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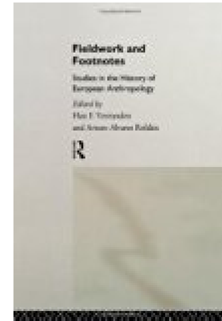
Han F. Vermeulen, Arturo Alvarez Roldan. *Fieldwork and Footnotes: Studies in the History of European Anthropology. European Association of Social Anthropologists.* London: Routledge, 1995. xi + 261 S. $44.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-415-10656-6; $130.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-415-10655-9.



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Writing for your own tribe or for the academic community?

No doubt, approaching the history of science is one of the most intellectually challenging parts of any academic discipline. And this challenge has increased significantly in the past decade or so, now that the history of science is no longer the story of Great-Men-Making-Great-Inventions-in-a-Flash-of-Genius. Studies of this kind tended, on the one hand, to ignore the intellectual precursors and the academic setting of inventions and discoveries while, on the other hand, taking the sacrosanctity of science for granted and leaving aside the Bourdieu-ian aspects of academe. Nowadays, moreover, history of science is no longer limited to the history of technology, natural sciences, and medicine. (Although, by the way, the H-Net list H-SCI-MED-TECH still tends to uphold this definition of the field.) In the social sciences and humanities, the history of a discipline used to be an integral part of the discipline itself. For the most part, history of science was a practical help and a starting point for future research, rather than a reflection on the why and how of science as such.[1]

In the disciplines of ethnology and anthropology, the reflexive movement and the ethnological method of participant observation have led to peculiar effects as far as the history of science is concerned: after years and years of studying exotic tribes in the jungle, anthropologists and ethnologists came home and developed an interest in "home-made" exotic cultures. They began to see academic institutes or disciplines (including their own) as exotic tribes, with rituals, traditions, and beliefs of their own.

The compilation *Fieldwork and Footnotes* is the product of the second workshop on the history of European anthropology, part of the conference by the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) held in Prague, August 1992. A first-ever workshop on this topic had been part of a previous EASA conference in Coimbra in September 1990. The History of European Anthropology Network and its newsletter, initiated for the third workshop in Oslo June 1994, seem to have lead a marginal existence since. The sixteen contributors of the book are from Spain, Scotland, Germany, Mexico, Romania, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Slovenia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. Their short biographies already outline the subject of the book and the paradoxes of European anthropology. The names of their institutes range from "social and/or cultural anthropology" to "anthropology and history" to "ethnology and (cultural) anthropology" or even "comparative culture studies" (pp. vii-viii).

The introduction by the two editors is a good example to explain my ambiguity towards this book. The introduction and the issues it raises–the question of the origins and periodization of anthropology and the institutional development of anthropology (a.k.a. ethnology) in Europe–whet the appetite of the reader. Nevertheless,

this introduction (and the book as a whole) might have been much more readable if the editors and authors had kept in mind that the history of anthropology is a minor subdiscipline, chief occupation for only a few. The pace and depth of their essays suggest that they tend to forget this, although they said so themselves in their acknowledgments, that this book is "a small independent place to exchange their ideas [on the history of European anthropology]." Therefore, a more extensive contextualization for the general anthropological reader might have been appropriate. The current introduction is bound to confuse your ordinary mortal: The existence of a debate on the developmental stages of anthropology is suggested, but it is not borne out by the rest of the book. The editor Vermeulen, moreover, later on admits that it is just a word game; as long as one distinguishes between the raising of anthropological questions and the institutionalization of anthropology, there is "a consensus on the main stages that a chronological scheme of the history of anthropology should cover" (p. 7). The second question of the introduction (on institutionalization) is approached by the editor Roldan from such an angle and using so much detail that one either has to be an expert in this subdiscipline or has to have read the whole book attentively before.

The first part of the book discusses the early origins of ethnography and its institutionalization in Europe and the United States, as well as its philosophical and historical roots, in four chapters. The first chapter by Michael Harbsmeier upholds the fiction of a debate on the origins of anthropology. Like the editor in his introduction, he too admits that one's dating of the beginnings of anthropology is bound to be influenced by the concept of anthropology one uses: Is it a Begriffsgeschichte of "ethnology" and its equivalents, the institutionalization in the nineteenth century, or is it the much older European habit of "some kind of eye-witness observation ... and the art of describing 'other' cultures and societies"? (p. 20).

