Manda Cesara, *Reflections of a Woman Anthropologist: No Hiding Place.*

Pseudonym for: Karla Poewe, as on the index page of the book.

Setting: Luapula, Zambia

Time: journal and field notes of 1973

Subject: The book is about the problem of how doing research in a foreign culture affects the researcher. Ethnographic material was published in two other books and numerous papers. Remember, at the time the profession was primarily concerned with the impact of what we do on the people we study, or rather, on avoiding such an impact. We failed to observe just how deeply doing research affected us, our assumptions, our theories, our world view, and our lives. Fieldwork is the excavation of the “soul.”

Style: mixed genre, including personal journal, letters, and existential philosophy.

Aim: to make the reader hear, see, feel, smell and touch, to make the reader think and reflect about, that which and those who were part of that first field experience—theirs and mine.

Rationale: It was my belief that anthropologists should write at least two types of works:
(1) Ethnographies or ethnologies, works having to do with the accumulation of anthropological knowledge;
(2) Reflexive works such as memoirs, diaries, records of fieldwork experiences, works having to do with the history of the discipline, its main praxis, and its people.

Response to the book: Love and hate.

The most moving response came from my former Ph.D. supervisor, Harry Basehart, a very just and low key Harvard man. Here is what he wrote when he read the manuscript:

I finished reading Escape Not (that was the original title) the other day for the first time—-but not the last. It is magnificent--a book with tremendous power and impact. I can understand why you had to write and what Sartre, especially, and the phenomenologists meant to you (Letter Basehart to Poewe, September 29, 1981, his emphasis). It’s his understanding why I had to write it that moved me most, for that is what it was!

Did the book affect my work thereafter? Yes, deeply. The Luapula experience excavated, as it were, buried memories. It opened my eyes to problems that I have researched ever since.