
Book Reviews

Bonner, Raymond. 1993. *At the Hand of Man*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, ISBN 0-679-40008-7, \$23.50, hardcover, pp. 336.

Raymond Bonner, a former political/foreign affairs writer for *The New Yorker*, lived in Africa from 1988 to 1992 while his wife served as the East Africa correspondent for *The New York Times*. During those years Bonner traveled extensively throughout southern and eastern Africa, continuing to write for *The New Yorker* but also collecting experiences and views on wildlife conservation. During his journeys Bonner came to realize that conservation is not just about animals but also about people, and that such forms of ecotourism as photographic safaris are not necessarily the most beneficial way to protect species or to aid local people and local economies. As abhorrent as it might seem to animal rights proponents, Bonner argues in this book that controlled, consumptive uses of wildlife, such as touristic hunting, can benefit flora, fauna, and local communities much more than certain nonconsumptive forms of tourism.

Bonner begins his treatise by comparing the Africans' view of wildlife to that held by the American pioneers: the wilderness and wild animals are to be feared and conquered, not conserved. Wild animals are seen as either threats to human lives and crops or, at best, as sources of meat. Bonner faults Western conservationists for failing to understand the meaning of wildlife to indigenous people, preferring instead to impose, paternalistically, their own concepts and views of conservation on the Africans. As a result, conservation organizations such as the African Wildlife Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund lost potential allies in their fight to save the animals. Bonner observes that, "As many Africans see it, white people are making rules to protect animals that white people want to see in parks that white people visit. Why should Africans support these programs?" (p. 85).

In arguing for the sustainable utilization of Africa's wildlife resources, Bonner highlights the abject poverty facing much of sub-Saharan Africa. Although preservation of Africa's wildlife heritage for future generations might be desired in its own right, the harsh reality is that resources, including animals, will of necessity be used. The emphasis, therefore, has to be on sustainability.

Photographic tourism is certainly one aspect of sustainable utilization, but Bonner believes that "it is not necessarily the most profitable or efficient one" (p. 99). Another option is touristic hunting—the killing and sale of animals for skin, meat, and trophies. Bonner admits that this is "not a very pleasant thought. . .but the reality of the impoverished continent—of children covered with flies and dying of malnutrition. . .is not a pleasant one either" (p. 99). He proceeds to argue that culling, or the selective killing of

certain animals, is in fact necessary in some cases to protect the habitat for other species. Elephants, for example, when overpopulated, can literally destroy all the trees in an area and, as a consequence, all the species dependent on those trees. The loss of species means fewer tourists, which in turn means less revenue for conservation programs.

Bonner presents convincing arguments that touristic hunting can be both an effective wildlife management tool and a benefit to local populations. While “the notion that a hunter can be a conservationist falls somewhere between oxymoronic and unfathomable” (p. 238) to most people, Bonner shows that responsible hunting can be preferable to photographic tourism, which has brought little economic benefit—but major costs—to Africans. He cites the state of many of Kenya’s parks as an example; they have been ruined by too many people, vehicles and lodges, and the tourists have taken the “wild” out of animals by interfering with their natural behavior. Indeed, Bonner observes that

From a conservation perspective, it might be wiser to promote hunting over tourism, however preposterous the proposition might seem on first examination. Ecologically, tourists are more destructive than hunters. They speed across the plains in their minivans, in pursuit of a lion pride or rhino, tearing up the grass and in rainy periods cutting ugly ruts. In Amboseli, the tourists have contributed as much to the park’s deterioration as the elephants have. There have simply been too many tourists for the small park, and they turn the place into a dust bowl in dry years, in addition to a Disneyland in high season. (p. 243)

To further support his argument, Bonner notes that while photographic safaris are expensive—a top of the line safari may cost \$20,000—no more than half of that amount actually remains in the country, and less than one percent directly benefits rural people. On the other hand, “a lucrative hunting industry can be established with a limited capital investment, without large hotels and minivans, or even a road network to get hunters to their destination” (p. 244). Further, big game hunters spend considerably more than photographic tourists—\$50,000 is not uncommon, most of which stays in the host country. Bonner quotes Costa Mlay, a former director of the Tanzania Wildlife Department, as saying that one hunter is worth a hundred nonhunting tourists.

