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'THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH': SOME ASPECTS OF EVANGELISATION AMONG THE TRIO INDIANS[1]

In this paper I examine certain changes that have resulted from missionary activity among the Trio Indians of Surinam. The focus is on the evangelical influence of the missionaries, and ignores the numerous secular effects that they have had. These latter topics form the subject of other papers, which, together with the present one, are intended to go into a book which will document social change among the Trio over the last two decades.

I shall start by giving a brief introduction to the Trio and a sketch of the development of missionary activity among them. In the second part I will give an account of traditional Trio beliefs with special reference to those concerning the causes of sickness and death, and also describe the nature of the Christian teaching to which they have been exposed. In the third part I consider how the Indians have understood the biblical message and reinterpreted it in the light of their own ideas. In the final section a few comments are made about the success and failure of missionary work in other parts of the world and some possible reasons are advanced.

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[1] This article represents a modified version of a paper given to Oxford University Anthropological Society and to the Department of Social Anthropology, The Queen's University, Belfast. The main change that has been made results from the requirements of a written rather than spoken presentation, but I have also incorporated some suggestions that arose during discussion. I am grateful to all those who commented.

I

The Trio Indians[2] are a group of Carib-speakers who live in the tropical forest on either side of the Surinam-Brazilian border. Even today this is a remote region, difficult of access except by air, and still separated from the encroaching boundaries of national development by great distances. The Trio's traditional settlement pattern consisted of small villages, averaging about 30 inhabitants, with about a day's walk between them. There was no overarching tribal organization. Villages were autonomous but relatively impermanent, with a lifespan of about six years. The population was highly mobile, and there was a continuous movement of people between villages. The subsistence economy is based on slash-and burn-cultivation with bitter cassava as the staple crop. Protein is mainly obtained through hunting and fishing, and gathering provides substantial amounts of food at certain times of the year. Virtually all raw materials are available from the environment, and the exceptions to this are metal goods and other manufactured items which were obtained through trade with the Bush Negroes of Surinam, in small quantities at least as early as the first half of the last century. The main division of labour is along sexual lines, and an adult man and woman form a self-sufficient combination in terms of production and reproduction. Shamanism provided the only clear-cut specialism, while village leaders were little more than heads of extended families.

The switching in the last paragraph between past and present tense is intentional and is designed to indicate certain features which no longer exist. In particular this applies to the traditional settlement pattern, and its disappearance is the most obvious effect of the missionary activity. Until 1960, the Trio had had relatively little contact with the outside world, and

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[2] My fieldwork among the Trio in 1963-4 was funded by the Research Institute for the study of Man, New York, and that in 1978 by the S.S.R.C.

For further information on the Trio with special reference to the changes which have occurred in the past two decades, the reader can be referred to: R. Cortez, *O 'Diaconato' Indígena: articulacão étnica no Recôncavo Tumucumaque Brasileiro*, Unpublished Thesis, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro 1977; P. Frikel, *Dez anos aculturacão Tiriyó, 1960-70*, Belem: Museu Goeldi; and the following works by P.G. Rivière: 'A Policy for the Trio Indians', *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, Vol. XLV (1966), pp. 95-120; *Marriage among the Trio*, Oxford: Clarendon 1969; 'A Report on the Trio Indians', *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, Vol. LV (1981).

certainly no permanent assocation. The most regular interaction with the outside world was with the Bush Negroes who visited the Trio for trading purposes. From the mid-19th century onwards various scientific expeditions, boundary commissions, and survey teams visited the region for brief periods. Then in 1959, a Franciscan missionary, Protasio Frikel, who had made frequent trips to the Trio during the previous ten years, founded a permanent mission station on the Brazilian side of the frontier. Although I will refer to this mission on future occasions, it is not the main concern of this paper. The focus is on the Baptist mission that was founded in Surinam in 1960.

