

In my view the main contribution of the half century long glottochronology debate has been to focus some attention to fundamental questions of scientific reasoning and the nature of knowledge in linguistics. Critics seldom bother much with this, self-satisfied in their majority opinion. But reviled proponents cannot avoid it, and their introspection is very illuminating, even to those without the slightest interest in glottochronology.

Sheila Embleton (I: 143-166) gives a detailed history of the work done on glottochronology (and lexicostatistics) over the years, and gives a very cogent account of the non-rational factors that go into decisions by linguists to accept or not some particular methodology. It gives one pause to recognize how little of the linguistic scholarly thought process seems to be rational, when carefully examined. Presumably, we are most irrational when we deal with matters we do not want to waste time on, but manage to do better in the few matters we are willing and able to devote adequate time to. Perhaps this should teach us humility, and tolerance for ambiguity.

Baxter and Ramer (I: 167-188) simply, yet elegantly, illustrate the value of statistical reasoning in linguistics. Using a computer to compare a short English and Hindi word list, they run a simple program designed to spot signs of phonetic similarity, comparing words with similar meanings. It finds nine matchings out of 33 items (where to my eye, only about three look like possible cognates). Then, they let the computer run 1000 comparisons of random matchings of the same words, to see if the nine where meanings match can be attributed to random chance or not. It turns out that only 11/1000 runs produce nine or more matchings, a statistically insignificant number. On that basis, they conclude that English and Hindi show statistically significant signs of being related. I'm impressed. Still, I wish they had tried the same thing with an additional pair, say French and Russian.

Of the non-linguistic papers, three especially stood out as especially worth reading for a linguist. McMahon and McMahon (I: 59-74) summarize new developments in biological estimations of time, comparing and contrasting recent chronological work in linguistics. Peter Bellwood (I: 109-142) compared archaeological and linguistic accounts of the Austronesian expansion out of Taiwan and across the Pacific, and more briefly of other parts of the world where he thinks agriculture was a factor in the formation of language families.

Finally, Clackson (II: 441-454) makes us aware of how we may confuse non-linguists by using a term like Proto-Indo-European in multiple contextually defined meanings. Lacking a good grasp of the (unstated) technical concepts that distinguish these multiple meanings so clearly in our own minds, he concludes that "one of the key ways in which reconstructed languages differ from actual spoken languages is that they are achronic, that is, they combine data from a wide range of different chronological layers...The method cannot distinguish between what is a late, or even post-, Indo-European feature and what is early or pre-Indo-European." This should warn us to use our terms clearly, explicitly distinguishing Proto-X,

pre-Proto-X, Proto-X dialects, early daughters of Proto-X, and the like. And, when writing for non-linguists, we should probably explicitly state how we know which of these is which.

Each of the remaining authors writes on a slightly different topic, or from a different point of view. They are covering broad subjects in very little space, and as a result several papers are essentially reviews of some section of the literature, accompanied by the author's views.

There is no way a short review can even begin to point out all the errors in reasoning, out of date ideas, and crucial omissions found in many of the papers. Caveat lector! In general, authors in need of firm editorial guidance didn't get it (or resisted it). This is particularly serious in the matter of several papers evidently translated from foreign languages, where the English is unreadable without an unabridged dictionary. Readers are busy people, and are not likely to bother to decode these. That translated papers out of Eastern Europe can be clear and readable is proven by Starostin (I: 223-266), and the same clarity should be required of others. Several other papers are obviously written with only specialists in some exotic topic in mind, scholars who are intimately familiar with an enormous amount of background. These papers would have required quite a lot of introduction in order to become meaningful to a general audience.

The two volumes are printed on glossy paper, and by direct artificial light (a reading lamp) there is a serious problem with glare. Finally, the binding in one of the volumes broke almost as soon as I opened it, and the pages are not very securely bound. I presume libraries will have to have these volumes rebound almost right away, and for this there is only 2.5 cm of margin. For 50 pounds sterling, one might have expected better.

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**Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland and Lyn Lofland (eds.), *The Handbook of Ethnography*, London: Sage, 2002, xviii + 507 pages.**

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Rather surprisingly *The Handbook of Ethnography*, edited by three British and two American sociologists, arrives hot on the heels of another sociological *Handbook* devoted to ethnography. This earlier one edited by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln is in its second edition (1994, 2000) and in the preparation stages for its third. Both handbook efforts are encyclopedic in their scope mainly featuring writings by sociologists and anthropologists, while the Atkinson *et al* volume also adds assorted other disciplines. While the earlier *Handbook* relies mainly on American scholars, the more recent volume claims that "international excellence was our primary criterion" (p. 1) for the selection of authors. The cast includes 21 British, 20 American and 2 each of Dutch, Finnish and Australian aca-

demics, comprising 31 sociologists, 9 anthropologists, 4 education scholars and one each from folklore, women's studies and the philosophy of science. Seemingly aware that the comparison between the two handbooks would be unavoidable, the editors offer a critique of the earlier volume(s), indicating that their own intention is to distance themselves from "the five (six) moments model of Lincoln and Denzin" ...[which] "can do violence to the complexities of research and its historical development" ...[such] a chronological, and linear view of development...is in danger of doing a disservice to earlier generations of ethnographers" (pp. 2-3). While these differences do not appear thunderous at first glance, reading all of the chapters leaves one with a clear sense of the strong support offered for the classic ethnography, not through proclaiming its familiar canons, but rather through displaying its multifaceted progeny, deep diversities, multiplicity of methods and broad applicability. Intriguing as the question of differences between the two parallel volumes may be, the Atkinson *et al* volume stands on its own as a worthy addition to the gargantuan growth in the discourses on ethnography.

