

Richard Just, *A Greek Island Cosmos*, Oxford: James Curry, 2000, xi + 276 pages, ISBN 0-933452-73-X.

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When the young Australian anthropologist Roger Just embarked on fieldwork (from 1977-1980) in Spartokhori, a rural Greek village on the remote Ionian island of Meganisi, his intention was to break new ground rather than follow those topics that had come to dominate the anthropology of Greece. His plan to pursue class, economics, and politics, topics that seemed more relevant than “kinship and family,” or “honour and shame” changed, however, when he began to listen to the local rhetoric which likened the village to “all one family,” “to a place where everyone knew one another, where everyone was related to one another, where everyone cared for one another...” (p. 37). Over twenty years later, ironically, Just defends and embraces the very “traditional” topics of Mediterranean kinship and family which he had hoped to avoid.

A Greek Island Cosmos is an ambitious and successful attempt to reinvigorate the anthropological study of kinship and community. The ethnography’s goal is clearly stated: the focus is on a rural Greek community, but its purpose is to specify the conditions in which the Spartokhoriots’ rhetoric of kinship and family, of solidarity and community, operates.

It is no easy thing these days to publish a study of a Greek rural community (as it was perhaps for anthropologists like Campbell, Friedl, or du Boulay). Village studies, particularly by the 1980s, have been largely rendered suspect, as failing to explore rural-urban links and demographic shifts. However, untroubled by the anxiety of most anthropologists, for whom the village is no longer viewed as a viable unit of study, Just persuasively argues that rural-based studies do not misrepresent Greece, but are vital for an anthropology of Greece. As far as Just is concerned “hanging out on urban street corners would be no advance on pussyfooting around rural verandah” (p. 24) because urban and rural life in Greece are so intertwined that one cannot be understood without reference to the other.

In chapter 1, Just is jolted out of his own rural reverie (of “the traditional village, with its white-washed houses, its gnarled fisherman, its grizzled elders, its quaintly attired women, its donkeys and chickens and sheep and goats”) when he finds himself amongst a people some of whom could talk quite knowledgeably about his own home town of Geelong. It becomes evident in chapter 2 that Spartokhori is hardly a rural enclave, but has a history of continual immigration and emigration. “What appeared to be, and genuinely was, a tightly-knit village community was the product of a quite dynamic and unstable past, and persisted despite an equally dynamic and unstable present” (p. 42).

Chapter 3 describes the influx of wealth and depopulation during the postwar years, a time when many Spartokho-

riots emigrated to America, Canada, Australia, and South Africa, or were employed in the merchant marine. Just reminds the reader that the cohesion of the village community through the structures of kinship and family can only be properly appreciated when population movements are taken into account.

The two subsequent chapters focus on aspects of kinship—consanguinity, affinity and godparenthood. Just begins by unraveling the kinship ties that link this island community (the forms of relationship recognized and how it is they contribute to the sense of community and belonging which the Spartokhoriots express).

Spartokhori as both an intensely public and private place is the theme that pervades the chapter entitled “Back-to-Back Community.” Here the author’s own experience of the constant tension in this tightly knit community is candidly conveyed in an anecdote that stresses the obsession with one’s own privacy and with others’ activities. After having spent many sleepless nights planning routes and manoeuvres in order to avoid being caught accepting a gift of olive oil from one person without anyone else finding out, Just asks “How could anything so simple have become so complicated?” (p. 166)

The complexity of the Spartokhoriots’ inward and outward representation of themselves is further demonstrated in “Household and Inheritance” and “Romance and Dowry.” Just illustrates, for instance, how the Spartokhoriots (especially the wealthier and better educated) deny the importance of dowry (despite its continued existence and frequent increase) as something that represents backwardness.

In the final chapter Just concludes that the rhetoric of Spartokhoriot communal life as “all one family” overrides the competitive relationships, jealousies, resentments and day-to-day animosities between the village’s constituent households. This expression of solidarity becomes most apparent when the entire village rallies around Niko, the coffee-shop proprietor, whose increasingly attractive establishment has not only caught the eye of tourists but jealous village residents who attempt to have him shut down.

In the epilogue, Just only briefly points out that when he returned to Spartokhori in 1994 the community was faced with several challenges from population decline to a steadily increasing wave of tourists. However, given the lack of data (which Just quickly reminds us could not have been duplicated in just a few weeks) on kinship and family as aspects still explicitly recognized by Spartokhoriots, one cannot help but wonder if, for example, the two new migrant Albanian families would, as Just predicts (p. 257), *become* Spartokhoriots if their children were to marry into the village.

While Just’s biggest contribution, in my opinion, is the attention he gives to the preservation of local identity among Spartokhoriots, “despite mobility, dispersal, diversity and active participation in creating change” (p. 32), a general sense of frustration nonetheless arises towards the end of the book as the reader struggles not to think of the Spar-

tokhoriots' sense of solidarity as something that has all but vanished. Repeating the Spartokhoriot rhetoric of community, Just is himself doubtful that Spartokhoriots would continue to say: "We're all one family" (p. 258).

Though I agree with the author that it is worth trying to reinvigorate kinship studies, an area that evidently has the ability to add real value and meaning to people's lives, only future research will determine whether contemporary Spartokhoriots' sense of community is still congruent with kinship and family. This book should stimulate undergraduates and graduates to undertake kinship studies and will no doubt be of interest to those who teach about kinship. Just is an excellent writer who can turn even the most seemingly mundane aspects of kinship into something interesting and meaningful.