The other two chapters in this part–the one on the philosophical roots and Hegel by Gheorghita Geana and the one on historical roots and the works of Adolf Bastian by Klaus-Peter Koepping–again have all the characteristics of a scientific paper presented for a small inner circle of specialists. Again, the approaches are interesting, but for a chapter in a book one might have wished to see some didactic concessions to the reader.

The second part of the book introduces some well-chosen great anthropologists and their favorite objects of study as stepping stones in the development of anthropological thinking. The chapter by Alan Barnard on Lord Monboddo and the "nobility" of the Orang Outang discusses questions of the sociability of mankind and the relation between animal and man. Monboddo (like Rousseau) accepted the idea that Orang Outangs were essentially human, as intellect, not speech, was their defining characteristic of mankind. Another chapter in this part which made some fascinating reading is Jan de Wolf's essay on H.J. Nieboer and the study of slavery, although the didactic problem pops up again. Having used two pages for his bibliography, De Wolf has fourteen pages left to make his argument: "While it is commonplace knowledge that the emphasis on the collection of primary data contributed to the newly emerging functionalist paradigm early in this century, it is less well known that secondary analysis through systematic comparison of many different societies could have a similar anti-evolutionist effect. In this chapter I should like to demonstrate this through the work of the Dutch scholar H.J. Nieboer (1873-1920) on slavery." Rather than using this limited space to make a clear and consistent argument, De Wolf feels he should also "contextualize this work in relation to his [Nieboer's] mentor Steinmetz as well as to some broader political and economic issues and their social policy implications" (p. 113). This leaves him all of four pages to demonstrate his views on Nieboer and slavery.

He then distinguished between two traditions in Dutch anthropology: Wilken and the study of native peoples of the Dutch East Indies, Steinmetz and the theoretical concerns with savages as a specific category of human being, as well as the implications for the study of one's own society. Steinmetz searched for laws as descriptive regularities and empirical generalizations of developmental stages. From this perspective, colonial peoples represented the closest thing at hand for the study of early developmental stages of mankind. Nieboer, being Steinmetz' student, applied the methodological ideas of his professor in his dissertation on slavery, focusing on sociological laws of current phenomena rather than on the early history of mankind. Evidently, having defined slavery, Nieboer found it impossible to come up with a bullet-proof set of iron rules of factors causing slavery. The article does have a point of demonstrating that in a strict sense Nieboer was neither a functionalist nor an evolutionist, although the flood of details and specialists' information might detract the reader.

The third part of the book, "Anthropological traditions in Europe," contains five national case studies on

the development of the discipline(s) and a final chapter on the paradoxes of the history of anthropologies of Europe. Tomas Gerholm argues that while Swedish anthropology (defined as the discipline dealing with non-European peoples and societies) was peripheral in the international community of anthropologists, ethnology much less so because of the international standing of Sigurd Erixon (1888-1938). He argued that European ethnology should be part of general ethnology (i.e., anthropology). Nevertheless, two separate disciplines became consolidated in Sweden, and both follow the lead of the international centers, rather than working with their colleagues next door.

The next two chapters deal with anthropology in Slovenia and Poland. With all due respect, the history of the discipline in these two states in the twentieth century presupposes a separate chapter on the development of anthropology in Russia and the USSR which is not really as unknown and undocumented as the editors seem to suggest,[2] although the influence of Soviet ethnography on East European academic traditions might be (p. 10). In the Soviet Union, the name of the game was "ethnography" and it has been on the rise ever since the 1960s (under Bromley) and basically even since Sergei Tolstov became director of the Academy institute in 1943. In Slovakia, the discipline also gained ground in the 1960s when it got an institute of its own. Quite remarkably (compared to the Soviet model), however, this institute was called the Department of Ethnology, to be renamed Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology recently. (The institute in Moscow was renamed Institute for Anthropology and Ethnology in 1991 as well).