This Baptist mission started life as the Door-to-Life Gospel Mission, but its activities were soon taken over by the West Indies Mission. Two mission stations were founded, and a policy of persuading the Indians to abandon their own villages and to settle round these stations was actively pursued. The missionaries were extremely successful in this (for reasons that cannot be examined here), and they attracted not only all the Surinam Trio but many of those living in Brazil as well. The Roman Catholic missionary who until then had been happy to visit the Indians in their own villages retaliated by implementing a similar policy. By the late 1960s all the Trio and members of some small neighbouring groups were living around one of the three mission stations, leaving the rest of a vast area deserted.

The policies of the two missionary organizations have differed on many points. The Roman Catholic mission has concentrated more on secular aspects, and has brought about some quite fundamental changes in socio-economic organization. They have paid less attention to the spiritual work, and the religious teaching that has been undertaken has been done mainly in Portuguese, a language in which a proportion of the population is now relatively fluent. Little or no attempt has been made to eradicate many traditional practices, such as smoking, dancing, and drinking. It is not clear whether shamanism is still practised.

On the other hand the Baptist missionaries have not gone out of their way to change the socio-economic organization, although some changes have inevitably occurred. Instead they have focused their efforts on religious conversion. This has involved the elimination of smoking, drinking, dancing, and shamanism, all practices associated with the Trio's traditional beliefs. The Baptists have done all their teaching in Trio, have translated the whole of the New Testament and suitable parts of the Old Testament into Trio, and have taught the Indians to read and write in their own language. With very few exceptions the Surinam Trio have remained monolingual.

There is no love lost between the two missionary organizations, and they are critical of each other's activities. Some of the Baptist missionaries regard Roman Catholicism as a deviation from true Christianity and do not accept their converts as Christians. This attitude has rubbed off on some of the more ardent Baptist converts, while Brazilian Trio have accused

the Baptist missionaries of practising ethnocide.[3]

II

To appreciate the changes that have been brought about by missionary teaching, it is first necessary to look at traditional Trio beliefs and then the particular form of Christian message to which the Indians have been exposed.

Traditional Trio beliefs are unsystematised and *ad hoc*, a fact which is in keeping with the nature of their social organization. It is out of the question to examine Trio beliefs in general, and I will concentrate on their notions of causation, with particular reference to sickness and death.

There are various components which may be identified here. First, and perhaps most important, is the influence of the individual human being. His or her behaviour can affect directly the well-being of others. This may be intentional or unintentional,and broadly speaking the more closely related two people are the less intentionality is required for one to influence the welfare of the other. It is not possible unintentionally to cause the sickness or death of a stranger, but it is of a close kinsman. Examples of this include the restrictions on diet that members of a nuclear family follow when one of their number is ill, and the acceptance that an individual's misdeeds may be responsible for the sickness of a kinsman. The mechanism at work here is not easy to follow, but basically the individual is seen as being intimately involved in a network of relations which form a part of his individuality. Harmony within this network is vital for a person's physical and spiritual well-being, and vice-versa. Influence within such a nexus is direct and calls for no other agency; the mechanism results from the sharing of a common relatedness. I must confess that I remain uncertain about the exact way in which the Trio conceive of this relatedness but it seems to be less a shared substance such as blood (as has been reported from elsewhere in Amazonia) and more a metaphysical entity such as soul-matter.

When intentionality is involved, the influence may be exerted either directly or indirectly. In the case of direct influence, the individual goes through some procedures, said or done, which act on the intended victim directly. The indirect method involves the recruitment of an agent, a spirit, which

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[3] See the report on the Second Assembly of Indigenous Chiefs held in Brazil in May 1975.

is sent to attack the victim. Laymen only have limited contact with and control over spirits, and as far as possible they try to avoid them. It is the shaman who has most dealings with the spirit world, and who is best able to employ its services for good or evil. The shaman has his own spirit helpers, and his relationship with them is not unlike that described above for close kin. It is essential for the shaman's safety that he keeps on good terms with his spirit helpers, and many of the restrictions he has to observe before contacting the spirit world are to ensure harmony in these relationships. Because of their greater powers shamans can kill over longer distances and in larger numbers than can laymen.

