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In the early twenty-first century, the romantic motif of "disappearance" is clearly insufficient to account for the fact that many marginalised societies / cultures in the world, and the languages they speak, are under serious threat. Endangerment is a social fact; it is also a bona fide field of interdisciplinary research involving linguists, anthropologists, biologists, ecologists, economists, literary / cultural scholars, and several more. "Endangerment", however, remains as troubled a term as the conditions of which it speaks.

The essays in this volume are an attempt to come to terms with the multiple contradictions contained within the term "endangerment", and to account for its availability as both a self-serving ideology of containment and a catalyst for action against the genuine threat of loss.