

Culture



Phillip C. SALZMAN and John G. GALATY (eds.), *Nomads in a Changing World*, Instituto Universitario Orientale Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici Series Minor XXXIII, Naples, 1990. 470 pages, (paper)

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with their intended mix of incomes, family types, and “wheelies” and “walkies” (Windward parlance for those residents confined to wheelchairs and those not- Windward is Canada’s first coop fully accessible to chair-bound residents), tend to lack focus and to wander around a number of points before achieving closure. However, the authors’ practice of providing a concluding section at the end of each chapter that summarizes the main points helps keep the reader on track.

The result is a book that community researchers and activists should have on their shelves. The bibliography alone is worth the price of the book. Cooper and Rodman’s balanced appraisal of the benefits and drawbacks of integrated communities that residents themselves control provides a strong affirmation that these communities do work, and that mixed-income, integrated, non-profit housing cooperatives merit public support. In light of the February 1992 announcement that federal funding was being withdrawn from this housing sector, let us hope that this case study finds its way onto the shelves of federal and provincial policy makers, and into the arsenal of those who are struggling to make Canada’s cities equitable and humane environments for community life.

Phillip C. SALZMAN and John G. GALATY (eds.), *Nomads in a Changing World*, Instituto Universitario Orientale Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici Series Minor XXXIII, Naples, 1990. 470 pages, (paper).

By Ian Whitaker

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This volume is a further symposium on aspects of nomadism edited by Salzman and Galaty, and is an important contribution to the study of migratory pastoralists. Regrettably the book has been long delayed, being the proceedings of a meeting held in London in 1978. As a result some of the discussion is not always cognisant of theoretical developments, and a number of the contributions do not cite publications after the 1970’s. This is unfair to the participants as well as to readers. Some authors have been able to make some revisions, however, and this certainly redeems the collection. The fieldwork on which much of the material is based is all from that period, and ranges from the Middle East, Northern,

West and East Africa, South America, and the European Arctic.

In an important introductory essay, the editors give some consideration to the present status of nomadic societies, many of which now demonstrate a high level of economic specialization, which no doubt contributes to their survival in rapidly industrializing countries. Often livestock play only a minor part in ongoing productive activities, but remain important both ideologically and as reserve option maintained for long-term security. Indeed, as Frantz shows in a fine survey of pastoralism in West Africa, varying external and internal forces — he deplores these two adjectives, but they have utility as shorthand — require a detailed analysis society by society. Not all the contributors have shown such caution.

In some instances sedentarization of nomads, as for example in the Libyan situation reported by Dalton, creates a complex situation which offers individuals considerable choice. In an essay analysing processes in the Middle East, Emanuel Marx shows the competing pressures of wage labour openings, increase in the price of meat, and attempts to maintain token herds, even at a loss. The maintenance of traditional frameworks is often striking, and deserves a more lengthy analysis than it receives in the volume as a whole. The editors acknowledge that there has been a movement away from earlier paradigms which stressed human or cultural ecology, which often in turn emphasised exchange, man/land relations as well as natural elements. This drift in the study of nomadism is to be attributed, they suggest, to cultural materialism and varieties of Marxism.

This is the dominant intellectual basis of several of the studies. In particular Pierre Bonte devotes over 50 pages to an essay on French Marxism, and he points to the continuing significance of class structures, modes of production and the theory of value. Peter Rigby, on the other hand, has an even longer discussion of pastoral production and socialist transformation among three ethnic groups in Tanzania: Ilparakuyo, Maasai and Barbaig. His approach is broadly comparative, but his starting point is Marx’s *Grundrisse*. Not all his readers will share his acceptance of such Marxian labels as the ‘Germanic’ mode of production. However his rich data permit alternative paradigms for those readers who find classical Marxism too restrictive.

