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Physical reality is represented in fundamentally different ways by photographs and holograms. When one rips a photograph into smaller pieces, each piece portrays its small segment of the image with the same clarity as before, but without any reference to the larger whole. A small segment of the hologram on the other hand, will still portray the whole image, but in reduced resolution or clarity. Ridington (1990) draws parallels between these forms of visual representation, and forms of knowing the world. He portrays 'western' knowledge as the reductionist, photographic method which builds knowledge of the world through sharp focus on small details. He characterizes 'native' north British Columbians as viewing the world holistically, seeing the whole at any level of understanding, but in increasing detail as time goes on, as experience adds to knowledge.

Gade's central theme in *Nature and Culture in the Andes* is that in an environment in which humans exist, neither nature nor culture can be successfully described or understood without stepping beyond reductionist science and viewing the whole, the interactions between nature and culture at many scales of analysis. He labels the knowledge which grows from such analysis the *nature/culture gestalt*, a holographic understanding which requires the perceiver to 'fill in the gaps', and yet affords access to understanding not available otherwise.

Gade prefaces his work with a discussion of his theoretical assumptions, and the personality traits and experiences he brings to his work. In particular he discusses in detail the dichotomy which has long existed in the social sciences between environmental determinism and culture as outside of nature. This work is an earnest attempt to step beyond that dichotomy. He also explains his personal experiences in his youth which predisposed him to work in South America. Those predispositions affected not only his interest, but the questions and kind of questions he chose to ask. It is perhaps only someone with Gade's experience who can make such reflexive analysis succeed.

To generate a holistic understanding of his theme, Gade presents us with seven vignettes of interaction between humans and environment in South America. Each is as a segment of hologram, complete in itself, but enhanced by the presence of the others. In each, Gade weaves among empirical evidence, reflexivity, and multiple scales of analysis in time, space and ecology.

The vignettes are drawn from his experience of over thirty years as a geographer working in South America, a body of work supported by a commensurate experience

of the literature pertinent to this region. These studies include an account of the hundreds of years of cohabitation between rats and humans in Guayaquil, Ecuador; an exploration of why camelids were never milked in the Andes; deforestation and reforestation in the highlands; coca growing valleys on the jungle margin; the interplay of malaria and human settlement; and the interrelationship between epilepsy, magic and the tapir. As well, Gade follows the career of an influential teacher of his, Carl Sauer, through Sauer's cataloguing of crop diversity in South America.

In each chapter, Gade demonstrates his groundedness in the empirical, and then leaps to inferences or conclusions which require effort on the part of the reader to follow and complete the gestalt. This is both the great strength and the potential weakness of this work. This is clearly a work from a researcher who is master of his field... a synthesis of a lifetime's study. It is written with a smoothness of style that makes it a joy to read, despite the heavy presence of supporting documentation. Whether Gade succeeds in transmitting the gestalt to the reader depends on the reader's willingness and ability to cooperate in the assembly of the hologram by taking the same kinds of leap of inference that Gade does. As Gade himself admits in his summary, not all will be ready to do that. Nevertheless, the challenge he presents us is itself worth the experience.

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References

Ridington, Robin
1990 *Little Bit Know Something: Stories in a Language of Anthropology*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre.