

Parallel lives, mirror images?

Stuart Schwartz, George Burton Adams Professor of History, Yale University. Transcript of video message sent from Puerto Rico.

Richard and Sally and I go back a long way! It was about 1970 when I contributed an essay on quilombos to Richard's *Maroon Societies*, but our careers and our lives and our interests have overlapped in many ways over the years since then.

Let me start with Sally. Reading her *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* completely changed the way I experienced museums for the rest of my life. I had always loved Native American and Polynesian exhibits, and my visit to the Harvard Peabody Maya exhibit at ten years old convinced me that archaeology was my destination. But after reading Sally's book, I developed a whole new way of seeing and appreciating so-called primitive art and artifacts. It changed my eyes and understanding and made my whole life richer. I remain an indebted admirer. The fact that we also became friends was an added plus!

Their books on Maroon arts have also delighted me and my family over the years. I have many memories of my exchanges and contacts with the Prices, but reading Richard's career memoir, *Inside/Outside*, reminded me of more, and helped me to understand why they and their work have been so important to me and to our common fields of interest. So, rather than talking about them, let me follow the example of the post-modern anthropologists who tell their native informants, "Enough about you, let's talk about me!"

Reading Richard's memoir, I was struck by how much we had in common. We are of the same generation and share a common cultural background, his father a dentist, mine a GP family doctor. Richard graduated high school in 1959, me in 1958. He was a Brooklyn Dodgers fan, me too. Like Richard, Jackie Robinson was my all-time sports hero. (My happiest day of childhood was my 10th birthday in 1950—Peabody Museum Maya and Jackie signed my scorecard). Although from Springfield—with lots of Brooklyn connections—I was a diehard Dodger fan—and never forgave their move to LA. The same events impacted us both: Civil Rights, Korea, Vietnam, the Kennedy assassination, the Cuban Revolution. And more.

He was a historically influenced anthropologist, I was an anthropologically interested historian who found Wolf, Mintz, Sahlins, and Geertz to my taste. Lévi-Strauss's *Triste tropiques* had gotten me interested in Brazil, and Richard had been his student. Richard and I read the same books as we grew up—C.W. Ceram's, *Gods, Graves, and Scholars* made me want to be an archaeologist. Richard read it too.

He and Sally were always more adventurous than me—as all that work and those books on Saamaka demonstrated. I did Brazil, they did the Caribbean—but we were influenced by each other's work, and often by reading the same people. Over time we traveled together. I brought them to the University of Minnesota and would have been delighted to have them as permanent colleagues—but the Twin Cities could not compete with Martinique!

As I began to get interested in the Caribbean I published an article in the *New West Indian Guide* that the Prices have been associated with for so long. I always read its reviews. For forty years, I have been influenced by, and an advocate of, Richard's book with Sid Mintz, *The Birth of African American Culture*—I am a creolization kind a guy, and I've insisted that a couple of generations of my grad students read it—and their (Richard's and Sid's) defense of it. This is what a classic really is: an essay that seeks to answer a major issue—and makes you think!

I know that Kris Lane's favorite book of Richard's is *Alabi's World*, but mine remains *First-Time*. The imaginative placing of a secretive and sacred oral history in a running same-page

conversation with an archivally-based European history of the same events reflected Richard's real skill and the value of anthropological field work, but also his creativity and daring in the nature of presentation in print—something also to be seen in *Alabi's World*. As a Brazilianist, I was always fascinated by the idea that the Matjau clan of Saamakas owed its origins to the fact that its founders were all runaways from a plantation owned by a man named Machado, probably one of those Sephardi planters driven from Dutch Brazil in 1654.

So let me finish up with what was perhaps our most important interaction. In 1973, I had bought in London a first edition of John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative* from a rare book dealer. It was not one of those expensive hand colored copies, but it was a first edition and all the plates were there. I read it thoroughly and was fascinated. It really told you what a slave society colony was like. While I was teaching at the University of Minnesota in 1978, Jack Parker at the James Ford Bell library asked me to take a look at a manuscript that they had recently purchased, so I went over to see it. It seemed familiar, and it looked like a hand-written copy of Stedman—but it was dated 1790 (not 1796, like all the published first editions) and there were whole sections that seemed unfamiliar to me. There were also some watercolors that reminded me of the plates in the first edition.

I said that the manuscript seemed vaguely familiar, but I knew someone who should definitely take a look at it. I called Richard, who was planning to travel to a conference in California, and he said he would make a stop in Minneapolis to see it. It was November, and Minneapolis was already cold, so I had to supply Richard with a winter coat. Given our difference in stature, it wasn't easy, but I did the best I could. After he saw the manuscript and told me he suspected it was Stedman's original text, I was just thrilled. But my role in the discovery was nothing in comparison to the research in Europe and the UK and Germany that Richard did (later joined by Sally) in the construction of their fantastic critical edition, sleuthing among family descendants and Stedman's own papers. Their edition is a monument of scholarship and a fitting testament to Richard's bona fides as a historian. I have sold my first edition, but I still have the beautiful Johns Hopkins Press volume they created.

Richard and Sally have enriched our world with their scholarship and their support for human rights in Suriname, French Guiana, and Martinique. Their generosity with colleagues and students has been a gift to us all. Whether in the cold of Minnesota, the hassle of São Paulo, or at dinner more recently in San Juan. I'm delighted to call them friends—satisfied to be of the same *turma*, as the Brazilians would say, and to have experienced the world and our related fields in much the same way.