A flaw of the book in this respect is its lack of consistency in the use of the terms "anthropology," "ethnology," and "ethnography." This may seem a truism and an unfair or even illogical point of criticism as the definitional history (Begriffsgeschichte) of these concepts is exactly what this book is all about. With so many possible distinctions between anthropology, ethnology, and ethnography, a separate systematic chapter would have been extremely helpful. Basically, we are discussing two (related) problems: 1) What criteria came to predominate in a national tradition to distinguish disciplines within this field–historical versus non-historical, descriptive versus comparative, European versus non-European? 2) What labels (anthropology, ethnology, and ethnography) were used to describe each of the disciplines thus defined? The authors of the chapter on Slovenia, for instance, write, "the vague demarcation between anthropology and ethnology (or ethnography, which dominates in Slovakia)..." (p. 171). Here, like in most East European states, the study of the own people predominates. This is–according to the authors Smitek and Jereznik–ethnology or ethnography, whereas the study of other non-Western peoples (anthropology) is virtually non-existent in Slovenia. In the nineteenth century, ethnology or ethnography had a role to play in nation-building, and after World War II the study of modern society (e.g. social stratification in a kolkhoze) was influenced by Soviet materialist ethnography rather than by subjectivist Western cultural anthropology.

In Poland in the nineteenth century, the opposition between ethnography as the study of (Polish) folk traditions and anthropology was mediated by an ethnology of non-European peoples which had both descriptive and comparative elements. In the interwar period, however, the discipline with a task in bringing the peoples and cultures of previously divided Poland together into one national culture was called "ethnology." Under communism, ethnology became part of descriptive ethnography studying contemporary social processes, while social and cultural anthropology virtually disappeared (like in the Soviet Union). In contrast to the Soviet example, however, Polish ethnography never became a study of primitive peoples, which makes sense as Poland lacked the faraway places and "primitive" peoples in its own state that the multinational Soviet empire had. According to the authors Jasiewicz and Slattery, the main task of Polish post-communist ethnography is now to re-introduce elements of ethnology and re-establish contact with Western institutions.

The last two case studies of this part, on Germany and Mexico, also illustrate the "unity through diversity" of European anthropology exemplarily. All in all, however, the national case studies leave the reader confused, bedazzled, and bewildered. I, at least, could not see the wood of unity for the trees of diversity. Therefore, Schippers' final chapter on "anthropologies of Europe," which does identify some common denominators in the national histories of the discipline, should have been placed at the beginning of the third part. He identifies an all-European trend to distinguish between physical and social/cultural anthropology before World War I. He also identifies the absence/availability of "primitive peoples" (colonies) as one of the explanations for the national predominance of either nomothetic English-oriented fieldwork ethnology or cumulative-descriptive German-oriented ethnography, a distinction which developed in the interwar period. After World War II, the schism was between Anglo-American eth-

nology, which predominated in Western Europe, and Soviet ethnography, which dominated in Eastern Europe. Ethnology, however, came "home" and no longer distinguished between European and non-European societies. His scheme does not replace the chapters on national diversity, but it is a much-needed guide to see the diversity in the right perspective.

A question not raised at all in this book is the development of the "world out there": When anthropology was young in the early nineteenth century, it was at least hypothetically possible to encounter "natives," "virgins" in terms of anthropological investigation. By the end of the twentieth century, every tribe has its own web-site and western development-aid workers, every group subjected to ethnological investigation uses the results reflexively to present and represent itself.[3] Fortunately, the reverse side of this issue, which is closely related to the persistence of professional stereotypes and disciplinary profiles, recently produced a major discussion in H-SAE (17-23 January 1998–"Absence of Europe in the introductory textbook"). Is Europe completely modern and therefore "none of an anthropologist's business?

In terms of breadth, price and structure, this book would make a really excellent introduction in the history of anthropology for students, but–as I said–it would have required a bit more effort and empathy on the part of the authors and the editors.

Notes

[1]. S. Woolgar, Science: The Very Idea (London 1988), pp. 83-111.

[2]. See, for instance, *Soviet and Western Anthropology*, ed. E. Gellner (London: 1980) or W. van Meurs, "Ethnographie in der USSR: Jaeger oder Sammler? in: *Inszenierung des Nationalen*, eds. B. Binder, P. Niedermueller (Berlin 1998), forthcoming.

[3]. R. Speth, Review of Kulturen–Identitaeten–Diskurse, ed. W. Kashuba (Berlin 1995) in *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, No. 3 (1996), pp. 630-631.

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