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commitment.” This stance, together with an ethical praxis, can be the way forward for realizing the promise of Chicano Studies. Can Chicano Studies now within the “belly of the beast” find its soul?

Barrio Professors: Tales of Naturalistic Research

By Lloyd H. Rogler

Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc. 2008

176 pp.; \$24.95 [paper]

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The reconstruction of memories compels inevitable reflections and the unraveling of social and personal history to re-signify the past in a present form. This process of recovery is the challenge that *Barrio Professors* undertakes through the recreated storying of the experiences of a neophyte sociologist in two different poor Puerto Rican communities between 1957 and 1968. Rogler’s tales draw foremost from his diverse field experiences that are recaptured and re-staged by his keen and graphic literary imagination. Moreover, these narratives encapsulate his gradual passage from an inexperienced but enthusiastic recent graduate student in sociology from the University of Iowa espousing the virtues of experimental research methods to a commitment to naturalistic research privileging respect of culture and of participant observation. This passage is facilitated by the memorable barrio residents he encountered:

The learning produced by such experiences...started the first phase of my lifelong concern with the troublesome assumptions in research. Truth also could be uncovered by encouraging barrio professors to speak their own minds, according to their own life experiences, without the clutter of social science. (p. 26)

Along the way, the reader witnesses the author’s varying perceptions of the multiple experiences that prompted him to be self-critical (“I had been making so many mistakes in my interviews...I seemed to ask clumsy questions”; p. 67), defensive (“After all, I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, spoke Spanish fluently, had a Puerto Rican mother”; p. 16), naïve, skeptical, astute (“Recognize his importance. Dwell on his fame. Stroke his ego”; p. 110), or sensitive and compassionate (“She reminded me of the desperately poor families in the San Juan barrios...and how the families struggled to keep some coherence in their lives while confronting the wretched conspiracies of poverty”; p. 155).

The challenge that “if you want to understand society, go out and look at it” (p. 43) energized Rogler’s field experiences while serendipitously “the intricacies and nuances of language and cultural meanings” (p. 42) generated a cultural rediscovery: “It revealed new things to me about myself and my culture.” The researcher also is the object of his own research and re-experiences himself. Self-discovery is serendipitous.

Two major sections and an epilogue comprise this book. The first section integrates six chapters from Rogler’s point of departure in Iowa to his interviewing strong, resolute, and memorable poor Puerto Ricans whose struggle for survival and well-being celebrate their resolve. When Rogler returns in 1957 to his birthplace to become Resident Field Director of the Social Psychiatry Project headed by

the eminent August Hollingshead, he discovered a Puerto Rico in the throes of major social and economic transformations, and political yearnings. The Social Science Research Center of the University of Puerto Rico where he was to work had become a laboratory for North American social scientists studying this rural to urban transformation (Puerto Rico was a relatively recent colonial acquisition in 1898). These researchers came, obtained their data, and returned to their stateside universities to analyze and publish, doing what was referred to pejoratively as “safari research” (p. 42). From a critical perspective, this research surfaces as colonialist, since it disregarded the relevance of Puerto Rican culture, appropriated “data” for its benefit without concern for the island’s development, and ignored the needs of the emerging university research center. In the 1970s and 80s, several Puerto Rican social scientists incisively examined this process and the studies produced, denouncing their colonialist scholarship and laying the groundwork for critical, socially responsible research (Rivera Medina and Ramírez 1985). Drs. Rogler and Hollingshead embraced certain notions of culture and published the first study about mental illness in Puerto Rico: *Trapped: Families and Schizophrenia* (1965). This work directed attention to the role of spiritualism as a community-based social support and healing system, among other aspects.

