

years on this fertile and temperate plain, bisected by the Pan-American Highway and only 75 kilometers from Guatemala City's international airport. Fragile hybrids including kohlr crops and other speciality vegetables were unable to be grown competitively on the large (absentee ladino) commercial farms due to high labour and supervisory costs. However, they thrive on the smallholdings of Maya farmers, where local agricultural expertise and the tradition of household labour pays off. The result, then, of the introduction of new crops for the export market in Tecpan and Patzun, unlike many cases elsewhere, has been a more equitable distribution of resources along ethnic lines.

In the concluding chapter on convergent strategies and cultural logics, Fischer reminds us that at the beginning of his fieldwork he intended to document the constructed nature of Maya identity, and to show how this construction is influenced by contemporary political and economic conditions. Instead, he found that his informants tended to reassert the essential nature of their identity. Clearly, Maya identity today is much more than the product of counter-hegemonic resistance, as cultural logics are deployed in novel circumstances, maintaining an important sense of continuity in the face of change (p. 244). Thus, while the project of promoting a pan-Maya identity involves radical remapping of the ways in which millions of individuals view the world and their position in it, through adoption of linguistic innovations such as neologisms, generic dress, neotraditional use of ancient symbols, etc., this is far from being purely instrumental constructivism with an overriding political agenda. "Rather, it is the conscious and unconscious dialectical reconciliation of received cultural logics and changing real-world circumstances that both reproduces and alters cultural patterns... If culture is like a game, then it is as much Scrabble as Battleship, with actors building words and meanings not by tearing down the existing structure but by adding to it, and changing it indelibly" (pp. 247-248).

In sum, *Cultural Logics and Global Economies* is a theoretically sophisticated, in-depth study of the cultural identity politics of an indigenous people, which is a valuable contribution to not only Maya studies, but also to contemporary ethnography, particularly of the interpretive bent. Upfront about his research methods, positioning and a priori biases, Fischer gives a detailed and nuanced account of fieldwork as a process, not just a product, which is reflexive but does not deflect attention away from his subjects of inquiry. The organization of the book is tight and the exposition logically developed. The text flows quite well, and is expressed with a minimum of jargon, though the language is, of necessity, somewhat dense at times and undergraduate students might find some sections to be tough reading. Extracts from field notes and interviews with informants help to ground the argument in the lived experiences he intends to privilege. Perhaps, inclusion of more of these vignettes would have made the theoretical arguments more accessible to a broader audience. It is important to reach a wide readership with the

message that the contemporary Maya are active and creative agents in the forging of evolving identities, rather than romantic relics of a dead civilization, or obstacles to "progress" by virtue of their lingering traditions, their "otherness."

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**Susantha Goonatilake**, *Anthropologizing Sri Lanka: A Eurocentric Misadventure*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, xiv + 306 pages.

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In *Anthropologizing Sri Lanka* Susantha Goonatilake, a Sri-Lankan researcher cross-appointed to the New York Center for Studies of Social Change and the Vidyarthi Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka, reviews recent work on Sri Lanka by four renowned anthropologists affiliated with prestigious Western universities: Richard Gombrich (Oxford), Gananath Obeyesekere (Princeton), Bruce Kapferer (London), and S.J. Tambiah (Harvard). Through a critical analysis of their works on Sinhala Buddhism, Goonatilake wishes to demonstrate these authors' Eurocentric biases and limited understanding of Sri Lanka's culture and society. Goonatilake sees in the works of Gombrich, Obeyesekere, Kapferer, and Tambiah a resurgence of a "virulent colonial anthropology in Sri Lanka" (p. xiv) and rebukes these authors for offering misinformed accounts of Sinhala Buddhism.

To develop his argument, Goonatilake has divided his book into five parts. First, he situates the anthropological research on Sri Lanka in the global context of the history of anthropology. In part 2, he reviews Gombrich's and Obeyesekere's attempt to interpret Sinhala Buddhism with reference to Protestantism. Thirdly, he examines Kapferer's analysis of the central role of sorcery in Sinhala society. In part four, he presents Tambiah's study of fratricide. Finally, he focusses on the cultural and educational backgrounds of these experts on the anthropology of Sri Lanka. Therefore, what Goonatilake proposes is not only an analysis of anthropological research on Sri Lanka but also a study of the anthropologists themselves.

In part 1, Goonatilake describes the dominant and yet evolving theoretical landscape within which anthropological research tends to be framed. He begins with a reminder that much of current anthropological work is still based on Western models originating in 17th-century Europe. However, he also points to competing frameworks emerging in Asia and non-Western countries that seem to have had a growing impact not only on ways to conduct anthropological research but also on the ways in which anthropologists, especially those from Western countries, are perceived by the societies they purport to study. He also points out how the spread of Buddhism in Western countries may have impacted Western

thinking, much in the same way previous contacts between Europeans and Sri Lankans had changed Sri Lankan thinking. Emphasizing that Sri Lanka has never been isolated from foreign influence, Goonatilake concludes part one by questioning anthropological work on Sri Lankan society that fails to consider the many cross-influences between European and Sri-Lankan cultures and ways of thinking.

