important throughout 20th-century anthropology. Examples include Sidney Mintz's biography of a Puerto Rican migrant worker, Oscar Lewis's life histories of Mexican families, and Ruth Behar's life of a Mexican market woman. Barbara Myerhoff pioneered dialogical life writing, intertwining her telling of the life of a Jewish American immigrant tailor with reflections about her own relationship to Judaism. To write about the lives of Yukon aboriginal women, Julie Cruikshank experimented with writing oral forms of storytelling. Serving as scribes of marginalized lives, Nancy Scheper-Hughes has narrated the lives of mothers in a Brazilian shantytown who delay bonding with newborns, and Philippe Bourgois has recorded the narratives of crack dealers in Harlem.

Finally, the critical reflexivity of postcolonial anthropology has renewed interest in biography. To transcend self/other dichotomies, phenomenological approaches focus on lived experience, and ethnography locates once others as subjects—placing anthropologists in relation to, not outside, their object of study. In the 21st century, as anthropology seeks new knowledge through collaboration and cotheorizing, life writing as reflexive practice is key to its realization.

Sally Cole

See also Autoethnography; Boas, Franz; Bourdieu, Pierre; Firth, Raymond; Mead, Margaret; Mintz, Sidney; Scheper-Hughes, Nancy; Steward, Julian

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BLOCH, MAURICE

Maurice Bloch (1939–) has worked mainly in religion, rituals, power, cognition, and economic exchange. He is among the pioneers of the French Marxist tradition in British anthropology.

Biography and Major Works

Bloch was born in 1939 in Caen, France. He had a mixed family background as his great-grandfather was a miller from Lorraine while his grandmother's family were Sephardic Jews, originally from Portugal, who lived in Bordeaux. His mother's mother was a niece of Émile Durkheim as well as a first cousin of Marcel Mauss. Bloch had a chance to meet Mauss near the end of Mauss's life. During World War II, Bloch's father was arrested and killed by the Nazis, and his mother, a marine biologist, was held in Auschwitz along with other scientists and forced to do laboratory research for the Nazis. Bloch was protected by one of his father's friends during this period. After the war, his mother married John S. Kennedy, a British biologist.

Bloch attended Lycée Carnot in Paris but moved to Britain at the age of 11 along with his parents and joined the Perse School in Cambridge. At the Perse, he was inspired by his history teacher John Tanfield and by Douglas Brown, who taught him English literature. He also developed an interest in classical music, with Olivier Messiaen and Benjamin Britten being among his favorites. He entered the London School of Economics to study anthropology as an undergraduate, where he was inclined toward Maurice Freedman and Burton Benedict, who worked on the cultures of China, and Mauritius and Seychelles, respectively. During this period, he was also inspired by Mary Douglas at University College London and Adrian Mayer at the School of Oriental and African Studies, where he had gone to study linguistics. In addition to academics, he also acted in plays, usually French, at the university. Bloch was also involved in politics during his time at university, supporting the anticolonial struggles in Algeria, India, and China. After completing his undergraduate studies in 1961, he went to France to oppose the Algerian and Vietnam wars.

Bloch attended Cambridge University for his PhD, initially working with Meyer Fortes and the French anthropologist Germaine Dieterlen. Bloch was interested in working in India due to his earlier inspiration from Adrian Mayer's work, but his funding required that he work in Africa, and he decided to work in Madagascar. He conducted his

field research in Madagascar from 1964 to 1966. Initially, Bloch carried out his research under the supervision of Audrey Richards, who had experience working with sub-Saharan African communities. At a later stage, he was supervised by Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, a specialist on Thailand and Sri Lanka. Bloch also had a chance to discuss his work with other pioneering social anthropologists at Cambridge like Edmund Leach and Raymond Firth. Caroline Humphrey, Marilyn Strathern, Andrew Strathern, Adam Kuper, Jim Faris, and Jonathan Parry were among his fellow PhD students.

Bloch completed his PhD in 1967. His doctoral thesis, *The Significance of Tombs and Ancestral Villages for Merina Social Organization*, focused on the tombs and kinship organization in Madagascar and was later published by Seminar Press as *Placing the Dead: Tombs, Ancestral Villages and Kinship Organization in Madagascar*. He was a lecturer at the University of Wales, Swansea, in 1967 and 1968, but in 1969, he accepted a lectureship at the London School of Economics, where his colleagues were Maurice Freedman, Lucy Mair, Jean La Fontaine, Ioan Lewis, and Peter Loizos. Bloch developed friendships with Alfred Gell and Olivia Harris, who were graduate students at the LSE at that time. In 1970, Bloch moved to the University of California at Berkeley, where he became interested in the work of linguists and of philosophers such as John Searle, leading him to study cognitive sciences. Not comfortable in the United States because of his Marxist links in France, Bloch returned to the LSE, where he continued to work on language and cognition. His article "Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation" (1974), on the criticism of semantics, has been widely read.

