

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

ROBERT V. KEMPER and ANYA PETERSON ROYCE (eds.),
Chronicling Cultures: Long-Term Field Research in Anthropology.
Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2002, 353 p.

This collection of papers is an ambitious and timely reflection on 20th-century ethnographic field research practices, its modernist origins and the ongoing challenges of making new interpretations from long-term research. Emerging from an AAA conference in 1999 that focussed on "passing the mantle" in research, this book is also a development from the much earlier Burg Wartenstein conference in Austria and its volume of revised papers, "Long-Term Field Research in Social Anthropology" (Foster et al., 1979). Representing the work of social anthropologists of diverse traditions, *Chronicling Cultures* explores the implications of long-term research in a rapidly changing world covering nearly sixty years of data collections. Revisitations to Mexican communities are handed down and filtered through three generations of professors and students: the old and the new from George M. Foster's work with the Tzintzuntzan in 1945 to Peter S. Cahn of the generation of young scholars.

Rich with personal anecdotes and self-reflexivity on research-participant relations, these papers anticipate the contradictory future uses of their research by their host communities whose younger members, recruited for their insider knowledge, also take up the critical linguistics of social anthropology as the new generation. Tzintzuntzan (which in 1519 was the capital of the Purepecha (Tarascan) Indian Empire, the most powerful political group west of the Aztecs) was the location of field methods training for students of Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History from 1944 on. In a context of a vibrant living oral culture as old as can be known, the new generation of social anthropologists and their methods anticipate new and postcolonial readings of data and analyses with a different urgency.

Chronicling Cultures illustrates in quotidian detail the crisis in impartiality that field researchers experience as they adopt the research community as their home that includes creative and practical negotiations in living accommodations and cooking arrangements. These studies also assess various long-term ethical dimensions complicated by such irregularities as criminal behaviours in the host community and their effects on the ongoing and long-term prospects of the research. They juxtapose local cultures and global systems in a spectrum of anthropological research from both colonial and post-colonial regimes. Their presence together in this

collection invites a necessary comparison within the larger disciplinary project of social anthropology. The Ju'hoansi's coming to a political consciousness and asserting a critical linguistics on the self-appellation of "Ju'hoansi" – meaning "real or genuine people" (formerly known as "Bushman" and "San") is a fight against stereotyping that crossreferences indigenous peoples' efforts in Canada, the United States, Australia and elsewhere. The global context of research forces comparisons between such diverse communities of South Africa's Katutura Apartheid relocation project to its independence, and includes studies of Mysore villages, Navaho communities and nomadic Turkish clans.

Studies of cultural adaptations sometimes reveal new signs of resistance such as Richard B. Lee and Megan Biesele documented interventions in Dobe communities, where a return to hunting and gathering in 1987 was necessary for self-sustenance after the government abandoned food distribution programs, or Ju villages' symbolic shift from a reliance on each other to a reliance on their herds through altering the practice of building houses that look across the central open space at each other to having houses face the kraal of the cattle and goats. With environment and land-settlement issues forcing the very question of what ownership can mean in time and space, these papers offer valuable clues to possible future directions and raise as many questions as they provide answers.

This collection of lived accounts is enriched by the cross-cultural scholarship that spawned it and is especially valuable as a framework by which to re-assess other early and more recent social anthropological studies. Though more effort could have been made to include the new scholarship of the Mexican generation, as a collection it offers a critical perspective on the massive restructuring of human communities by capitalist driven industrialism. Clearly, as the long-term research projects attest, social anthropologists need to assess their obligations as professionals and consider which community deserves the greatest benefit of their research: Should there be a prioritizing of research for grass roots community purposes or should the funding agencies reap the awards? The vivid descriptions of communities that have preserved a continuum of culture and social organization through the disruptions and interventions of industrialism provide a framework of comparison to other communities in evolutionary stasis or eschatological demise. However, most surprising here, are the meditations of veterans' "passing the mantle" who confess that the host community is their home of preference, a place of special meaning, life-long commitments and intergenerational relationships.

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