# Lost Paradises and the Ethics of Research and Publication

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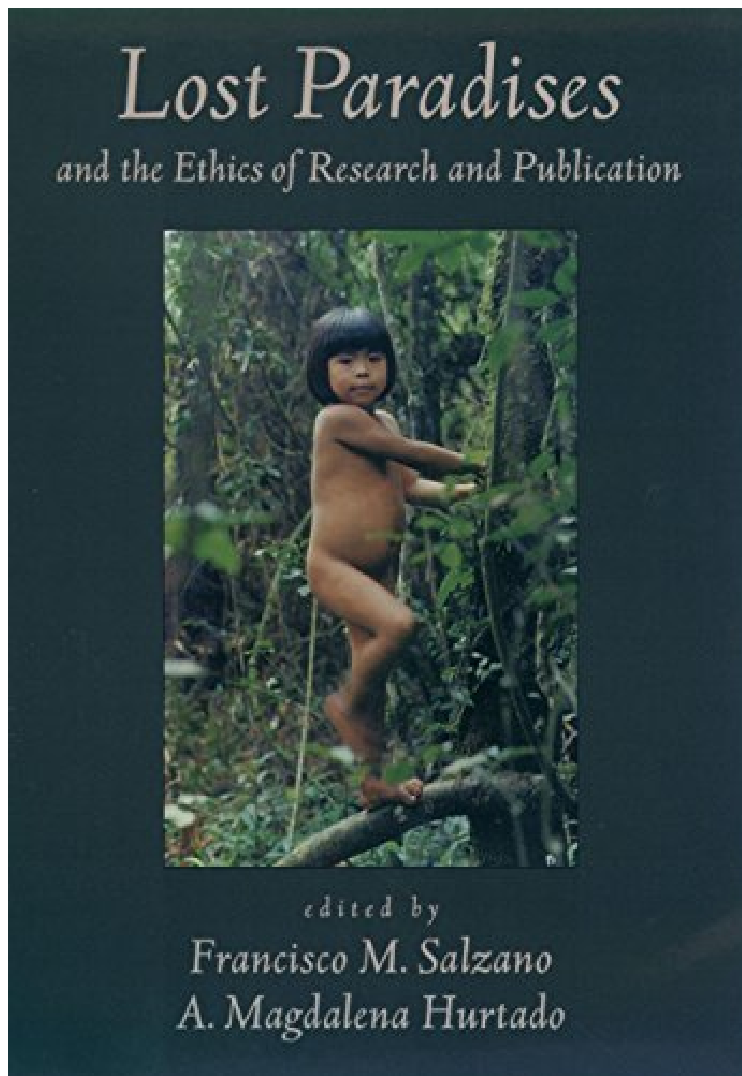


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**From Oxford University Press : Lost Paradises and the Ethics of Research and Publication** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lost Paradises and the Ethics of Research and Publication:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Thoughtful essays on anthropological ethicsBy E. N. AndersonIn 2000, reporter Patrick Tierney published a supposed expose' of anthropological shenanigans in Venezuela, attacking primarily James Neel (geneticist) and Napoleon Chagnon (ethnographer). Subsequent investigations revealed that the attacks on Neel were simply wrong, and the more substantive ones on Chagnon were too, leaving a residue of broader charges that Chagnon had sensationalized the Yanomamo people and made them seem more violent and harsh than they really are--a serious matter, since it allowed certain government and private parties to excuse genocidal attacks on

the Yanomamo. Tierney's book would probably have passed unnoticed if it had not been rather prematurely hyped by certain excellent and well-known anthropologists (who have, I think, lived to regret this). As it was, the whole episode produced a storm of controversy. Tierney's book also led to a halt on vaccinating indigenous populations in some areas, since the most sensationalist (and clearly wrong) charge leveled at Neel was that he had inoculated Yanomamo with inferior vaccine, so as to study their reactions. The present book, edited by prominent anthropologists from Brazil and Venezuela, puts the whole controversy in some perspective. The book quickly dispenses with the wilder Tierney charges, but then settles into a serious and thoughtful series of enquiries about the real issues raised: bringing health care to indigenous peoples, and publishing dubious accounts of them. The need for health care is established by a large amount of sobering statistics. Indigenous peoples in South America (and elsewhere) have terrible health problems, and live far less long than settler populations in their countries. They desperately need inoculations and every other sort of health care. The question of publication is less clear-cut. Sensationalist accounts, whether by reporters or anthropologists, clearly do no good. But how much advocacy are anthropologists expected to have? How is the cause of bringing health care, or any other good cause, best advanced in popular or technical writing? Balancing advocacy with factual description is never easy and must always be considered. The conclusions provide some of the most insightful and thoughtful ideas on ethics to come from the anthropological literature. The book is marred by the inclusion of a highly polemical article by Paul Gross. Dr. Gross is a highly intelligent and well-meaning man, but lets his rhetoric get away from him, thus sorely damaging the otherwise thoughtful and balanced tone of this book. I fear the pro-Tierney forces may seize on this essay to discredit the whole book. Unfortunately, nasty attack literature is now getting rather common in anthropology. Several leading anthropologists and biologists who have dedicated their lives to successfully helping local societies and indigenous peoples have been subjected to Tierney-style attacks recently. Often, the attackers are not reporters, but actual anthropologists, sometimes people who felt somehow slighted or aggrieved by the anthropologist(s) in question. Even university presses have published such books. No one is above criticism, but everyone, even in politics (let alone science), should be above dishonest, unfair, and viciously polemic criticism. It is extremely disturbing to see the morality and tactics of Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly spilling over into anthropology. Salzano and Hurtado's book provides a very important step in the right direction. Real issues are raised by even the wildest critics, and these issues should be thoughtful and soberly considered. Answering them in their own style merely makes the whole mess worse. One hopes that publishers, webmasters, and listserve managers will resist the temptation to maximize sales and attention by publishing irresponsible personal attacks.

In 2000, the world of anthropology was rocked by a high-profile debate over the fieldwork performed by two prominent anthropologists, Napoleon Chagnon and James V. Neel, among the Yanamamo tribe of South America. The controversy was fueled by the publication of Patrick Tierney's incendiary Darkness in El Dorado which accused Chagnon of not only misinterpreting but actually inciting some of the violence he perceived among these "fierce people". Tierney also pointed the finger at Neel as the unwitting agent of a deadly measles outbreak.Attracting a firestorm of attention, Tierney's book went straight to the heart of anthropology's most pressing questions: What are the right ways to study a tribal people? How can scientists avoid unduly influencing those among whom they live? What guidelines should govern the interactions - economic, social, medical, and sexual - between a scientist in the field and the people being studied?This volume represents anthropology's thoughtful, measured reply to the issues raised by this heated controversy. Placing the dispute within the context of ongoing debates over the ethics of biomedical research among human populations, the contributors to this volume discuss how the interaction between investigators and their subjects can most sensibly be governed. They consider the responsibility of the media in disseminating anti-scientific and pseudo-scientific views, and how scientists might best educate journalists to enable them to effectively educate others.In the wake of what was widely construed as a major scientific scandal, this landmark volume lays out in detail the principles and ground rules of anthropological and scientific fieldwork.

About the AuthorFrancisco M. Salzano is Emeritus Professor of Genetics at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre, Brazil. A. Magdalena Hurtado is Associate Professor in the Human Evolutionary Ecology Program in the Department of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico.