chua” to refer to both the most widespread indigenous language and the largest indigenous group in Ecuador are of no little importance in that they denote a lack of familiarity not only with indigenous and national politics and the reality of indigenous communities but also with the specific history of the northern Andes: these mistakes condense the difference of the northern from the central and southern Andes, where “Quechua” (and not “Quichua”) applies. The case of the St. Biritute dispute is too weak to support the generalizations he draws from it, and there is no anthropological analysis of how the statue is constitutive of the identity of the Sacachún comuna. The political role of archaeology in Ecuador could have been clarified with concrete examples of the articulation between the production of national archaeological knowledge and the construction of hegemonic discourses on “Ecuadorianness” (for example, through the analysis of the programme of studies over time, course syllabi, and the topics of dissertations).

Although I am deeply sympathetic to the issues raised by the book and the concerns of its author, I feel that it fulfils its promises only in part.

References Cited


Remembering Anthropology’s Sexuality

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Irregular Connections tracks the central but often weakly acknowledged role that sexuality has played in anthropology, including the constitution of the culture concept, the understanding of difference, and the formalization of the discipline. Overall, the book reflects an impressive amount of archival research and close readings of important but oft-forgotten texts. An enjoyable and informative read, it is suitable for both graduate and advanced undergraduate courses. It will prove useful for anyone interested in the place of sexuality not just in anthropology but in British and American thought more generally (the book focuses on Britain and the United States). I learned a lot from this book and expect to cite it regularly in any discussion of sexuality and social science.

After summarizing the book’s goals, Lyons and Lyons turn to the post-Enlightenment contexts; of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from which contemporary anthropology originated. Chapter 1, “Three Images of Primitive Sexuality and the Definition of Species,” examines images of “natives” as sexually decadent, frigid, or desirable. It then turns to the contribution of sexuality to key debates as to whether the various “races” of humanity were to be understood as distinct species. Chapter 2, “Sex and the Refuge for Destitute Truth,” focuses on the period 1860–90 and demonstrates resonances between anthropological writings on sexuality and broader social debates. Lyons and Lyons ask how concerns with sexuality shaped groups like the Anthropological Society of London and thus contributed to defining anthropology’s project “at this critical period when the roots of institutional anthropology were planted” (p. 55). The work of Richard Burton is a primary focus of this chapter. Chapter 3, “Matriarchy, Marriage by Capture, and Other Fantasies,” addresses the role of sexuality in late-nineteenth-century social evolutionary theory, examining the work of proto-anthropologists or early anthropologists like J. F. McLennan, John Lubbock, Lewis Henry Morgan, Edward Tylor, Henry Maine, Johann Bachofen, James Frazer, and Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen.

Despite some minor tics (a habit of gesturing toward Foucault without really engaging his thought or that of his critics and a somewhat self-righteous tone when pointing out the faults of those insufficiently or incorrectly aware of the history of sexuality in anthropology), these three chapters provide an effective introduction to the topic. Beginning with chapter 4, “The Reconstruction of ‘Primitive Sexuality’ at the Fin de Siècle,” Irregular Connections finds an even stronger analytical voice. Lyons and Lyons are particularly knowledgeable about work from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century; their analysis of this important period is insightful and their command of published and unpublished sources impressive. Chapter 4 turns the discussion to an institutionalizing field of anthropology, focusing on Havelock Ellis, Edward Westermarck, and several other figures to examine how early-twentieth-century sexology understood “primitive sex-
uality.” Chapter 5, “Old Africa Hands,” addresses the relationship between sexuality, early-twentieth-century ethnological work in Africa, and the demands of the British colonial system of the time. Chapter 6, “Malinowski as ‘Reluctant Sexologist,’” picks up from chapter 4 to track the centrality of sexuality to Malinowski’s work, exploring the influence of Ellis, Freud, and others on Malinowski’s methods and theoretical frameworks. As in several other chapters, a strength of the authors’ approach is their brief sketching of the social milieu in which the anthropologist in question wrote. In Malinowski’s case this included the many sexual reform movements of the 1920s and 1930s (for instance, he served as a vice president of the Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress) and Ellis’s delineation of the topics to be discussed in any scientific study of sexuality. Chapter 7, “Margaret Mead, the Future of Language, and Lost Opportunities,” focuses on the remarkable career of Mead and the dissemination and reception of her work. This discussion allows Lyons and Lyons to examine the role of normative masculinity in the anthropology of sexuality, a topic addressed elsewhere in the book as well.

Chapter 8, “The ‘Silence,’” covers the period from approximately 1930 to 1960. It is an important intervention because it documents that “sexuality did not so much simply disappear as become subsumed in other discourses: kinship and marriage, child socialization, gender and aggression, even environmental adaptation” (p. 217). In this chapter and the one that follows, the force of the book’s argument breaks the narrative increasingly takes the form of analyzing individual authors and texts one by one, though useful overarching arguments certainly remain. We find insightful discussions of Firth’s (1936) We, the Tikopia, Schapera’s (1966 [1940]) Married Life in an African Tribe, Elwin’s (1991 [1947]) The Muria and Their Ghotul, and others (including the work of George Devereux, Ruth Benedict, and Cora DuBois). The depth of scholarship in this chapter, as elsewhere, is striking; Lyons and Lyons appear to have read nearly everything during this period that could be seen as relevant to sexuality and anthropology (including the work of psychologists and sexologists of the time such as Alfred Kinsey and Abram Kardiner).

Similarly, chapter 9, “Sex in Contemporary Anthropology,” employs what could be seen as an “ethnocartographic” survey of anthropological works—emphasizing close readings of individual texts over broader analyses. Here and in the previous chapter the authors cite Kath Weston’s notion of “ethnocartography” as a feature of the anthropology of sexuality, glossing it as “a development that precede[s] later theorizing” (p. 298) without expanding on the critical implications of Weston’s analysis: “Many an author opens with an obligatory nod to Foucault before presenting research findings, but more commonly, the researcher’s theoretical perspectives remain embedded in apparently straightforward reports from the field. In effect, the absence of theory becomes the submersion of theory. Lurking between the lines are functionalist expla-