Bonner further contends that hunting can be good for conservation because “as pressure for land and resources grows, the support of rural people for wildlife conservation will depend increasingly on the tangible benefits they gain from it” (p. 216). Only by assigning an economic value to animals, and designing programs which return to local communities a substantial percentage of the proceeds from wildlife, can Africans feel they have a vested interest in protecting the animals—particularly when the animals threaten both themselves and their crops. Bonner points to the CAMPFIRE program in Zimbabwe as a good example of how local people can benefit from wildlife, in this case by returning to the community nearly all of the financial returns from culling impala herds, selling hunting concessions, and setting up joint tourist ventures.

Bonner concludes his book by calling for a fundamental change in conservation philosophy, beginning with “an examination of the stereotypes and prejudices about who are good conservationists and what are good conservation practices” (p. 231). To effect this transformation, conservationists must have the courage and leadership to stand up for their principles, and they must work to ensure that local people receive the majority of benefits from wildlife resources. According to Bonner, to preserve Africa’s wildlife heritage, “all we need to do. . . is care about the people as much as we care about the wildlife. Both are in the hands of man” (p. 286).

Having served in the U.S. diplomatic corps in Africa for over eight years, I found Bonner’s book perceptive but somewhat biased. On the positive side, as an outsider to the conservation community, Bonner had the independence as well as the audacity to say what many well-meaning people knew but were afraid to admit—that Africans had been excluded from decisions involving their own sovereignty and their own natural resources. Regardless of whether or not decisions made by others reflect their best interests (however defined), Africans have an inalienable right to be the principal decision-makers in issues involving their national resources—even if they are too timid (or intimidated) to stand up and demand that right. Bonner’s book can also be lauded for highlighting the importance of involving local people in wildlife conservation programs. The value of local participation seems self-evident, but it had very little public support prior to the publication of this book. Finally, Bonner’s observations on the destructive environmental impact of “nonconsumptive” tourists cautions us to reflect before embracing unquestioningly all forms of ecotourism.

On the negative side, Bonner exhibits, in my opinion, a certain bias in his description of the African wildlife conservation field. It has not been totally dominated by neocolonialist, animal-killing white men. Within the very organizations he attacks are found honest, concerned, caring people of different colors, genders, and nationalities—persons I occasionally had the pleasure and privilege of working with in the field. Bonner also gives short shrift to failures by African government leaders themselves. Corruption and greed have led to the senseless slaughter of much of Africa’s wildlife, condoned if not encouraged by those at the top. If Bonner, then, was truly interested in attacking all those guilty of ignoring the “local people,” he should have highlighted the culpability of their own political leaders. Finally, I believe that Bonner is too naive in asserting that “Africans will not always allow themselves to be dominated by Europe and the United States. They threw off colonialism; one day they will throw off eco-colonialism” (p. 286). It is true that a few African countries will go their own way, and their wildlife resources will suffer as a result. However, as Bonner highlighted early in his book, the majority of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa are direly impoverished, and they are not likely to bite the hand that feeds them.

Denzin, Norman K. & Lincoln, Yvonna S. (Eds.) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, ISBN 0-8039-4679-1. Hard cover, \$95.00, 643 pp.

Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, state that the last two decades have borne witness to a "quiet methodological revolution." This revolution has occurred despite the pervasiveness of positivism as many investigators have searched for new ways of knowing to expose additional meanings within the social world. Searching beyond numbers has resulted in this tome where the contributors have offered the epistemological, ontological, and methodological thought that underpins the existence of qualitative research. In contrast, previous qualitative texts have focused on methods rather than a more encompassing methodological review.

The *Handbook of Qualitative Research* is a 643 page "encyclopedia" that should become a standard bookshelf item regardless of academicians' investigative persuasions. Beyond its broad academic appeal, the handbook should take practicing qualitative methodologists into new areas of thought and praxis. The text extends beyond classic participant observations and ethnographies to describe postmodern and post structural thought. A key feature is the recurrent theme of the researcher as *bricoleur*. This type of researcher requires a variety of practices (*bricolage*), molded into a tight method from which the findings can emerge. *Bricoleurs* are not dominated by "methodolatry," but shape their inquiry around the questions asked and the contexts within which various phenomena exist.

The "handbook" is divided into six parts and the 36 chapters are written by notable academicians with sociologists and educators dominating. Prior to part one, the editors provide a background for qualitative research by defining it, comparing it to quantitative research, and then positioning the evolution of qualitative inquiry into "five moments." Although the cutting edge of qualitative research is still exploring the bounds of the fifth moment, most leisure researchers seem to find comfort when operating within the first and second of these moments.

Part one, *Locating the Field*, explores qualitative research from a historical perspective by describing the influences that have shaped its development. Key sections are the criticisms leveled against qualitative research, the various ethical stances taken by the contributors, and the discussion of research from an advocacy perspective.

