Book Review

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Lost Paradises and the Ethics of Research and Publication. Edited by Francisco M. Salzano and A. Magdalena Hurtado. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Pp. 238. $19.95.

With the publication of Patrick Tierney's book, *Darkness in El Dorado* (W. W. Norton, 2000), tensions that had been building for years in the field of anthropology erupted into the public sphere. The tension between "humanistic anthropologists" and "scientific anthropologists" had led not only to the splitting of some academic departments but also to a general feeling of alienation among some practitioners of the discipline. In his book, Tierney made a series of claims that, while working with the Yanomamo, anthropologist Napolean Chagnon and geneticist James Neel caused or exacerbated a measles epidemic during a 1968 field season, experimented on the population without obtaining informed consent, continued collecting data while people were dying, and brought harm to the population they were studying. The most exaggerated claims against Neel and Chagnon were rebutted by the scientific community even before the book was officially published. Subsequently, the allegations were examined by an American Anthropological Association Task Force (of which I was a member), the American Society of Human Genetics, and the International Genetic Epidemiology Society, among other scientific bodies, and, for the most part, were dismissed. Tierney's book did, however, force many in the anthropological community to examine the relationship between the researcher and the population under study.

Francisco M. Salzano and A. Magdalena Hurtado, the editors of *Lost Paradises and the Ethics of Research and Publication,* enter into the debate by stating at the outset that anthropology is on trial because of the inattention anthropologists pay to the needs of the communities they study. Like the American Anthropological Association Task Force report on *Darkness in El Dorado,* the editors of this volume take the position that the debate should move beyond past research practices and move forward to a new era of responsibility for anthropologists who deal with native or identified populations. In the introduction, the editors issue a call to action, stating that anthropologists must become engaged in protecting the rights and the health of the populations they study.

One of the charges directed against anthropologists in general and anthropological geneticists in particular is that they take data from subject populations for their own ends and interests and return few benefits to the population. Sections II and III of the book directly answer this charge by showing how the data derived from studies of the Yanomamo and other South American native populations have led to knowledge that could be (and, in the case of Neel, was) of use in protecting the health of these groups. The articles in section II review James Neel's work with both the Yanomamo and the Japanese. M. Susan Lindee, a historian who has written extensively on Neel's life and work, describes the scientific logic behind the work in the Amazon. Neel was interested in all aspects of individual variation at the moment of transition between first contact and assimilation. This clearly included medical histories of individuals—histories that were remembered and histories that were recorded in antibody responses and genes. Francisco Salzano describes Neel's work in Japan. He states that the work in Japan was "the most extensive in genetic epidemiology ever undertaken" (p. 51). In another chapter in this section, Salzano describes the reason for undertaking genetic studies of tribal populations. Salzano states that genetic history matters and that "most members of any given ethnic group are curious about their past" (p. 73). However, it is this type of statement that has placed geneticists interested in population history in direct opposition to some populations. People may have their own versions of their history. Groups may not be interested in a genetic past—a past that might be very different from received cultural tradition. Many geneticists working with indigenous populations today recognize this dilemma and actively seek ways to accommodate both the scientific questions and the belief systems of said populations.

Whereas section II describes the utility of genetic studies of human populations and places James Neel at the center of these studies, section III reviews the long-term impact of Neel's studies, from epidemiological and health perspectives. Carlos Columbra Jr. and Ventura Santos review the epidemiological information available for indigenous populations in Brazil and reflect on how vital this information is for planning, evaluating, and restructuring health services and programs. In the longest chapter in the book, Hames and Kuzara provide an ecological overview of Yanomamo health and discuss medical problems that have resulted both from living in a tropical environment and from contact with non-Yanomamo individuals. Infectious diseases continue to be a major health problem for the Yanomamo, particularly in the early years of life. Demographic information clearly shows a decline in population numbers over time. The chapters by Black and by Hurtado, Hurtado, and Hill attempt to explain why native New World populations are so susceptible to Old World diseases. Black's explanation is derived from studies indicating genetic homogeneity of New World populations at *HLA* and other loci. Hurtado, Hurtado, and Hill present a hypothesis that suggests that the mix of T-helper 1 and T-helper 2 cells activated at birth is important for determining disease susceptibility in populations.

The two chapters in part IV, which is entitled “The Future,” set out principles for future work with remote tribal populations. Hill and Hurtado suggest two overriding principles: that the well-being of the study population should be the first priority and that research requires informed consent. In conclusion, Hurtado and Salzano state that “science can be an important positive political force because it produces verifiable facts that can be used to improve the fate of native peoples, if they are collected responsibly and are aimed at discoveries that have lasting and beneficial social consequences” (p. 222).

Anthropologists, they feel, must take an activist stance and find appropriate venues for the dissemination of their information about health and well-being. It is with this idea that Hurtado and Salzano extend the ethical principle of beneficence to actively promoting the right to health of specific local communities. This extension of the principle of beneficence is contentious in its own right. Whether or not one agrees with the editor’s recommendations, this book and the position its editors advocate make it an important contribution to the discussions of research practices by anthropologists and geneticists who hope to work with tribal populations.

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