Bloch returned to Berkeley in 1974–1975, where he was influenced by cognitive anthropologists such as George Lakoff and Paul Kay. He was visiting professor at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and the New School for Social Research in New York, but since 1976, his career has been almost entirely at the LSE, where he was promoted to Reader in 1976. Bloch has also taught and has been an occasional visiting professor at Paris West University Nanterre La Défense, University of Stockholm, and National Ethnology Museum of Japan, among others. He was appointed as full professor at the LSE in 1983 and elected a fellow of the British Academy in 1990.

Currently, Bloch is emeritus professor at the LSE and an associate member of the Institut Jean Nicod of the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. In addition to the many students he has supervised, his writings have been translated into at least 12 different languages.

Critical Contributions to Anthropology

Bloch has published books in both French and English and more than 100 articles relating to ritual, power, kinship, economics, religion, and money.

French Marxism and Structuralism in British Anthropology

Although Bloch was educated in the British anthropological traditions, he has long been connected with French Marxist movements. On the one hand, he was interested in the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss, while on the other, he was influenced by several French Marxist writers with whom he had personal relations, including Maurice Godelier and Emmanuel Terray. Bloch organized a session at the conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists in 1973, in which French Marxists and British anthropologists discussed various theoretical interests. He tried to use the approaches of Marxist anthropology and Lévi-Strauss's structuralism alongside the then dominant paradigms in Britain, like methodological individualism and structural functionalism. The influence of Lévi-Strauss is particularly strong in *Placing the Dead*, where Bloch interpreted kinship organization as a schema of elementary structures. Anthropologists have different responses toward Marxism and Marxist analyses depending on the traditions they were trained in or the communities they have been working with, as Bloch demonstrated in his detailed description of Marxist analysis, *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology* (1975), and in *Marxism and Anthropology: The History of a Relationship* (1983). Marxist tradition was declining in France when Bloch was initially working through a French Marxist approach in British anthropology. However, Bloch persisted in a Marxist approach in his work on the representation of money and economic exchange, particularly in his book *Money and the Morality of Exchange*, coedited with Jonathan Parry, and the article "Zafimaniry Debt and Credit."

Ritual and Power in Madagascar

Bloch worked with two communities in Madagascar: a rice cultivating peasant community in central Imerina and the forest people of Zafimaniry. In *Placing the Dead: Tombs, Ancestral Villages and Kinship Organization in Madagascar*, Bloch presented the reinterpretive power of rituals in relation to ancestral tombs in central Imerina. Later in 1983, in *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, a volume of essays he coedited with Jonathan Parry, he discusses the role of women in funerary practices, in particular the dominant role of women in mourning and death rituals. Although Bloch worked on various topics ranging from linguistics to cognition and from money to morality, the study of rituals, religion, and power has been the focus of most of his works. In *From Blessing to Violence: History and Ideology in the Circumcision Ritual of the Merina of Madagascar* (1986), Bloch offered a concrete and influential neo-Marxist theory of ritual and power. He describes that, on the one hand, the circumcision ritual starts with blessings from God but ends with symbolic and physical violence and, on the other, at times, it symbolizes the mystic transmission of the moral identity from the descent group and then is used to legitimize and celebrate the dominance of one group of Merina over other Merina or non-Merina groups. He developed this theory further in *Ritual, History and Power: Selected Papers in Anthropology* (1989). As a further development in his approach toward ritual and violence, he synthesized a radical theory of religion in *Prey Into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience* in 1992, interpreting rituals as a denial of the transience of life and human institutions through sacrifice. Bloch published several articles, like "'Eating' Young Men Among the Zafimaniry," to further explain his ideas on power, rituals, and violence.

Bloch continuously used a historical approach of studying rituals and religion. In his article "Why Religion Is Nothing Special but Is Central" (2008), Bloch challenged the popular notion in anthropology that religion evolved as it promoted social bonding. He, instead, stressed that the development of brain architecture and power to imagine nonexistent things and beings transformed the nature of society, including religion. His stance was debated in anthropological as well as other intellectual spheres, since many anthropologists have been stressing the evolution of religion alongside technological or cultural development primarily for social bonding.

Cognition, Memory, and Culture

Bloch developed an interest in studying language and cognition at a very early stage during the time he spent at Berkeley. In that era, due to the works of scholars such as George Lakoff and Noam Chomsky, new dimensions in linguistics and cognitive psychology were being studied. Bloch's interest in child development also drew him closer to psychologists like Susan Carey, Dan Sperber, and Paul Harris. Bloch wrote *Political Language, Oratory, and Traditional Society* in 1975, which is considered one of the landmark books on political language in non-Western cultures.