In chapters 2-5, the author analyzes the thesis of "Protestant Buddhism" proposed by Gombrich and Obeyesekere. Goonatilake criticizes the methodology of the authors, as well as their knowledge of the contexts within which concepts of Protestantism and Buddhism have evolved and have been used. Richard Gombrich's book *Buddhist Precept and Practice* (1991) describes the study of a village in which Buddhist life is undisturbed by external influence and then transformed by the introduction of Protestantism by missionaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In Gombrich and Obeyesekere's *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (1988), the anthropologists based their study on Obeyesekere's idea of Protestant Buddhism. For him, Protestant Buddhism consists in protest against the British and also in an integration of various characteristics of those colonizers. Protestant Buddhism has in turn been transformed through changes in class-based values.

Goonatilake highlights the Eurocentric biases apparent in Gombrich's conception of Buddhism, including common Western misunderstandings of Sri Lankan concepts such as *dukkha*. He also faults Gombrich for arriving at the conclusion—on rather scanty data—that Sri Lankan practices and precepts of Buddhism are discrepant. As Goonatilake points out, is it not the case for every religion? Another problem with Gombrich and Obeyesekere's perspective, according to Goonatilake, is that they have wrongfully explained subsequent transformation of "Protestant Buddhism" by mixing the term "protest" with "protestantism." All protests do not trace their philosophical or religious roots to Protestantism.

In part 3, Goonatilake presents what he perceives as another biased explanation of Sri Lankan society: Kapferer's work on practices of exorcism and sorcery. This object of study is not a problem in itself. Rather, as Goonatilake points out, the problem is the fact that Kapferer purports to explain every aspect of Sri Lanka's society by looking at only these two phenomena. Furthermore, in his second book *Legends of People, Myths of State: Violence, Intolerance and Political Culture in Sri Lanka and Australia* (1988), Kapferer mistakenly applies the theory of *Homo hierarchus* to explain ethnic problems, even though Dumont himself excluded Sri Lanka from his theory.

The fourth part deconstructs S.J. Tambiah's explanation of ethnic problems. The arguments against Tambiah are not always convincing and they often sound more like personal attacks. The general tone of chapters 9 and 10 is harsh, leaving the reader with more questions than answers.

Part 5 questions the expert status of Gombrich, Obeyesekere, Kapferer and Tambiah. Goonatilake claims that

these authors rely on secondary sources provided by a particular "cognitive matrix" composed of members of non-governmental organizations, institutions, and individual social scientists. Goonatilake questions the exclusive reliance on these informants given that they may not represent the views of the local people they study. Furthermore, last but not least, for Goonatilake their political orientations undermine their capacity to understand social problems. In particular, these informants may tend to approve of pro-Indian insurrections and hold political views that are at odds with many other Sri Lankans. Thus, he argues, relying solely on their perceptions and taking these at face value may undermine a researcher's capacity to understand social problems.

Goonatilake's book offers a troubling description of the works of well-known anthropologists. Some passages of the book are dismaying, and the reader may wonder whether there is any "valid" ethnographic account of Sri Lanka? For Goonatilake, the answer is apparently no. Although he considers some ethnographic descriptions acceptable, he does not deem the methodologies and insights proposed by the four authors to be appropriate. For him, their analyses tend to leave out important issues, such as the highly literate quality of Sri Lankan society, its national politics and economic realities. In addition, he doubts these authors' knowledge of Sri Lanka because of their limited proficiency in the local language and their excessive reliance on questionable secondary sources.

Given these reservations, it seems difficult to predict what is the future of the anthropology of Sri Lanka. The author claims that a non-Western sociology-anthropology has been elaborated mainly by Ralph Pieris and Laksiri Jayasuriya (who only published one article each) and himself (pp. 101-102).

Goonatilake raises interesting questions, but the evidence he proposes to back up his arguments are not always convincing. Given Goonatilake's claims to have a better understanding of Sri Lanka than the "experts" he derides, it would have been appropriate to introduce a self-reflective aspect of his own research. Also, when he claims that the anthropology of this country is at a dead end, providing the reader with possible research alternatives may have helped to tone down the author's rather harsh and polemical arguments. Presenting his own work and proposing alternatives would also have completed the sociology of anthropology of Sri Lanka that he presented in the last part of the book. Furthermore, the reader also has to keep in mind that the focus of the book is anthropological studies of Sinhalese Buddhist society, which means that Goonatilake leaves out other valuable contributions to anthropology by Gombrich, Obeyesekere, Kapferer and Tambiah.

Overall, the arguments in the book are interesting as an illustration of the kind of critical analysis to which contemporary anthropologists may be submitted to. In that sense the book is instructive.