Spirits are also said to act on their own volition, but they are not thought of as unambiguously bad or dangerous. The main trouble with spirits is their unpredictability. They are potentially anywhere and everywhere, and anything may have its invisible, spiritual counterpart, although certain things are more often and closely associated with spirits than others. The presence of a spirit can only be determined after the event, so that it is always wise to take precautions. The ambiguity is most clearly recognised in the fact that the same spirit can kill or cure.

Thus an individual's sickness or death may be explained in a number of ways, but more often than not it is assumed that human malevolence has something to do with it. Most people die of sorcery, and sorcery symbolises the catastrophic breakdown in human relations. The opposite condition to this is the state of *sasame*. This word can be translated as happy, but interestingly enough you cannot be *sasame*, or happy, alone. *Sasame* is something that has to be shared with others, and is a quality of a relationship. Its implication, however, is more far-reaching than this since it refers not simply to a state of harmony with one's fellow men but with the natural and supernatural worlds as well. When I first glossed the word, I wrote 'In its simplest connotation this word means 'happy', but its deeper meaning implies a sense of contentment and the feeling of belonging not only to society but to the whole of nature and the universe.[4] The most general and public demonstration of this condition was displayed in dance festivals.

For the present purposes that brief sketch of Trio ideas about the causation of sickness and death will suffice. We can now turn to what the Baptist missionaries believe and teach. The first and crucial point is that they are fundamentalists, and as such they recognise the Scriptures as a literal and historical document. Furthermore the Scriptures are inerrant and infallible. In practice, this fundamentalist commitment to the scriptural texts means that life is a constant battle against the forces of evil and the temptations that Satan places in the way. The only way in which victory can be attained and individual sal-

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[4] *Marriage among the Trio*, p. 256

vation assured is through God and the acceptance of His word by which one's actions must be continually guided. Failure to believe and obey will result in damnation and burning in the eternal fires. The God of the fundamentalists appears much more as an avenging father than a forgiving one, and to turn away from His true path is to bring His wrath upon one. How has this message been conveyed to the Trio?

Much of the biblical message is totally meaningless to the Trio. This is barely surprising given that parts present insurmountable difficulties to those brought up within the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Evans-Pritchard drew attention to some of these difficulties in his introduction to *Theories of Primitive Religion* and asks 'how do you render into an Amerindian language "In the beginning was the word"?.'[5] The answer for one Amerindian language is *'Ma, ipitɨtoponpɨmao Omi teese'*. The missionaries have made a literal translation of the biblical text. *Ma* is a standard opening for any sentence, and could be roughly rendered as "well". *Ipitɨtoponpɨmao* is derived from the stem of the verb 'to begin' (*ipitɨ*) which is nominalised by *-to*. The suffix *-ponpɨ* means 'former', and *-mao* provides the temporal sense. Thus the word literally means 'beginning former when'. *Omi* is the word for 'speech' or 'talk' (although it is rarely used without a possessive pronoun), and *teese* is the stative form of the verb 'to be'. Thus while it is possible to find words in the Trio language with which to translate such a sentence, the problem of how to convey the meaning is left untouched. This difficulty is not only present with reference to metaphysical passages but is equally problematic in the translation of the socio-cultural background. How to get across the pastoral idiom that is so central to biblical imagery to a people who not only lack a pastoral tradition but might even be described as anti-pastoralist in their outlook?

On the other hand there are various biblical stories and notions that the Trio have no difficulty in appreciating; the Garden of Eden and Noah are examples of these. However, it is not the Trio's reaction to such passages that is as interesting as their adoption and adaptation of more essential ideas. This is best illustrated by returning to the subject of the causation of sickness and death, and to the title of this paper.

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[5] E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965, p. 14.

