

Okely, Judith. 2012. *Anthropological Practice. Fieldwork and the Ethnographic Method*. London, New York: Berg / Bloomsbury Publishing. xii + 200 pp. Pb.: £16.19. ISBN: 9781845206031.

The book *Anthropological Practice. Fieldwork and Ethnographic Method* is dedicated to Edmund Leach, who introduced its author to Social Anthropology. Research and methodology have always been a quest in itself for any subjects and anthropology is not an exception. As stated by the author, the book concentrates on aspects of the unique field practice of anthropology.

The book is divided into seven chapters apart from the Preface and Acknowledgement, Questions for the Anthropologist in an appendix, as well as notes, references and Index. It begins with the preface and acknowledgement in which the author states that it is an outcome of years of research, lecturing, thinking and writing, and exposures to the different lectures and conferences the author had presented, including the University of Edinburgh as a visiting professor.

The first chapter, Theoretical and Historical Overview, begins with the line ‘Anthropological fieldwork is the subject in practice’ (p. 1). It describes the development of anthropology from armchair to the veranda. Okely argue that when a verb “to conduct” is used in relation to fieldwork, which implies that fieldwork is managed and pre-directed. According to the author, the more satisfactory verb is “to experience”. She continues that author has aimed to explore the total context whereby the anthropologist acquires knowledge through experience. The chapter focuses on discusses about the methodological silence, demand for methods, hypothesis, definition of ethnography, etc. It is an analysis of the total concept and holism of anthropology as a subject citing different scholars, including Malinowski, who spent hours reading novels in the field and later mentioned this in his publication.

The second chapter deals with the choice of the location of fieldwork and the concept of isolation of the people under study; the author presents an account of working among Roma and the choice of location, which (according to the author) includes both deliberate and unconscious factors.

The third chapter, Choice or Change of Topic, discusses topic and its change later in the field or in between the research, by quoting different scholars and their fieldwork such as Morris’s shift in his focus from classification, Howell’s initial knowledge about the people under study through library, Parry’s responses to the interests and concerns of the people whom he encountered, McLeod’s choice of Ghanna through mishearing and many other scholars. This chapter confronts the preconceived notion for people to be studied and the subsequent change in the topic after being in the field.

Participant Observation: Theoretical Overview examines the merits behind the claims of anthropologists regarding participant observation as a method. In the history section, the author clearly denotes the definition as given by Chicago sociologists in the interwar period, though Malinowski had been using the method without being aware of the term. The author also mentioned sociologists considering participant observation as a continuum with observation.

The following chapter on the Participant Observation cites examples from different scholars, such as Wright, McLeod and Herzfeld, who revealed in different contexts the value of going with the flow of local culture.

The sixth chapter, *Fieldwork Embodied* with sub-themes such as body with mind, the body and embodied knowledge, arrivals as sexed and racialised others, etc. The chapter describes the experience of being a part of the people under study. The last chapter focuses on ethnic differences, gender sexuality, and intellectual exchange. The book concludes by describing the anthropologist's adaptability to change in time instead of following some formulaic agenda.

Anthropological Practice. Fieldwork and Ethnographic Method is a book that can be used as a reference. The essence and richness of the book lies in the fact that the author has cited a vast amount of the work of anthropological scholars. The 'Reference and Further Reading' section runs from page 167 to 188. One can easily conclude that indeed the author has done admirable research on anthropological fieldwork methods and the contribution of different scholars. However, there is no chapter on conclusions, leaving readers to wonder "What then should be the correct methodology?". Okely has worked among the Roma and had mentioned and cited about the Roma, without offering any conclusion about her work. The book is therefore lacking in the area of conclusion.

The book is a rich anthropological work and it is worth praising for citing so many anthropological works with such an immense exposure to the great many scholars of anthropology. Name any renowned anthropologist and his/her work will be cited here. If any young anthropologist or someone new to the field is looking for books on research methodology, this work may disappoint, but for someone aware of the richness and beauty of anthropology and looking for critiques to the works of anthropology, this is the right book. On the whole, this reviewer recommends the book to scholars and researchers who are at higher levels of understanding anthropological research.

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