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Kayapó Ethnoecology and Culture

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The only shortcoming of the book that I feel compelled to identify concerns the theoretical analysis, which could benefit from greater development. In trying to account for why Brazilians assumed that the Indians would become extinct, he refers to the paradigm of acculturation. This model assumes that when two cultures come together, the stronger one will overpower the weaker (p. ix). This clearly has not happened in Brazil. He then calls for the development of a new paradigm, that of cultural diversity, that will include concepts such as self-determination, autonomy, ethnic survival, and cultural resistance (p. 243). In neither case does he provide the reader with an understanding of the theoretical issues involved or the relevant literature.

This book is appropriate for use in the classroom by undergraduate and graduate students from a wide variety of disciplines, by policy makers, by those who are interested in indigenous populations all over Latin America, by historians, and by members of development and conversation organizations.

Kayapó Ethnoecology and Culture. Darrel A. Posey (Kristina Plenderleith, editor). New York: Routledge, 2002. xviii + 285 pp., figures, tables, foreword, glossary, index. \$80.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-415-27791-4. [www.routledge.com]

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Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Darrell Posey personally will not be surprised by the exuberant humanism, eloquence, vibrancy, and scientific depth of this book, which is an edited collection of some of his most important work. The book is a tribute not only to his depth and breadth as an anthropologist, but also to the superb effort of his editors and friends to bring these articles to print even as Darrell lay dying of brain cancer. Darrell inspired many people, and that inspiration is reflected in the superb workmanship and quality of this publication.

Of the dozens of important contributions written by Darrell Posey alone or in collaboration with other authors, this volume collects twenty-one that not only reflect the core of his scientific work with the Kayapó people of Brazil but his commitment to their stewardship of a unique environment and continuation as a people. After long hours of flying across the Amazon to a place he thought was incredibly isolated, Darrell discovered that the people he chose to study were being threatened by the encroachment of a nearby *fazenda* destroying the rainforest that was the home of his new friends. Trained as an entomologist, geographer, and anthropologist to do the precise and sometimes tedious work of a field scientist, Darrell could not ignore the global implications of the conflict between the ancient culture he studied and the forces of impending obliteration.

Each chapter in this book is extracted or reprinted from previously published work. As she explains in her preface, editor Kristina Plenderleith concentrated on Darrell's early reports concerning the ethnoecology of the Kayapó, derived, as described in Brent Berlin's foreword, from Darrell's pursuit of the "ethnobotany, ethnozoology, ethnomedicine and ethnopharmacology, ethnopedology, ethnoforestry, ethnoastronomy, and ethnoagriculture" (p. xv) of the tribe. His previous training in entomology allowed him to make detailed investigations into and observations of phenomena that would escape the notice of many anthropologists. His articles on the folk biological taxonomic systems of arthropods, prepared with his Brazilian co-author João Maria Franco de Camargo, and amazing material on the knowledge and management of stingless bees by the Kayapó, are enough alone to establish this book as a classic in libraries of ethnobiology. But there is much more, including superb articles on the management of Amazonian soils by the Kayapó with co-author Susanna Hecht. With Elain Elisabetsky, Darrell gives us a fascinating article on the use of medicinal plants for the control of fertility and sexuality.

From the first chapter—a description of Darrell's first encounters with the Kayapó in the village of Mëbêngôkre and an overview of Kayapó ethnoscience, and his highly personal account of a near-disastrous trek in the unfamiliar rainforest—to the last chapter—in which Darrell describes how he and his Kayapó friends take on the whole international development structure—there is a vibrance and authenticity in his voice that inspires us and will inspire future generations. It is not only possible to be a superb scientist and student of humanity, but it is possible to act meaningfully on values that are understood by such scholarship. Darrell Posey witnessed that fact with his life and work, some of the best of which is found in this volume.

This book will take its place in the permanent library of great anthropological literature for many reasons. The scientific work is superior and encompassing, the writing is superb and compelling, the author's engagement with the subject is intense and unselfconscious, and both the facts and their relevance to a broader struggle are immediately and transparently important. There is much rhetoric about the conflicts between development, core human values, and the need to preserve the unique natural environments of the world. These issues are joined in the most specific ways in this invaluable book.

The Brazilian People: The Formation and Meaning of Brazil. Darcy Ribeiro. Gregory Rabassa (transl.). Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000. xviii + 332 pp., bibliography. \$34.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-8130-1777-7. [www.upf.com]

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