way of researching: his sketchbook becomes a means of communication between himself and the world in which he travels, rendering him more human to those around him.

As he journeys through the Ethiopian Central Highlands, collecting historical legends of the power struggles surrounding the arrival of the first Europeans in the mid-sixteenth century, he is drawn to the Portuguese legacy of castles, palaces and churches, near ruins now, though echoes of their lost splendour are retained in oral accounts. Excerpts from his diary, as well as journalistic pieces, share the conviviality of his encounters with the priests, elders and historians who act as custodians of the Amhara oral tradition. Their tales are interwoven with improvised, yet assured, drawings, and this informality of structure successfully retains the immediacy and pleasure of his discovery of Ethiopia. It also suggests the potential for drawing to play a more active part in anthropological production, as a means of creating new narratives and expositional forms in ethnography, bringing it closer to travel writing or the graphic novel.

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Pietro Meloni

Antropologia del consumo. Doni, merci, simboli
Roma, Carocci, 2018

[http://www.carocci.it/index.php?option=com_carocci
&task=schedalibro&Itemid=72&isbn=9788843090969](http://www.carocci.it/index.php?option=com_carocci&task=schedalibro&Itemid=72&isbn=9788843090969)

Nelle scienze sociali gli studi sul consumo sembrano essere attraversati da una tensione costante tra due poli interpretativi: quello che vede le merci alla base di un processo di alienazione nelle pratiche quotidiane e, all'opposto, quello che privilegia l'analisi degli scambi simbolici, che definiscono il consumo come costruzione di legami sociali e attività di tipo rituale. Gli oggetti ci rendono schiavi o, al contrario, ci liberano da numerose costrizioni? Attraverso gli oggetti ci isoliamo dal mondo o, diversamente, li usiamo per costruire relazioni sociali? Lo shopping è una pratica di tipo edonistico o un modo per manifestare l'amore verso i propri cari? Nel testo si insinua il dubbio che il consumo non si esaurisca nell'acquisto ma si configuri piuttosto come una relazione – una sorta di opening gift – dove diversi soggetti si vincolano tra di loro in un rapporto che assume forme sempre più complesse di definizione del sé.

Il volume illustra gli ambiti di ricerca, le teorie e i concetti dell'antropologia del consumo in una prospettiva etnografica.

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