



Dispatches from the Field: Neophyte Ethnographers in a Changing World

Andrew Gardner, David M. Hoffman

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Penned by advanced graduate students amidst their dissertation fieldwork, these provocative essays capture the challenges and intricacies of that anthropological rite of passage. The collection's authors frankly portray the mistakes they made in the field, their struggle to analyze the events unfolding before their eyes, the psychological and emotional frustration seemingly endemic to "doing" ethnography, and the ethical complexities of researching living people. The authors present these essays not as models of ideal fieldwork or as a series of lessons about how to overcome potential hurdles one faces in the field, but rather as a window into the complexities of "being" an ethnographer in the contemporary world. Against a backdrop of subject populations increasingly informed about global relations of power and, more specifically, informed about the topography of American imperialism, these humanistic essays vividly reflect recent shifts in both the focus and methods of anthropological research, as well as the dilemmas underlying the construction of anthropological knowledge. They are meant to spark discussion and debate. While tailored to an audience relatively new to ethnographic fieldwork (and intended as a teaching tool), this collection should appeal to anthropologists and ethnographers at all points in their career.

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