Paul Spencer writes in a more ‘mainstream’ social anthropological tradition. The title of his

paper seems to have changed from the index to the title page, but the content puts pastoralism clearly as a form of capitalism. Ingold, in a characteristically stimulating discussion of the transition from pastoralism to ranching among the Skolt Sami (Lapps) of northeastern Finland, sees this transformation as a fusion of an expanding frontier economy with an indigenous pastoral tradition. Ranching is a form of predation that has many common characteristics with hunting, although both cannot coexist since there is a contradiction in terms of property relations. His essay raises points rather different from those of other contributors, yet probably has some theoretical utility in future cross-cultural comparisons.

Finally I will single out Browman's study of Andean llama and alpaca production as one which has great novelty. In a pioneer study he discusses two historical periods: 1530-1680 and 1680-1890. The ethnohistorical materials give a perspective that is lacking in much of the volume, since similar data are not available for other pastoral groups. He points to the similarities between Andean pastoralism, and that in Tibet and Nepal.

This review can only skim over the different issues raised in this further contribution to the study of migratory pastoralism. The significance of such discussions is both theoretical and substantive. One can only regret the great length of time between the original symposium and the appearance of these proceedings.

Sophie BLANCHY-DAUREL, *La vie quotidienne à Mayotte*, Paris, L'Harmattan, Collection repères pour Madagascar et l'océan Indien, 1990, 239 pages, 130 FF.

et

Noël J. GUEUNIER, *La belle ne se marie point, contes comoriens en dialecte malgache de l'île de Mayotte*, Paris, Peeters, Selaf 306, 1990, 400 pages, 1170 FB.

Par Michael Lambek,

Université de Toronto

Ces deux ouvrages sur Mayotte – le premier une étude ethnographique des locuteurs de la majorité shimaore (bantous), et le second, un recueil de légendes en dialecte kibushy de la langue malgache –

portent sur la question du langage et des catégories locales, et s'appuient sur la conviction que la langue et les contes populaires constituent un lieu essentiel de la culture.

Dans son excellent ouvrage, Blanchy tente de décrire la vie quotidienne à Mayotte au moyen des formations socio-culturelles qui modèlent l'expérience. Bien qu'elle fasse une distinction entre ce qu'elle appelle les « mondes matériel, social et mental », dans la pratique, la voie d'accès qu'elle utilise pour chacun d'eux est avant tout linguistique. Elle fournit des terminologies et des définitions détaillées que viennent compléter des chansons, des poèmes et des références à des légendes (qu'elle a publiées ailleurs). Le résultat est un essai intéressant sur le monde conceptuel des locuteurs shimaores, essai ponctué de regards, la plupart du temps très à propos, en terrain plus proprement psychologique.

Contrairement aux locuteurs malgaches, que je connais bien, les locuteurs shimaores semblent très préoccupés de prestige et de hiérarchie. Malheureusement, l'auteure ne marque pas, dans l'information qu'elle présente, de distinction rattachée au prestige ou au statut du sujet interrogé, pas plus qu'elle n'indique auprès de quelle collectivité elle a travaillé. Dans un tel contexte, il est un peu difficile de juger du caractère général des valeurs décrites. Elle insiste beaucoup sur l'importance des relations mère-fille et sur la fragilité des liens conjugaux. Il aurait été particulièrement utile de traiter de ces questions en tenant compte de la hiérarchie sociale; en effet, la nature abstraite de la discussion cache un problème plus général. Sans étude de cas et sans description du mode d'application des interprétations dans des contextes spécifiques d'interaction tels que les conflits, il n'est pas facile de se faire une idée juste des répercussions concrètes liées aux concepts locaux, et de l'intégration de ces derniers au niveau individuel.

En somme, même si Blanchy a réussi dans une large mesure son portrait de l'éthos local, du « style cognitif, émotionnel et conatif », et de « l'aspect interrelationnel de la vie de l'individu à Mayotte », je doute du caractère essentiel des présomptions qui sous-tendent ses arguments et de son désir de « faciliter la compréhension d'un type humain mahorais » (p. 207; mise en relief du soussigné).

Une qualité essentielle de l'ouvrage est la distinction qu'il établit constamment en fonction de l'appartenance sexuelle. L'analyse de l'auteure des contradictions touchant les relations homme-femme