Gerhard Baer, Manuel Gutiérrez Estévez, Mark Münzel, (Coords.), *Arts indigènes et anthropologie. Artes indígenas y antropología*, Société Suisse des Américanistes/Schweizerische Amerikanisten-Gesellschaft. Bulletin 64-65 (2000-2001), 254 pages.

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Il est toujours difficile de rendre compte d'un ouvrage collectif et encore plus lorsqu'il s'agit, comme c'est le cas, des actes d'un colloque concernant un champ d'étude relativement marginal au sein de l'anthropologie: celui des arts. Bien que le projet de repenser les formes d'expression artistique 'non occidentales' en s'éloignant de la conception de l'art propre à l'histoire occidentale tout en regardant de près les processus créatifs et le rôle des créateurs autochtones soit en cours depuis Franz Boas, l'anthropologie de l'art cherche encore aujourd'hui sa voie théorique et méthodologique (Gell, 1998). L'ouvrage dont je vais faire le compte rendu est un bon exemple d'une anthropologie des arts qui essaie de trouver sa voie.

À l'automne 1999, à l'occasion du 50^e anniversaire de la Société Suisse des Américanistes / Schweizerische Amerikanisten-Gesellschaft (SSA/SAG), eut lieu à Trujillo (Espagne) un colloque sur «Arts indigènes et anthropologie». Le Bulletin 64-65 de la SSA/SAG publie les 25 textes (4 en français et 21 en espagnol) présentés à Trujillo et, dès l'introduction, on attire notre attention sur deux questions. D'une part ses organisateurs signalent que les arts de l'Amérique «latine» ont été négligés par les penseurs occidentaux et, d'autre part, ils affirment que l'ethnologie américaniste a longtemps exclu de sa réflexion tout ce qui n'était pas «traditionnel» ou «purement indien». Le titre du colloque fut volontairement «imprécis et même ambigu», et le pluriel «arts» de même que la référence à l'anthropologie devaient conduire à un éloignement de la conception occidentale de l'Art qui permettrait repenser la production esthétique amérindienne.

Mais la réflexion des organisateurs du colloque par rapport au titre choisi ne s'est pas étendue au qualificatif «indigènes» accolé aux «arts», reflétant ainsi la persistance d'un biais ethnocentrique qui concerne la dénomination des arts propres aux sociétés autrefois «primitives», «sauvages» ou «barbares» (Silver, 1979). Ce manque de réflexion explique peut-être pourquoi cet ouvrage rassemble des articles extrêmement divers en ce qui concerne ce que chaque auteur(e) considère «arts indigènes» (mythes, rituels, chansons, poèmes, artisans, fêtes, masques, histoire de vie d'un chaman, arts domestiques, tables pour les morts...). Malgré l'intérêt de la démarche initiale, un certain nombre des textes publiés dans ce Bulletin renvoient vers une image «exotisante» des soi-disant «arts indigènes» qui empêche de penser conjointement arts occidentaux et non occidentaux (Geertz, 1983) et qui, généralement, sauf dans l'article d'Eva Garrido Izaguirre «Categorías del gusto en la escultura de Ocuchimo...», ne retiennent pas vraiment sur le plan analytique les effets idéaux et matériels du colonialisme et du postcolonialisme (Philips et Steiner, 1999) sur ces «arts indigènes».

À la faveur de la description et de l'analyse de différents «arts indigènes» antiques et contemporains de nombreux groupes ethniques – Mapuche (Argentine), Secoya (Amazonie équatorienne), Ticuna (Brésil, Colombie, Pérou), Yague (Amazonie péruvienne), Huicholes, Coras et Tzeltales (Mexique), Maya-Chortis (Guatemala), Chiriguano-Chané (Bolivie), une grande diversité de thèmes sont proposés dans les 25 textes inclus dans cet ouvrage que l'on peut tout de même regrouper en deux corpus. D'une part, il s'agit des textes apparaissant sous les rubriques «Introduction thématique» et «Réflexions sur l'art»; et d'autre part, ceux regroupés sous les rubriques «Art et artisanat»; «Masques, rites et iconographie»; «Arts et fêtes»; «Esthétique, goût, morale et identité» et «Voix et traditions orales». Dans le premier corpus de textes, on traite des problématiques qui concernent la place des recherches sur l'art en anthropologie; on traite également du développement d'une anthropologie de l'art qui réussit progressivement à s'éloigner de la conception occidentale de l'Art et de la théorie du beau de Kant; enfin, certains auteurs de ce corpus se penchent aussi sur la difficile question de l'expérience (ou de la réponse) esthétique. Malheureusement, les auteurs paraissent ignorer – du moins en ce qui concerne les références bibliographiques – l'existence d'ouvrages en anthropologie de l'art, vieux d'une trentaine d'années (Otten, 1971), et d'autres bien plus récents (Marcus et Meyers, 1995), qui auraient sans doute contribué à une approche plus nuancée des «arts indigènes».

C'est le cas de l'article de Manuel Gutiérrez Estévez «Los sentidos y su moralidad: apuntes sobre la mezcla y la risa entre los amerindios». L'auteur de ce texte retient le fait selon lequel une approche purement esthétique de l'art est impossible dans la mesure où nos sens sont culturellement et historiquement constitués. Cependant, pour développer cette idée extrêmement intéressante, il passe d'une lettre écrite en 1784 par un habitant de Arequipa (sud du Pérou)