

be 'interpreters' of otherwise inaccessible knowledge. Let us say, for example, that (heaven forbid) some terrible scourge struck all anthropologists from the face of the earth.

Would the world and its developmental process in fact be any different? In certain tiny ways perhaps, but broadly not a jot. If therefore we are so unimportant to the most important diffusion of technical knowledge that has ever taken place in the world, it implies that our claims to privileged brokering are in turn inflated out of all proportion. Of course, just like any other human beings, we can sometimes make a small contribution and that is wonderful, but it is no more (and no less) than this. Mine is a call for recognition of this fact.

Here, I believe Mr Ezeh's and my views begin to coincide. I don't like the total domination of often destructive technical and economic innovation any more than he does. My point is that the process will occur whether anthropologists are there to offer their views or not. □

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Ethnographia 1767

I was pleased to find an interesting report on the coining of the term 'ethnography' in the news (AT, 16(3):16-17). Your report stated that the term 'Ethnographia' was coined by southern-German headmaster Johann Friedrich Schöpferlin in his book *Sveviae veteris per temporum periodos descriptae primae lineae*, published in 1767 (reprinted 1787), and then adopted by German historians such as Johann Christoph Gatterer and August Ludwig Schlözer working at the University of Göttingen. My own research suggests that Schöpferlin did not coin the term 'Ethnographia' but introduced it in the literature after having been in contact with Schlözer, a historian and linguist who was related to his assistant. It is my thesis that the term 'Völker-Beschreibung' was coined in St. Petersburg and the multinational Russian empire in the 1740s, picked up there by Schlözer in the early 1760s and brought to Germany. Schlözer visited his relatives in Franken, southern Germany, in the winter of 1765-6 and will have discussed the subject with Schöpferlin, a headmaster and historian. It was only after Schlözer started using the Germanized term 'Ethnographie' in his lectures at Göttingen and in historical publications, particularly *Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte* (Halle 1771) and *Vorstellung seiner Universal-Historie* (2 vols., Göttingen/Gotha 1772-3, 2nd ed. 1775) that the term caught on in Germany and beyond (Vermeulen 1995, 1996a-b). The article by Justin Stagl (1998) you cited lists some of these data (see also Stagl 1995) but deals mainly with a later stage, the discussion between Schlözer and Johann Gottfried Herder about how this new discipline, a historical and descriptive study of peoples, should be conceived. Stagl mentions also some interesting new findings regarding the coining of the term 'ethnologia' in the

Austrian-Hungarian empire of the early 1780s. □

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- 1996a. *Taal-, land- en volkenkunde in de achttiende eeuw*. Leiden: Oosters Genootschap in Nederland. No. 23.
- 1996b. Enlightenment anthropology. In: A. Barnard and J. Spencer (eds.) *Encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology*. London/New York: Routledge. pp. 183-185.

Göttingen International Film Festival

While I was glad to read Ricardo Leizaola's review of the Göttingen International Ethnographic Film Festival (AT 16(4):24), my comments in the Foreword to the Festival Catalogue about the criteria for student films at the festival have been misconstrued. I did not say that there is a fixed list of criteria for student films. The minimal criterion at Göttingen for a film to be eligible for consideration for the student competition is that its author made the film when registered as a student. I proposed that more detailed criteria such as limits to budget and previous experience might provide a solution to problems presented by the category as currently constituted. Meanwhile, at Göttingen, 'our policy is not to define a list of criteria' (p.8). □

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Who cares about anthropology?

As a young member of the profession, facing numerous changes and new demands, I often think about why I am practising anthropology. Why should I care about anthropology? The August 2000 AT issue gave me two very good reasons to care about anthropology: Keith Hart's editorial and Tim Ingold's reply to Maurice Bloch. Both offered exciting and ambitious visions of the anthropological project. I wish to comment here on the nature and scope of their claims rather than on their substance.

We are often told that theoretical approaches in anthropology influence the empirical material. These usually take the form of textbook comparisons for the benefit of students. Much more rarely, however, in the current climate of British anthropology, do individuals make such a clear abstract statement of the theoretical perspective driving their work. Both Hart and Ingold make their arguments with reason and passion, and this contributes to their originality.

British anthropologists today generally lack the boldness and vigour to pursue their discipline as a form of 'humanistic education' (Hart). Rather, following the direction of British education from primary school onwards, they choose to specialize in narrowly defined topics or regions. Some concentration of this kind is necessary, of course, but not if it leads to our failing to reach 'a general understanding of the kinds of beings we humans are' (Ingold). It is not being overworked or overwhelmed by current conditions that has forced so many of us to narrow our horizons. It is instead a matter of a chosen orientation, of belief, if you like, underlying our work and its place in the world. What motivates us to work in the way we do?

This question has forced me to ask how anthropology is reproduced, not just through publications but also in teaching and supervision, in professional debates through internet-based discussion groups, seminars, workshops and conferences. How do these ensure intellectual continuity between past, present and future? Are the concepts and methods of the twentieth century adequate to the task of understanding the coming century's predicaments?

Clearly for Hart and some others they are not. A palpable influence on both Hart and Ingold (and on Bloch, for that matter) was Edmund Leach. In one of his 1967 Reith lectures, Leach said that the young 'need to be taught to gain confidence in the astonishing powers of their own imaginations. But they do not need to be loaded down with the out-of-date clutter of useless information which is all that traditional scholarship has to offer. Only those who hold the past in complete contempt are ever likely to see visions of the New Jerusalem' (*A runaway world?* BBC, London, 1968:76). Leach expresses here an iconoclastic scepticism for the value of the old teaching the young, and it is salutary to be reminded of this gap. For only when young people are encouraged to come up with their own ideas are they ever going to 'make a difference', and perhaps reduce another gap, that between individuals and humanity as a whole, to become 'subjects in history' (Hart).

These two pieces in the same issue break the mould of a lacklustre British anthropology which often seems to be in crisis. It is not so easy to care about anthropology while fulfilling the demands of an academic career. My hope is that this vigour will spread into publications beyond AT and that others, young and middle-aged, will be encouraged to enlarge the scope of their thinking. □

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Selectionism

I am in full agreement with Tim Ingold's views on the theory of memes (AT 16(3)). For the past few decades there has been a plethora of new theories, usually in the social field, being passed off as science when in fact they do not pass the most basic requirements