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Dale Peterson, *The Ghosts of Gombe: A True Story of Love and Death in an African Wilderness*. Berkeley, CA. University of California Press, 2018. 232 pp. ISBN-10: 9780520297715.

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The Ghosts of Gombe carefully documents the pleasant and sad moments of field researchers working in the world of chimpanzees. Dale Peterson presents a complex and detailed narration of a true story involving a group of chimpanzee researchers who worked under the directorship and supervision of one of the world's famous scholars and perhaps the one best known for her ethnographic work on primatology in Africa, Jane Goodall. The book begins with a nine-page prologue which raises and keeps in profound suspense the curiosity and penchant of the reader who mentally keeps framing rhetoric but disturbing questions as the reading progresses: How did Ruth die? Was she killed by a Chimpanzee? Could she have been eaten up by a roaming lion or any other wild animal? Could she not make her way back home after going deep into the forest and therefore died out of hunger or thirst?

Peterson has carefully brought together thick data gathered from diverse sources including interviews with Jane Goodall and some of the Gombe chimpanzee field researchers, as well as archives and personal visits to Gombe to give us a fulsome account of the true story of how Jane Goodall arrived in Africa and carried through her chimpanzee research project in "an African wilderness" (the Gombe forest). Goodall's arrival in Africa to begin work on primatology was a fulfilment of her long-held childhood dream. In the 1960s, Jane Goodall arrived in the jungle of East Africa and began a research project on Chimpanzees somewhere in the Gombe Reserve Forest in Tanzania. The lively Chimpanzee project which looked very promising and assured of a centre of excellence for primatology studies in Africa sadly led to the death of one its committed and hardworking volunteer researchers, Ruth Davies, who, throughout her stay in Gombe, developed extraordinary passion, care and love for the chimpanzees who provided her companionship both inside and outside the camp during "follows".

Peterson presents his work in the form of a prose, an anthropological non-fiction devoid of unnecessary academic theory and complex terminologies, making the book an interesting read even for the very lay person. The book is neatly compartmentalised into six main sections, each section connecting chronologically and coherently from the previous ones.

Section one briefly recounts the experiences of Geza Teleki (Ruth's lover and one of the field researchers in Gombe) a couple of months after Ruth's death. On September 12, 1969, Geza had an encounter with Ruth who appeared in his room in the dead of the night. Although Geza was fully awake when this happened, the author, like Geza, is unable to reconcile what happened with the scientific world, thus making it difficult to draw a categorical conclusion as to whether what happened was a "visit" or "vision" and whether or not the visitor was a "ghost".

Section two of the book vividly captures painstaking narrations about the "beginnings" in the late 1960s (September 1967 – June 1968) when the Gombe chimpanzee project was at its incipient stage. In this part of the book, Peterson elaborately recounts how Ruth Davies, Carole Gale and Geza Teleki (three of the most prominent volunteer researchers on the Chimpanzee project) joined the Gombe primatology project and how they each came to

develop deep compassion and affection for the chimpanzees in Gombe. Although initially a mere typist, Carole is presented as one of the most experienced researchers on the chimpanzee project and one who had served longer than both Ruth and Geza. The section then unveils Carole's experiences in the jungle with the chimpanzees. She quickly acclimatised to the forest life and the chimpanzee environment.

Peterson documents in detail Carole's infatuation with the chimpanzee project and her total immersion in the social and ecological life of the chimps. One day, as she sat to work, a "couple of the chimps sat on the veranda and gazed at Carole, but mostly they concentrated on themselves and went about their business which was grooming, displaying, hooting, attacking, retreating, reassuring, nursing babies, and – as the latches clicked and the boxes were strategically opened one by one – gorging on bananas" (p.23). Peterson reveals that the chimpanzees were often lured into camp with banana bribes offered by the volunteer researchers on site. This made on-site data collection on the chimpanzees easier and less stressful. Alongside other fieldworkers, Carole and Ruth helped to build dossiers of general records about the psycho-social, attitudinal, behavioural and ecological life of the chimpanzees. In this section, Peterson provides a picturesque description of the process of building up general records which followed a basic ethnographic observation technique: "Any chimpanzee who came into the provisioning area would be identified and observed, and his or her activities would be recorded. All the records were typed, organized and assembled" (pp.26). Data collected by the researchers on the chimpanzees consisted mainly of two types, namely A-record (consisting of data collected on chimpanzee life in the camp) and B-record (involving data collected on chimps during "follows" in the forest).