Many anthropologists focus on the role of culture in studying language, while psychologists give primary importance to cognition and memory. Bloch, however, tried to balance the role in both disciplines of culture and cognition in understanding language. He has dealt with memory and cognition from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives. In "The Past and the Present in the Present" (1977), Bloch examined the cultural as well as the cognitive aspects of language while studying the temporal expressions of memory. In 1991, in "Language, Anthropology, and Cognitive Science," he advocated interdisciplinary approaches in the social and cognitive sciences. *Essays on Cultural Transmission* (2005) was another provocative work because of its call for a partnership between anthropology and cognitive psychology. In his recent works, like *The Blob* (2011) and *Reconciling Social Science and Cognitive Science Notions of the "Self"* (2010), Bloch reasserted this position. Bloch's approach, particularly in the studies of rituals, language, and cognition, has had a continuing influence in different domains of anthropological queries.

Muhammad Aurang Zeb Mughal

See also Cambridge University; Cognitive Anthropology; Godelier, Maurice; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; London School of Economics; Marxist Anthropology; Structuralism

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Bloomfield, Leonard

Leonard Bloomfield (1887–1949) was an American pioneer of structural linguistics. Bloomfield came from a high-achieving intellectual family of Austrian Jewish origin and grew up in the hotel business. He was educated at Harvard and first specialized in Germanic languages, writing about Germanic secondary ablaut for his PhD. He continued to work on these topics through his career, teaching German at the University of Illinois, later teaching Germanic philology at Ohio State University and the University of Chicago, sometimes writing articles in German, and writing a textbook of Dutch (Bloomfield, 1944). He was later to turn his flair for practical linguistics to the U.S. war effort, producing a textbook and a grammatical sketch of Russian for the Army Specialist Training Program. He taught for most of his career at the University of Chicago, moving to Yale as Sterling Professor in 1940. Bloomfield wrote the *Call*, the academic proclamation that led to the founding of the Linguistic Society of America in 1925, publishing the first article in its journal *Language*. A paralyzing stroke in 1946 ended his career; and he died in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1949. His student Bernard Bloch published Bloomfield's obituary in the journal *Language* in 1949.

Cautious, reserved, uncharismatic but kindly (and with a whimsical and occasionally scabrous sense of humor), Bloomfield made quiet but massive contributions to general linguistics, and Austronesian and Americanist linguistics, all written in immediately comprehensible prose. His work in general linguistics includes two introductions to the field, *An*

Introduction to the Study of Language, published in 1914, and the much longer *Language*, published in 1933; the latter work is still in print, and its account of processes in historical linguistics was long taken as the best introduction to the field. Bloomfield's earlier work reflects his interest in the psychological theories of Wilhelm Wundt; his later philosophical position was less dogmatic, and he showed much interest in behaviorism as posited by A. P. Weiss. Bloomfield's cautiousness about describing the semantics or system of meaning of a language with the same degree of scientific rigor as its grammatical structure was often misunderstood by critics as perpetuating an antimentalist view of language, in which semantics was excluded. This was not the case. He spent much time putting his ideas to practical effect, employing linguistic methods in attempts to enable English-speaking children to learn to read effectively.

His Austronesian works are few, principally comprising some work on Ilocano of the northern Philippines and a collection of texts, with grammatical description and glossary, of Manila Tagalog. Like the Ilocano sketch, this was based on fieldwork with a consultant, in this latter case a trainee architect at the University of Chicago, who dictated these texts to Bloomfield, and it achieves the linguistic ideal of descriptive adequacy because the use and sense of every form found in the text is accounted for and every feature of the grammar of the language attested in the text is explained. As a model of descriptive work, it has few equals.

From the 1920s, Bloomfield did much work on the Algonquian languages of Canada and the Great Lakes, producing an impressive collection of work, including texts, grammar, and dictionary materials, on Menominee, the Native American language once spoken around Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, where he had grown up (until then it had barely been documented). His major work on this subject is *The Menomini Language*, which was published in 1962, 13 years after his death. Bloomfield also visited Saskatchewan, collecting two volumes of texts of Plains Cree, which he published in 1934. His 1958 study of an idiolect of eastern Ojibwe, *Eastern Ojibwa: Grammatical Sketch, Texts and Word List*, ranks with his Tagalog work as an intellectual accomplishment of high descriptive adequacy. Bloomfield also did secondary work on the conservative Algonquian language Fox (Mesquakie),