The editors hope to present a "tour d'horizon of ethnographic methods and ethnographic research in the social sciences" (p. 1) in an undertaking that they readily agree is diffuse and beyond the ambitions of any single volume. To accomplish this they organize thirty-three diffuse chapters into three sections. The first section explores the origins of ethnography, various "intellectual and substantive contexts," differences in disciplinary and national orientations and seminal conceptual theoretical strands involved in ethnographic thinking. To meet these ends there are rich offerings on the Chicago school of ethnography (Mary Jo Deegan), the ethnographic roots of symbolic interactionism (Paul Rock), an overview of the ethnographic commitments of British social anthropology (Sharon Macdonald) and American cultural anthropology (James Faubion). To these are added the ethnography-centred works in community studies of various kinds (Lodewijk Brunt) and the less-well known fieldwork methods of the Mass-Observation studies of Britain (Liz Stanley). The section is rounded out by those theoretical and analytic propositions and assumptions that have come to be associated with ethnographic work—the Orientalism problematic, so much in the very fibre of anthropological thought (Julie Marcus), the basic contributions of phenomenology (Ilja Maso), ethnomethodology (Melvin Pollner and Robert Emerson), semiotics and semantics (Peter Manning) and grounded theory (Kathy Charmaz and Richard G. Mitchell).

The second section is devoted to "distinctive domains of ethnographic research," those locales where ethnographic work has contributed definitive knowledge or shaped the academic portrait of the cultures involved. These are the ethnographies of health and medicine (Michael Bloor), educational settings (Tuula Gordon, Janet Holland and Elina Lahelma), deviance (Dick Hobbs), science and technology (David Hess), childhood (Allison James), material culture (Christopher Tilley), cultural studies (Joost Van Loon), communication (Eliz-

abeth Keating), work (Vicki Smith) and photography and film (Mike Ball and Greg Smith). This is a well-documented state of the art perspective on topics that, like the titles of courses in a curriculum, are familiar to all social scientists.

The third explores "key aspects of data collection, analysis and representation," key domains and debates. Some of the necessities for any handbook are addressed here: career socialization (Christopher Wellin and Gary Allan Fine), ethics (Elizabeth Murphy and Robert Dingwall), participant observation and field notes (Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw), interviewing (Barbara Heyl), narrative analysis (Martin Cortazzi), life stories (Ken Plummer), autoethnography (Deborah Reed-Danahay), feminist ethnography (Beverley Skeggs), ethnography after postmodernism (Jonathan Spencer), computer applications (Nigel Fielding), ethnodrama (Jim Mienczakowski) and finally postmodern, poststructural and postcritical ethnography (Patti Lather). The differences between sections two and three are not entirely self-explanatory, for example as to why photography and film reside in a section devoted to distinctive domains rather than to aspects of data collection and representation. Yet the chapters in themselves, as individual attempts, support the editors' intention of presenting the "presents and futures" of the enterprise, the nature of "ethnographic labour" and the reflexivity involved in the art and practice of ethnography (p. 322-323).

Each chapter inevitably invites a critique but, given the tradition of such book reviews, I can evade the onerous task of applauding the sparks of imagination or occasionally enumerating the banalities in each, and instead direct attention to those facets of the work that might provoke the interest, or alternately, the ire of anthropologists. For many years I have heard sociologists deride the offensive assumption of anthropologists who claim ethnography as the sole domain of their own discipline. Two chapters in particular are destined to challenge that discipline-centred ignorance. Mary Jo Deegan traces the "continuing tapestry" of the Chicago school of ethnography, the history of that institution between 1892 and 1942, its active and activist descendants and, most importantly, the classic urban ethnographies published by the University of Chicago Press. Listed among these are such enduring contributions to social science, to urban studies and to the ethnographic record of North America as W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Poland and America* (1918-1920), Nels Anderson's *The Hobo* (1923), Louis Wirth's *The Ghetto* (1928), Harvey Zorbaugh's *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (1929), Clifford Shaw's *The Jack Roller* (1930), Paul Cressey's *The Taxi-Dance Hall* (1932) and William F. Whyte's continuing example of what ethnographic excellence looks like—*Street Corner Society* (1943). Much of this "hands on" method was promoted by Robert E. Park, a leading figure in Chicago sociology, who, interestingly, was connected to the anthropologist Robert Redfield by marriage and by collegial interests in social science. This sociology and its promotion of ethnography had a towering presence over the discipline from 1892 well through the last century to the present. Reputedly

by the 1930s the University of Chicago had trained half of the sociologists in the world (p. 11).