In section three, the part detailing the "Golden Summer", the author continues with detailed exposition on the activities of Ruth, Carole and Geza regarding the following of the chimps out of camp for observation. Following chimps had become a routine for the three volunteers and "once every three days, each of them would select a chimp, a target individual, and follow that individual out of camp for as long as possible, taking detailed and timed notes as they went" (p.80). Interestingly, each of the camp researchers had their favourite chimpanzees whom they deeply loved, followed and observed, and with whom they enjoyed companionship.

Section four provides details of Carole's period of transition when she had to be re-assigned to another project. She had been moved from the main camp in Kakombe to Nyasanga to take a new job of taming "stranger chimpanzees" in preparation for the commencement of the Park's Department tourist project in Nyasanga that would welcome tourists visiting the place to see the chimpanzees. As Carole wallowed in loneliness in Nyasanga, life continued at the main camp in Kakombe. Some of the female researchers did not only express love for their fellow humans at site, but they had also developed "physical attraction for the male chimps" (p.113). While Ruth and other volunteer researchers sometimes followed the chimpanzees to far places in the forest, the chimps often dodged their followers by moving faster, scavenging across a wide range of forest lands: the valleys of Kahama, Mkenke, Kakombe and Nyasanga.

Sections five and six are dedicated to the subject of love, the death of Ruth and the aftermath. While Peterson has documented in several places that some of the volunteer researchers fell in "love" with the chimps, he also makes it clear that some of the volunteers openly expressed love for one another. However, in this jungle, love interspersed with misfortunes. Ruth had once been attacked by a raging buffalo in one of her trips in the forest. She had also once encountered a spitting cobra that nearly harmed her. At another time, she had been dragged on the ground in the forest and seriously sustained bruises when she refused to positively respond to the lustful beckoning of a chimpanzee (p.152). In the middle of their

love, Geza left Gombe for the USA and that was when Ruth began facing real challenges. Meanwhile, the two had promised to get married in Gombe on Geza's return. Geza's absence left Ruth in psychological despondency, interlaced with social distancing and isolation from colleagues and friends.

One event after another, the initial euphoria that characterised the chimpanzee project gradually turned into partial withdrawal and dejection. Then came that fateful day, July 12, 1969. Ruth followed one of the chimpanzees into the forest and did not return. An exhaustive search involving researchers on site, school children, local fishermen, game rangers, policemen and aerial surveillance could not find her even up to the fifth day. When all hopes of finding her had been lost on the sixth day (the last day of search), Carole and Ferdinand broke the silence by discovering Ruth's decaying body. This is where Peterson confronts his reader with the most tragic part of the Gombe chimpanzee project: "At the edge of the shallow pool at the base of the waterfall, on the stones there with the cool water flowing around and beneath: a bloated body. It was Ruth, her body swollen enough to have ripped her shirt partly open ... The head had been smashed open and was now a mass of maggots (pp. 171, 172). From this point, the exact cause of Ruth's death remains obscure and speculative throughout the remaining pages of the book.

The book is rich in data and ethnography and it is carefully written to meet the readers' curious expectations. It satisfies the anthropological canon of "thick description" (following Clifford Geertz) and compares favourably with similar, well known monographs in the anthropological tradition. The personification of chimpanzees is both admirable and confusing. The reader admires in amazement Peterson's use of anthropomorphic words and expressions for chimpanzees as though they were humans, and as if they can speak like humans do. Examples: "Hi Figan" (p.102), "Mike died of pneumonia in 1975" (p.187), and "Flo's daughter Fifi was alive and thriving, and she had by then produced eight offspring, including two powerful and socially ambitious males, Freud and Frodo" (p.187).

Peterson's presentation of data in very detailed and chronological terms and his in-depth revelation of the daily and weekly ethnographic episodes in Gombe seem make him the principal researcher who did the ethnographic work by himself in the jungle between 1960 and 1969. But he did not do it himself. His connection with Goodall's chimpanzee project only began twenty years after Ruth's death.

Peterson's style of writing and presentation undisputedly defines him as a distinguished author. While the two maps provided in the book help the reader to mentally process the geographical and ecological terrain of Gombe for better understanding, the pictures of chimpanzees and the researchers on site animate and freshen the author's abstract painstaking descriptions of events that happened as far back as the 1960s. In writing this book, Peterson has exercised extraordinary thoughtfulness and diligence. His good effort in avoiding unnecessary typographical errors and his use of very simple language has contributed to the book's quality. By and large, there is one confession to make: the quality of the book is unquestionably high and compares favourably with the two beautiful popular anthropological monographs produced by Jane Goodall herself: *The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behaviour* (1986) and *Jane Goodall: 50 years at Gombe* (1999).

This book will be a good material for scholars and students interested in African primatology and general primate research. Primatology is often studied under biological or physical anthropology (which is itself one of the four main fields or branches of anthropology).

I, therefore, recommend the book for students studying anthropology at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

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