The focus of Rogler’s tales, however, are the memorable voices of barrio and inner city residents. We meet an astute, hardworking Don Paco of the sector of Buenos Aires of the Martín Peña Channel of San Juan, who was his first barrio professor. Don Paco challenged some of his assumptions, surprising him with his expressive language, teaching him about *jibaro* dignity and the centrality of having a secure place in the world, a “*querencia*,” as he called it, even amidst abject poverty and wretched surroundings. We travel outside of San Juan to meet Don Emilio and Doña María, a couple who had to move from one poor area to another fleeing the stigma of Emilio’s “*nervios*” or schizophrenia. We collude with the defiant, tall, orange-haired Doña Juana, who defends her right to develop her “*facultades*” and refuses the electroshock treatment prescribed by an ill-humored psychiatrist. There are also the animated voices, yearnings, and teachings of the spirit medium of Barrio Buen Consejo, Doña Ina and a widowed spiritist advocate, Don Julio. From these dynamic encounters, Rogler prepared a controversial lecture on “Spiritualism and Mental Illness” in Puerto Rico at an unexpectedly packed University of Puerto Rico Library in October 1959. It is attended by students, community members, patients, spiritists, representatives of academia, and even the Chancellor. Rogler affirms that spiritualism “is a source of social support for persons in distress” (p. 94), ushering an era of new academic research interests and practices on Puerto Rican culture and mental health.

Rogler left Puerto Rico in 1960 to become a Professor at Yale University, New Haven, where he became a participant observer in a struggling community action process. The second part of the book takes material from Rogler’s innercity experience, which he portrays in *Migrant in the City* (1972). In this book, his barrio professors are the caudillo-styled Serrano, the sacrificing community advocate Doña Cristina, and the challenging Doña Maria. By the end of this process, Rogler conceded that his interest in studying “natural events” had overpowered his experimental training. The Barrio Professors had prevailed. But it is through Rogler’s homage to his sociologist father, Charlie, in the Epilogue, that we can fully appreciate how the past reverberates in the present. Charlie had gone to Puerto Rico in the mid-1920s as an adventure, and had become enamored by the culture and with

a woman. In the “grand tradition of community studies in sociology” (p. 168), Charlie studied the small mountain town of Comerío for his doctoral dissertation, which was published in 1940. He called his strategy of data collection the “Loafing Method... the do-nothing method of friendly talk and attentive watching” (p. 169). Throughout his life, Charlie vigorously defended the centrality of studying human behavior and communities in relation to their natural, historical, and cultural contexts. Rogler’s tales come home. The influence of Charlie resonates not only as related to culture and naturalistic research, but as the underlying impulse of *querencia* that the barrio professors espoused and protected. In the *Rediscovery of North America*, Barry López (1992: 52) defines *querencia* as:

a place where one feels secure, a place from which one’s strength of character is drawn. In Spain, it’s the place in the ring where the wounded bull goes to renew his strength and center himself, ready for a new charge. A place in which we know exactly who we are...The place from which we speak our deepest beliefs.

Rogler’s tales recreate his own *querencia*: they return to the place that gives him strength, security, to a metaphoric home, to a desired place of reflection. Also, these re-storied narratives humanize an academic endeavor and provide students, researchers, academics, and the general public with an invaluable gaze into the power of the sociological imagination within an ethnocultural context. But they also provide an opportunity to move fastforward from a critique of positivist social science that traverses through the strengths and limitations of naturalistic research and is re-situated in the confluences of critical theoretical perspectives. The natural in a context of coloniality, economic inequities, socio-educational disadvantages, and relational power differences may not be so natural. Critical inquiry of structural inequities that have been naturalized challenge how knowledge is obtained and produced, and how the marginalized are maintained marginal. From this perspective, we side with participatory research methods that help to disentangle the noxious effects of injustice, that promote participatory, liberating social and individual actions geared to community development, to positive youth development, to developing new subjectivities that reclaim new narratives. We would, in essence, rescue the eternal graduate student, Pedro Ayala (pp. 36–42) from his rage and silence. In a fictionalized encore, Pedro’s voice resonates as an unremitting conscience. He can be heard asking: “Well, Rogler, how did your naturalistic field experiences impact the barrio residents? What would *their* version of your tales be? How would *they* remember you? What would *their* narratives be? What would *their* unexpected lessons be? How will we know?”

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What people are saying about Barrio Professors: “These enchanting tales of colorful and gritty characters in the barrios of Puerto Rico and New Haven are an engrossing read. Lloyd Rogler is a distinguished, prize-winning sociologist, himself half Puerto Rican and half American, whose research has explored the cultural connections and disconnections that mark Anglo-Latin encounters and the strategies through which the poor and the migrant triumph over adversity. Reading the book is like sitting in a bar next to the author, who is saying, “This is what it was really like...”” Prof. Gilbert W.