

missionary, George Brown, examines his collecting as it relates to the Christian ideal of the gift. Rainer Buschmann focuses on German New Guinea insightfully to explore the tensions between the scientific and commercial collecting exemplified by German museums and colonial trading firms. Chicago's Field Museum is justly famous for its Melanesian collections, especially the A.B. Lewis Collection, but Robert Welsch focuses on the three less famous ones collected variously by its Curator of Anthropology George Dorsey, a Hamburg curio dealer, and an overseas employee of the German New Guinea Company. Lastly, Elizabeth Edwards makes a case study of Haddon and Seligman's 1898 Cambridge Torres Strait Expedition in terms of the hitherto-little-examined relationship between collecting artefacts and photographs and the way in which meanings are constructed. Concluding the book is a brief epilogue by Nicholas Thomas, who, while acknowledging that the data are probably thin, regrets that the essays have less to say about indigenous agency and 'the issue of negotiation around the practice of collecting' (p. 274) than about European agency.

Overall, this is a rich collection of essays, brimming with data and, for the most part, cogently analysed. It shifts the discussion regarding ethnographic objects from repatriation issues to the original collections themselves and to the social and political arenas which they historically inhabited.

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BANKS, MARCUS. *Visual methods in social research*. xvi, 201 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. £60.00 (cloth), £19.99 (paper)

In this helpful introductory text, Banks offers advice to social scientists interested in using visual imagery in their work, and discusses the benefits of doing so. The author's approach is neither dogmatic nor evangelical, combining instead quiet confidence with cautionary good sense. The result is a very solid book which will be particularly useful for students in sociology and anthropology hoping to engage with issues of visual representation.

Visual methods in social research covers empirical approaches to image creation as well as image analysis. Drawing on wide-ranging examples, from holiday postcards to vintage film, Banks illustrates how methodology relating to visual form in the social sciences is

'[either] scattered or confined to quite specific areas' (p. 2). The author makes effective use of rhetorical questions and discrete subsections (such as 'unnatural vision' and 'reading narratives'), thereby encouraging the reader to reconsider often-unquestioned assumptions about visual culture. Banks is well versed both topically and technologically, and jumps nimbly from caste in India to the Kayapó of Brazil, and from Polaroid to webcams. Moreover, by choosing explicitly contemporary reference points, such as Jörg Haider or Quentin Tarantino's now-cult film, *Pulp fiction*, he succeeds in engaging younger readers on their own visual territory.

A number of sections are particularly strong and worthy of special attention. Discussing the presence of foreign objects and non-indigenous bodies in ethnographic films, Banks points out that in future generations, the 'sight of "imported" artefacts would not be taken as mournful tokens of lost innocence, but celebrated as cultural appropriations' (p. 144). About the aptly named HADDON web-based meta-catalogue of archival ethnographic film and footage, the author's own creation, he is characteristically modest. The existence of this online catalogue and of a supporting website for the book under discussion, <www.rsl.ox.ac.uk/isca/vismeth>, embodies the hands-on approach which Banks advocates. While largely photo-centric, *Visual methods* also offers useful pointers for working with computer-based digital media, one advantage of which is the potential for 'research parity between sound, text and image' (p. 162). Increasingly, as academic publishing becomes a not-for-profit enterprise and publishers attempt to curtail their production costs, a well-conceived website of video clips and images can provide access to a supporting corpus of rich visual data which can help to illustrate a written text. Focusing on the *Yanomamö interactive* CD-ROM, Banks demonstrates how the use of multimedia 'opens up a non-linear space within which the detail can be absorbed at the user's own pace, and the arguments which rest upon that detail can be fully explored' (p. 165). This is the power of bits and bytes: the social researcher can 'usefully employ multimedia to state her own case but also to outline the alternative interpretations and provide access to the raw materials to allow the user to test them all' (p. 164). Banks concludes his otherwise cautious narrative with an unexpected, albeit entirely justified, sting in the tail. Having offered the disclaimer that his book contains little explicit theory, he takes a well-aimed swipe at scholars who advocate nothing other than 'swooping god-like into other people's lives and gathering "data" ... according to a predetermined theoretical agenda [which] strikes me not simply as morally dubious but intellectually flawed' (p. 179).