III

The Trio for 'the wages of sin is death' is *iripi irepeme nai waweinɨ*. This, in turn, can be rendered back literally as 'sin payment is death', and although the Trio understand it as that, it is worth pointing out some interesting points about this sentence. Leaving *iripi* aside for the moment, *irepeme* although now fully incorporated into the Trio language is a loan-word, its origin being almost certainly French, Spanish or Portuguese (the Trio [r] sound is close to [d] and [l]; and [p] is close to [b]). It seems probably that the word was introduced by the Bush Negro traders. Trading between the Trio and Bush Negroes involved an almost contractual relationship between permanent partners, and was based on considerable trust since debts were left outstanding for long periods,as they are among the Trio today. Thus, while *irepeme* does mean something being owed, there is no sense of immediacy attached to the word. It might be said that the old comment that the wages of sin is death but not immediate death is built into the Trio version.

The problem about *waweinɨ* is that as well as death it refers to a state of unconsciousness, as, for example, when someone is in a coma. This, in other contexts, has implications for the understanding of certain miracles.

The most difficult word is *iripi*,sin. Unfortunately I have no information about the traditional meaning of the term although it seems improbable that it meant sin. Possibly cognate with it is the word *wiripɨ*, which is the Trio for spirit, although the missionaries invariably translate it as evil spirit or devil. For example, in the story of the Gadarene swine, Jesus sent the *wiripɨ* into the pigs. There is the word *wiripɨme* which literally means *'wiripɨ* being'. The missionaries have taken this term to mean 'bad', but this translation can be accepted only if spirits were regarded as unequivocally evil, which the Trio did not. As has been mentioned, spirits are unpredictable and unreliable. This ambiguous position is perhaps further evinced by another word, *wiripɨtao*. This term refers to the area between the village clearing proper and the forest proper. This is a strip of tree-roots, uncleared fallen trees, weeds and low secondary growth, and is the place where the village rubbish is dumped. It is neither village nor forest, which are the two essential socio-spatial categories in Trio thought, but something in-between.

While it is questionable whether *wiripɨme* meant 'bad' in the past it certainly does today as a result of missionary teaching. Nor did the missionaries fail to note and exploit the closeness of the terms for spirit and bad. Likewise, whatever *irïpï* meant in the past, today it means sin. The sins against which the missionaries preached are those listed in numerous

passages in the New Testament, and include such things as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, strife, sedition, idolatry, witchcraft, sorcery, hatred, anger, murder, drunkenness, revelling, orgies, and so on. All of these are features of Trio life, and even if they did not regard them as sins they did recognise most of them as potential sources of disharmony. Most of these sins can be translated into Trio without too much distortion, and in some cases there is an abundance of suitable terms for the purpose. For example, the Trio language is well endowed with terms to describe different degrees of anger. However, some bias can be seen in the missionaries' choice of words. Witchcraft is translated as 'practising shamanism', idolatry by the belief in the shaman's spirit helpers which are represented in his rattle by tiny pebbles, revelling and orgies as 'dancing', and sedition by the verb 'to leave a village'. Given the policy of retaining the Indians close to the mission stations, this last example is of particular significance considering the high rate of traditional mobility.

Having identified the Trio's sins, translated them into Trio (at least to their own satisfaction), the missionaries still had to persuade the Indians that they were sins and should give them up. They did this by telling the Trio about a new spirit of whom they had never heard. This new spirit is called God (*Kan* in Trio). Kan is all powerful, and unequivocally good and protective on condition that one places unwavering faith in him and those allied to him. Those who are not with him are against him. The spirits with which the Trio had been dealing in the past had deceived them for they were the allies and representatives of Kan's direst enemy, Satan. Kan, however, is more powerful than Satan, and if you believe in him, pray to him, and follow his word He will protect you from the spirits and malevolent men and give you everlasting life.

