

BOOK REVIEW SERIES

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MADDEN, RAYMOND. *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010. ix + 197 pp., bibliography, index. Paperback £22.99.

Madden's volume is a guide to how to practice ethnography. Through concise and manageable chapters, the reader is not submerged in theoretical jargon, which can appear to be grandiloquent to those new to the discipline. As he describes in the introductory chapter, his anticipated audience is "budding ethnographers".

Madden approaches his guide to ethnography through anecdotes, both classical and modern ethnographic accounts. In addition, each chapter is concluded by a summary and questions section, which introduces his "budding" investigator to current questions within ethnography. These sections are reminiscent of text books due to their repetitive nature. Furthermore, this book is not only written for persons now approaching ethnography, but for individuals who are more interested in 'applied anthropology'. This is important to note, since Madden, being an applied anthropologist, takes a reflexive approach through use of examples and constantly posing questions to the reader.

In the style of many books that focus on disambiguating ethnography, Madden starts off with a "Definitions, Methodology and Applications" chapter, highlighting key terms that characterize ethnography. Although he describes these in relatively brief paragraphs, his writing is clear and packed with detailed descriptions. This is evident when distinguishing between American and British Anthropology through their key figures, Boas and Malinowski. I applaud Madden for making these distinctions, as individuals and users of ethnography often become confused by them.

Chapter 2 focuses on the ethnographic 'field', and the importance of relationships between humans and places. He states that "ethnographers are place-makers" (p.38) which, he goes on to state, does not mean trying to control the group or institution studied. Rather, Madden sees this role of the ethnographer "as an attempt to put boundaries

around an ethnographer's enquiries into a human group or institution" (p.38-9). As a result, Madden later reflects on the ambivalence of conducting ethnography at home, through excerpts from his PhD thesis and the questions that surfaced as a result of conducting his fieldwork in his "home".

In the second section of this book, 'Doing Ethnography', Madden addresses the encounters one may have when entering the field and practicing there. Hence, chapters 3 and 4 both revolve around how the ethnographer interacts with his/her environment. Chapter 3 focuses on how we use speech to make 'negotiations' within the field. He outlines interviewing and conversation techniques that contribute to the negotiating process, which he thinks is crucial to the ethnographic experience. Included are examples of interview scenarios taken from classical ethnographies, such as Evans Pritchard's *The Nuer*. He uses the Nuer to demonstrate the "tricky business" that is interviewing and how having the right questions is pertinent to acquiring knowledge about the people we study. To further emphasize the importance of mastering the ethnographic interview, Madden refers to Spradley's (1979) twelve speech events, highlighting certain criteria entailed in a successful interview. However, these do not guarantee its success.

Madden moves on from the language we use to the way we participate and observe. He notes that, aside from talking to participants, we must also consider how we participate and see. Why do we engage with certain roles in the field, and why do we see what we do? He separates participation into immersion ethnography—the classic image of fieldwork—and step-in-step-out ethnography. Neither is the "right" way. Instead, he emphasizes that both of these methods are used in order to get "close but not too close" to the participants we encounter. This, he states, occurs through 'inter-subjective embodiment', as "the ethnographer's body needs to acquire some competence relevant to the participants he or she is working with" (p.83). In relation to observation, Madden states that we systematically deploy the ethnographic 'gaze', which refers to the "specific way ethnographers have trained their observations on others" (p.96). He mentions a number of gazes, from the 'feminist gaze' to the 'white male gaze' (p.97), which refer to a sort of perspectival positioning that reflects their social position. Here, Madden brings in Visual Ethnography, outlining the use of films and photographs as tools for representing participants in the field. However, as he rightly notes, using images comes with many complications, due to a lack of "solid contextualizations" (p.112).

In chapter 6, he employs the idea of a 'systematic hand' to describe the transcription of field notes. It is easy to see the connection between the ethnographic gaze and the

ethnographic hand, although the ethnographic hand requires strategies for transferring observation into words: this is our raw data. Madden suggests that ethnographers should use a strategy that works for them when it comes to writing field notes. He then categorizes these as participatory, consolidated and other. Participatory refer to notes taken during active fieldwork and consolidated notes are usually written at the end of the day. Madden warns that we should be careful how we use language, especially when carrying out applied ethnographic research.

With this in mind, the following chapter, 'Analysis to Interpretation: Writing "out" data,' focuses on the "language of data, and securing, managing and organizing the data" (p.136). Therefore, the next stage is to organize notes using individual strategies of coding—i.e. indexing and identifying themes. Here, Madden again makes a point of addressing the process of systematization. In this case, he focuses on thematic codes, which could be used to show relationships within the primary data (i.e. field notes). At the same time, coding also refers to pre- and post-fieldwork forms of data.

Chapter 8 calls for a "storied reality" in which the ethnographer makes the data interesting and accessible. This depends on the type of audience. Knowing ones audience influences the ethnographer's interpretations, as highlighted in his previous chapter. Hence, writing up is part of the ethnographic method, as analysis and interpretation are both active during this period. Madden goes on to describe the structure of ethnographic writing, while acknowledging the importance of style, mentioning Van Maanen's identification of realist and confessional genres.

He concludes by appealing to those forms of ethnography, such as 'cyber-ethnography', that do not relate to face-to-face fieldwork. He questions whether the authority of cyber-ethnography is diminished by the lack of embodied exchange that has hitherto defined ethnography. Madden further draws our attention to the ethnography of non-human others, which, in many societies, provide rich insight into social relationships. He uses the example of the relationships people have with greyhounds in gambling. He argues that ethnographers should pay more attention to these relationships. It is hard to imagine a rural ethnography that would not take such relations into consideration.

Does this book constitute a conceptual advance in how we understand ethnography? Although it offers a concise introduction for beginners wishing to prepare themselves for the field and what it could possibly entail, it lacks depth. The emphasis on systematization is also rather heavy-handed. One accomplishment of this book, however, is to

encourage the reader to engage with classical ethnographies, as well as with the author's own fieldwork experiences. This publication is a useful aid to study, especially as Madden is constantly raising questions for his readers to ponder and answer.

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