Students would be well served to read this book alongside James Monaco's now-classic *How to read a film* (currently in its third edition). In tandem, these background handbooks are amply sufficient to prepare researchers in social science with enough practical know-how, together with a healthy dose of reflexive understanding, to ensure the responsible use of visual imagery in their work. Banks is at his best when he stresses the material nature of visual media and the cultural nature of vision (bringing to mind John Berger's work), and in demonstrating how visual objects are entangled in social relations. In his introduction, Banks suggests that 'good visual research rests upon a judicious reading of both internal and external narratives' (p. 12). His own approach – critical yet mindful – does just this.

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CAIRNS, ED & MÍCHEÁL D. ROE (eds). *The role of memory in ethnic conflict*, xii, 199 pp., tables, bibliogr. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave, 2003. £47.50 (cloth)

This book examines a number of case studies in which ethnic conflicts are, it is claimed, fuelled by a sense of past and unresolved injustice. In particular, it explores the paradox that ethnic memories may sustain conflict in this regard, but are at the same time empowering in relation to the present. It also illuminatingly notes that collective memories (enshrined in the group's symbols and sentiments) may well not coincide with the memories of corresponding individuals (enshrined in personal experiences). The book offers some tentative indication of how an awareness of such issues and conundrums might facilitate the practical resolution of inter-ethnic conflict. Of course, it is made clear that memories are as much constructions of the present as precipitates of the past.

The case studies offer an appropriate coverage, notably on Black versus White Australians, the Northern Ireland communities, Israel, and South Africa. There is interesting discussion of efforts to resolve ethnic conflict, for example in the school classroom and in Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. But the book does not display very strong theoretical leadership. The editors offer a brief introduction, mainly devoted to summarizing the ethnographic chapters that follow. This is succeeded by P. Devine-Wright's chapter, entitled 'A theoretical overview of memory and conflict'. This usefully runs through a number of relevant perspectives on the stated topic, but only devotes a couple of pages to the question of conflict between ethnic groups as such; it has little voice of its own. The final chapter, again authored

by the editors, throws into relief some of the analytical distinctions offered in the ethnographic chapters, but adds little more to what is said there already.

For me, a key problem is that memory is only one of the relevant social processes that sustains ethnic conflict – as the title of the book tacitly states. Not to relate it systematically to other factors means that history is seen as the principal impetus of ethnic conflict, and the re-envisioning of history is in turn regarded as the recipe for conflict resolution. As the final chapter states: 'societies torn apart by ethnic conflict must, at some stage, face up to the past, especially if they wish to deal with conflict in the long term' (p. 179).

The notion of 'ethnic group' is also treated as unproblematic. Barely any analytical attention is given to what is at stake in relation to the wider world such that people find it worthwhile to reproduce ethnic allegiances, enmities, and memories. Of course, folk ideas consider ethnic conflict in terms of history and memory, and folk imaginations then conclude that repositioning history is the way that such conflict can be defused.

In fact, some of the more interesting ethnographic chapters in the book are devoted precisely to folk processes in this regard. For example, K. Burton and A. McCully talk about conceptions of history in the school classroom in Northern Ireland and of the difficulties teachers experience in trying to engage pupils' personal and family memories with formal historiography. B. Hamber and R.A. Wilson describe the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and the way in which it tends to force 'closure' in relation to past atrocities when individuals are clearly not ready for it. But one might have hoped that analytical syntheses might produce some propositions as to why 'folk' do uphold their notions, especially since modes of conflict resolution are also under discussion. In sum, although this is a not-uninteresting book, with some nice case studies, I also find it something of a missed opportunity.

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HINTON, ALEXANDER LABAN (ed.). *Genocide: an anthropological reader*. ix, 302 pp., tables, bibliogr. Oxford, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2001. £55.00 (cloth), £16.99 (paper)

This *Reader* addresses many aspects of genocide: the international law, accounts of particular collective atrocities, the official rationales offered for these acts, the cultural settings in which the killings took place, and last of all