It is important to realise that the missionaries never denied the existence of the Trio spirit world. Indeed all the evidence indicates that the missionaries believe as firmly as the Trio in the existence of spirits, although they call them devils or Satan. The Trio still accept the presence of spiritis. Former shamans do not deny their past communication with the spirit world and their relationship with spirit helpers. No-one has suggested that they should, and they are frightened to perform traditional shamanistic practices because this will put them back in contact with that world. They admit that in the past they were ignorant of what they were doing, and because of this their forefathers have gone to burn in the eternal fires. Today they have heard of Kan, are His children, are good, are better off, and do not die.

This last claim is crucial to our understanding of the process of conversion. The speed at which the Trio gave up so many of their traditional ritual practices is startling, and in another paper I have tried to explore some of the reasons for this. There is no room here to go into this subject in detail, but there is one vitally important aspect to which attention must be

drawn. When the missionaries started work in the area, the Trio were demographically in a parlous state. Medical care provided by the missionaries has completely altered this situation. The infant mortality rate has dropped right off, and life expectancy has risen abruptly. The number of people of 50 years and over has quadrupled in a generation, and four-generation families are common. The overall mortality rate has been unnaturally low in the last decade, and in a certain sense people have stopped dying, at least at the usual rate.

The Trio are well aware that medicine is mainly responsible for this change. However, medicine did not come to them in an ideologically uncontaminated form. The missionaries taught that the power of medicine to cure is directly dependent upon the will of Kan, who may give or withhold this power in any particular case. Medicine is by no means the only thing whose efficacy the missionaries have attributed to Kan, but it is the most obvious and the one which has had the greatest implications for the Trio. The point should be made, however, that I do not think that the missionaries can be accused of making opportunist and deceitful use of the powers of Western medicine in order to advance their evangelical message among those who know no better. They are, I feel certain, acting sincerely, and preaching what they themselves believe. Kan, for the Trio, has become accordingly both the necessary and the sufficient cause in the explanation of a whole series of phenomena, and above all in that relating to sickness and death. Because these events continue to occur - people fall ill and die, that is - the causal explanation has to include the reason why in any particular case, and even in that of the most dedicated Christian, Kan has failed to save the patient and withheld from the medicine its power to heal.

The answer to this is contained within the evangelical slogan 'the wages of sin is death'. Kan will punish the sinner by withholding the power of the medicine, and allow him to die. The Trio have elaborated this simple message in order to make it fit better with their traditional ideas. Today the Trio recognise that sickness and death result from Kan in revenge for sinning, but not necessarily that of the victim. Revenge may be visited on an individual as a result of his own wickedness, but it may equally be the effect of some other, closely related person's lapse. In other words, the social network component of the traditional causal notion remains, and an individual's behaviour can influence the well-being of others as well as his own. Blame is still attached to individuals, and as in the past it is apportioned after the event. The Trio have high, but rather unspecific standards of Christian behaviour, and they tend to be judged in the light of what has happened. Thus the behaviour of a person who falls ill and dies is scrutinised for lapses which will explain the event. Likewise the behaviour of others, especially closely related people, is examined. Relevant to this is the fact that the question ' are you *sasame?*', which means approximately 'are you happy in your relation with others?', has also come to mean 'are you a Christian?'. Christianity involves being in a state of harmony with your fellow men and

with God. Disharmony in social and spiritual relationships is still understood to be an aspect of the aetiology of sickness and death. Blame for a particular occurrence will be laid on a defaulter in exactly the same way as accusations of sorcery were made in the past. Also, as in the past, explanations are *post facto*.

A change that has come about is the disappearance of the intentional aspect referred to earlier when discussing traditional ideas. The Trio no longer fear the sorcerer against whom Kan and prayer protect them. Rather it is the punitive action of Kan that is responsible for sickness and death, and even the intentional sinner only does unintentional harm since no-one knows when and on whom Kan will wreak his vengeance.