The second part of the handbook, *Major Paradigms and Perspectives*, is used to explore the paradigmatic and perspectival variations within qualitative empiricism. By using positivist and post-positivist paradigms as a base from which qualitative inquiry has advanced, the editors explain the epistemological, ontological, and methodological understandings of constructivism and critical theory. Succeeding chapters address the perspectives of feminism as well as ethnic and cultural studies. Within each perspective, the different trajectories of epistemology, ontology, and research goodness are examined.

The chapters often expound views that conflict, but all contribute to the breadth of qualitative inquiry.

Part three, *Strategies of Inquiry*, addresses the variety of questions confronted by a *bricoleur* when formulating research designs and strategies of inquiry. As opposed to a method-dominated research design, qualitative researchers should be involved in a "path of discovery" through finding a means by which data may be revealed within the contexts of the phenomena. The latter chapters of Part Three turn to many strategies of inquiry. Ethnography, participant observation, phenomenology, ethnomethodology and interpretive practices, grounded theory, biographies, historical, clinical research, and action research comprise the discussion. Each chapter argues the value and positioning of strategies within a paradigmatic and perspectival framework.

The fourth part of the handbook, *Methods of Collecting and Analyzing Empirical Materials*, explores the gathering of empirical materials and their subsequent analyses. The data gathering chapters review the potentials and problems of each method and are sometimes in contradiction to their counterpart chapters. The chapters successively consider interviews (structured to unstructured), observations (looking to participant), written documents (texts to artifacts), visual media (films to photos) and personal experiences (lived experiences to individual stories). The chapters on data analysis move from post positivist to postmodern orientations with one chapter offering a particularly good evaluation of advances in computer based, qualitative analysis programs.

"The Art of Interpretation, Evaluation and Presentation" comprises the fifth part and is devoted to evaluating the goodness of interpretation and presentation. After discussion about traditional qualitative research based on the canons of positivism, the contributors contend that "pure knowledge or truth claims" are unrealistic and that knowledge is mediated by a variety of life experiences. Validity, the editors claim, must be enhanced by a researcher's self disclosure about influences that contributed to their interpretation.

The final part of the book discusses the issues of "where from here." In the last twenty years qualitative research has taken many different trajectories, but the editors hope for a future common ground between the areas of qualitative inquiry.

The major strength of the *Handbook* is its comprehensive representation of paradigms, perspectives, and methods of inquiry and analysis. Although full of contradictions and tensions, this book illustrates that research need not follow a path where all must agree. Indeed, it is my contention that variety and tension are the essence of discovery. I also hope that the paths of inquiry will continue to diverge. Research, after all, should celebrate all angles of inquiry, the many ways of knowing, and the many voices of the social world.

A second strength of this edited tome is the coupling of method with methodology. In most qualitative research books, method has been domi-

nant, but in this book readers can understand qualitative research from inception to end, including discussions about the nature of knowledge to discussions about research presentation and policy influence.

Although the wide coverage of qualitative research deserves praise, this text needs to delve beyond the contributions of Western scholars. Researchers have tended to study Non-Western societies as cultures or groups but we have never revealed their actions of inquiry. This omission begs the question of whether Western science sees itself as a dominant force, a trap that researchers should transcend.

A second criticism lies within the methods chapters. This handbook is not a "how-to" book. People wishing to learn a qualitative research technique will need to search for the original contributions of authors. Chapters about the techniques of data gathering, analysis, and presentation are only background or introductory at best.

Finally, if qualitative researchers wish to make their craft accessible to more people, they will need to rewrite this handbook in a language that is within the grasp of more people. This handbook should be a standard text on the bookshelves of all researchers, but it is probably beyond the reach of undergraduates and some graduate students too.

For leisure researchers, this handbook offers a single source to justify and expand their qualitative inquiry. In reading the book, one can move beyond the positivist and post positivist hindrances of qualitative inquiry and into the richly contested areas of post modernism and post structuralism. This text advances qualitative research beyond "finding out" and embraces advocacy, policy change, and a voice to the underserved populations of the world.

In sum, this book achieves its goal of representing the past, present, and future; it goes beyond and behind method to give a full representation to Westernized qualitative research. Although it is refreshing to note that leisure researchers and leisure journals are accepting of qualitative inquiry, many of the offerings in this book extend past anything attempted in leisure research so far. When compared to sociology, anthropology, and education, the leisure field has a long journey when beginning to accept other ways of knowing.

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