The University of Chicago sociology is also the focus of Paul Rock's chapter. He traces the beginnings of the theoretical-methodological approach of symbolic interactionism and its ethnographic imperatives. In doing so he connects the work of such recognizable figures as George Herbert Mead, the philosopher, with Erving Goffman, Herbert Blumer and others to the practice of participant observation, the focus on the everyday and the production of ethnographic writing. Despite their potential contributions to ethnographic work in anthropology, to participant observation, to the ethnography of speaking and other interests entertained by anthropologists, symbolic interactionist propositions have not penetrated the anthropological ethos, apart from the work of a few practitioners like Gerald Berreman.

Of further interest are two sociologically inspired chapters. One of these by Lodewijk Brunt organizes ethnography under the rubric of communities and community studies, thereby giving credence to sociological as well as anthropological work and bringing together tribes, clans, bands, villages, cities, towns, neighbourhoods, immigrants, families, social classes and "imagined" communities of many kinds into some kind of common symbolic entity. Undoubtedly adjusting to the direction set for the volume, the author does not push his analysis into some intriguing spaces signalled by his particular choice of topic such as questions about the borders and limits of ethnography, of macro demands for knowledge beyond communities and other epistemological factors. The other chapter by Liz Stanley introduces North American social scientists to observational fieldwork carried out in Britain between 1937 and 1939 and again immediately after WWII. Intended to capture "the historical moment," the Mass-Observation's fieldwork was portrayed as "a new form of social science, an anthropology at home, a synthetic sociology, and as an alternative to the very different form that the university-based social sciences of the day had taken (p. 93)." Arising in response to the royal abdication crisis of 1936, the fieldwork project was committed to linking "ordinary people" to science by having them observe each other within a variety of social occurrences and on a variety of debatable social issues. As these "subjective cameras" and the demands of the "new science" were at odds with each other, the author implies that the interests of ethnography were set back for some time to come, defeated by "high positivism." The emotional and ethical appeals of this type of fieldwork would be congenial to the ethnographic cultures of today.

Although obviously ethnographic fieldwork is always hard work, the chapter by Christopher Wellin and Gary Fine offers a fresh perspective on the enterprise. It places what is usually seen as "methodology" into the arena in which careers and labour is usually situated. The approach puts a different complexion on the complaints echoed by generations of anthropologists—the difficulties of entrée into the field, the continual presence of ethical issues, the impact of the research, the retention of disciplinary rules, the translation into favoured

theoretical bundles, the mundane pressures of everyday fieldworking lives and a myriad of other dilemmas. They become part of the "dirty work of making a living," the problems of dealing with bosses and superiors, labour-intensive but not capital-intensive and indeed heir to all of the exigencies and demands recognized by all occupations and bureaucracies. The chapter is both provocative and entertaining. Yet anthropologists will inevitably bristle at being informed that they are "less subject to critical reflection" than are sociologists. The *Writing Culture* efforts are dismissed as "broad, political and literary critiques of ethnography and its linkages to colonial power" rather than reflection (p. 325), thereby giving no acknowledgment that those very efforts were only possible because of extensive earlier reflection. Parenthetically, those who are tiring of the continual genuflection to *Writing Culture* and to Geertz, will find some solace as well as some amusement in Jonathan Spencer's playfully iconoclastic chapter on post-modern ethnographies. For him the mavericks who broke the mould, like Bateson, did so well before the volume in question and Clifford Geertz is a "literary dandy" (p. 445).

Anthropological attention will also be piqued by other outsider views of the anthropological enterprise. Beverly Skeggs maps the topography of feminist ethnography in ways that would find a sympathetic audience among anthropologists. That is until she declares point blank "a number of anthropologists used ethnography to spy for the US government" (p. 427). Every anthropologist who lived through the problems of the Vietnamese war, the academic responses to it and the actions and activisms of the time, and who has read the numerous accounts that have emerged in the writings within the discipline since then, will affirm the complexities of the issues, the diffuse views of those inevitably drawn into the debates and the impenetrable fuzziness of the accounts provided about the uses to which ethnographies were actually directed. That such multifaceted happenstances become translated into single sentence confident summaries is, I suppose, an expected part of the academic as well as every other textualizing effort.

In all, the collection proposes to celebrate "a certain unity in diversity" (p. 6). As satisfying as the collection of chapters has shown itself to be, it leaves the reader with a hunger for the next stages in the ethnographic drama. Do these well-executed foundations lead to some kind of epistemic introspections? What will interdisciplinarity enable in the ethnographic scenario? What kind of powerful knowledge-producing vehicle is the ethnographic narration? What is the nature of the description discourse itself? How do we come to know? Surely we do ethnography every day of our lives and a non-ethnographed life is hardly possible? Can these familiar assumptions of everyday knowledge be teased out for ethnographic reflection? What kinds of interlocutors will herald the next stage? Where and how will the boundaries of ethnography be stretched?