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John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds.

*Ethnicity*

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996

John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, as editors, compiled *Ethnicity* very likely for use as a potential text book, appropriate for a course in either Sociology or Cultural Anthropology. The initial pages contain a series of maps identifying the movement of people in the ancient world, details of migrations and ethnic kingdoms in western Europe from 400-1000 AD, national conflict and frontier disputes in Europe [1919-1934], the Decolonization of Africa in the twentieth century, colonies of South and Southeast Asia before 1947, and ethnolinguistic groups in Pakistan. A descriptive Introduction comes next, followed by eight general sections that constitute the heart of the text. The book also contains Notes, a Select Bibliography, Biographical Notes, Source Acknowledgements, and an Index.

In the Introduction Hutchinson and Smith endeavor to articulate a working definition of "ethnicity." They cite numerous authorities' opinions of what constitutes a meaningful explanation of this term. For each author cited, they carefully weigh the merits and flaws in the factors considered essential for ethnic identification. Their presentation generally follows a chronological order from when the term was initially introduced (around 1953) into English language usage. This Introduction is highly commendable and the discussion eminently cogent. It successfully reveals just how complicated the term "ethnicity" has become. On page 8, in a section entitled "'approaches to ethnicity" they confess: "it is no wonder, then, that we find such conflicting approaches to the study of so kaleidoscopic and seemingly paradoxical a set of phenomena." This lack of precision as pertains to how the term "ethnicity" frequently has been utilized is wonderfully illustrated in Section I, "Concepts of Ethnicity," in a statement by Thomas H. Eriksen that appears on page 28: "Since the 1960's, ethnic groups and ethnicity have become household words in Anglophone social anthropology, although, as Ronald Cohen has remarked, few of those who use the terms

bother to define them." Thus, from the Introduction, one gleans that the terms "ethnic" and "ethnicity" enjoy respectable linguistic derivation from the ancient Greeks, yet the concepts involved seem of more recent vintage. Yet, even these more recent usages, although broadly accepted in general parlance, remain somewhat flawed due to imprecise conceptualization of what actually can be included in each and every particular instance.

Having established this working ambiguity, Hutchinson and Smith divide their book into eight general sections. These include: "Concepts of Ethnicity", "Theories of Ethnicity", "Ethnicity in History", "Ethnicity in the Modern World", "Ethnicity, Religion, and Language", "Race and Ethnicity", "Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism", and finally "'Transcending Ethnicity?'. In these sections Hutchinson and Smith provide sixty-three selections from published works of seventy-three different authors. All of the selections are relatively brief – from one to nine pages at most. They drew on the publications of a broad spectrum of internationally respected scholars. To cite just a few, they borrowed from Thomas H. Eriksen, Max Weber, Fredrik Barth, William H. McNeill, Nathan Glazer & Daniel P. Moynihan, Donald Horowitz, and Kosaku Yoshino, in addition to two selections from their own previous publications. As each selection is relatively brief, it makes for easily digested reading, and the total package creates an ideal anthology for classroom usage. The content also includes most areas of the world as well as most historical periods. They offer a grand spectrum that is sure to satisfy *almost* everyone.

It is not possible in the space of this review to comment on each and every of the sixty-three selections. As a humanist historian with poor qualifications for coping with the linguistic challenges of Sociological and Anthropological terminology, I am quite naturally inclined to focus on those selections dealing with historic matters. What intrigues is why Hutchinson and Smith selected these passages as being of particular relevance. And, of course the title of the selection also was significant.

In section III, "Ethnicity in History," Hutchinson and Smith selected several pages from Moses Finley's *The Use and Abuse of*

*Ancient History*. They elected to title these pages: "The Ancient Greeks and their Nation". First I must confess that I have not read Finley's book (although I have put this on my list of readings for when I have some leisure). Thus, I have no basis of determine just how judiciously Hutchinson and Smith utilized the contents of Finley's book. Naturally, I was intrigued to discover how Finley might equate the ancient Greek development of the "polis" with the more modern concept of a "nation". From the six pages that were borrowed, I was rather disappointed. Finley's arguments seem circular and vague. He recognizes the obvious — the Greeks in ancient times never achieved a centralized political unit that could in any way be construed as a "nation state". He argues that the ancient Greeks managed to formulate a concept of "Greekness" that set them apart from nonGreeks, thus identifying these "others" as "barbarians." He cited various ancient Greek writers such as Herodotus, Aristotle, Hesiod, Heraclitus, Zeno, Plato, and Thucydides and quoted from their writings or extrapolated from their observations. Yet, he never convincingly (at least from what was quoted in his text) proved the title of this selection. Beyond this minor disturbing factor, I wondered why Hutchinson and Smith culled these pages for their anthology. The final sentences from Finley included these remarks: "It is self-evident that the interests and demands of these varied groups were not always consonant, and often enough conflicting. It is also self-evident that the nature and intensity of an individual's ties, institutional and psychological, to each group with which he had an affiliation varied substantially — according to the context or activity; according to his status within the group (few were equalitarian) and within the social hierarchy itself; according to his own self-image, aspirations and ambitions, lack of ambition or feeling of deprivation." (116) And so, I am at a loss as to how to understand ancient Greek concepts of "ethnos" which I suspect Hutchinson and Smith considered a basic factor for including this selection.

The second selection that intrigued me was entitled "The Cultural Roots of Modern Japan," taken from Jean-Pierre Lehmann's *The Roots of Modern Japan* [1982]. After recogniz-

ing a general Japanese feeling that the four major islands of Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku and Hokkaido constitute the Japanese homeland in terms of Territory, Lehmann then explored the factors of Language, Religion and Race. The four pages included in this anthology are simply insufficient. He briefly mentioned the matters of the Ainu, the Eta and the Korean minority; these matters were to be developed later in his book, but were not included in the anthology. Lehmann asserts the language factor as a significant matter for Japanese national awareness but fails to identify regional dialects or that the language as spoken in the Ryukyu Islands may have some impact on ethnic identity. His discussion of Shinto and Buddhism also discounts that religion plays any major role in Japanese identity. Indeed, other than a brief mention of "ethnic" in the opening paragraph, the entire selection never mentions "ethnic" or "ethnicity". So, the question arises, why include these particular pages in illustrate "ethnicity" as regards Japan?

This book has some merit. The Introduction successfully identified the complexities that evidently abound for any practical discussion of the meaning of ethnicity". The sixty-three selections, alas as "borrowed" materials, all too often present materials that seem unrelated to the theme of the anthology. It is a package that is flawed because its contents fail to offer information that explicitly deals with the topic of ethnicity. By borrowing published materials the editors were forced to include matters that are of minor pertinence.

Ronald R. Robel