There is a final aspect to all this that is worth a brief mention. The importance of the shaman's harmony with the spirit world, and in particular his spirit helpers, before conducting a seance has been mentioned. This idea has been transferred to the medical personnel who care for the Trio. These are mainly Dutch nurses, and they have been the focus of numerous accusations when patients have failed to respond to treatment. The nurses are charged with not being Christians, or not being *sasame*, and because of this Kan has withheld the curative power of the medicine. An interesting case involved an Indian girl who was being trained as a medical assistant. She had been forced to marry a man whom she did not want to marry, and was conducting a rather open affair with the man whom she wished to marry. She was heavily sanctioned for her adulterous behaviour, and it was proposed by the village leaders that she be suspended from her medical duties. This might appear to have been a punishment, but an informant took the view that since she was sinning there was little point in her administering medicine because its potency would be lost or reduced. She was giving medicine in vain (*nepinëyanre*), the informant explained.

To summarise the nature of Trio Christianity, we may say that they believe in an all-powerful spirit, Kan, and they accept that there are certain forms of behaviour of which He does not approve and if they indulge in them He will punish them. On the other hand, if they heed His word and follow His commandments, they will be rewarded with everlasting life. The nature of traditional beliefs has not provided an obstacle to the assimilation of parts of the Christian message. Given the open-ended nature of the Trio pantheon, the existence of a spirit of whom they had not previously been aware called for no radical reappraisal. It is true that the qualities of this new spirit have resulted in the world being more sharply divided between good and bad than it was in the past, but since there was always an aura of uncertainty about the traditional spirits, Kan's guaranteed goodness, concrete evidence of which was readily observable in the demographic circumstances, seems to have offered an alternative that was attractive to the Trio. The values of harmony and brotherhood as present in Christian teaching are not out of keeping with the notion of *sasame*. Nor are the sins

listed in the New Testament unknown to the Trio as forms of asocial behaviour, and furthermore the Trio belief that the behaviour of one person can affect the welfare of another has its parallel in Christianity: 'For I the Lord God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation'.

IV

The Trio succumbed relatively quickly and easily to the evangelical message, and there are a number of reasons and circumstances that can be held to account for this. This is the topic of another paper, and here I wish to draw attention to only one aspect, the degree to which the ideas on both sides were compatible. I would argue that the discrepancy between certain fundamental Christian beliefs and Trio beliefs is not all that great, and further that the rather unsystematised nature of the latter allowed for the absorption of the former, or at least parts of them. If this is correct, then another form of Christianity would not prove so acceptable or the Trio would latch on to different aspects of it. Some information on this will be forthcoming when Father Francisco Cerqueira of the Institute completes his work among the Trio in the Brazilian side of the frontier. For the moment we will have to do with two rather more wide-ranging comparative examples.

The first of these is another South American case, the Toba of Argentina, and the source is Miller.[6] The Toba have been exposed to four centuries of Catholic missionization, the first mission having been founded in 1585. During this long period, the evangelical work has been carried on with varying degrees of vigour, but, Miller claims, apart from the use of the term Dios there is very little among present-day Toba which can be contributed to Catholic teaching. Two Protestant missions, one Church of England and the other Mennonite, operated with considerable intensity during short periods of this century, but they proved no more successful in converting the Toba than the Roman Catholics. The reason Miller gives for the failure of all these missions is similar. In all cases, the main power figures, God, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary, are too remote to fit with Toba notions of what a relationship with such supernatural entites should be. The failure of these organizations is to be contrasted with the immediate and lasting success of a Pentecostal mission. A key

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[6] E.S. Miller, 'Shamans, Power Symbols, and Change in Argentine Toba Culture', *American Ethnologist*, Vol II (1975), pp. 477-496.

aspect of Pentecostal beliefs and experience is the direct communication with the divine, or supernatural. Miller explores some of the points at which Pentecostal beliefs have brought about changes in traditional Toba ideas and practices, in particular the fact that there is now universal communication with the supernatural while in the past this was confined to shamans. However, it is not this point which is interesting for the present subject, but rather the fact that the Toba, having rejected three forms of Christianity as inappropriate,accepted a fourth because it fitted with their indigenous notions.

For a second case, we may turn to the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea, and the source here is Schieffelin.[7] The mission is the Asia Pacific Christian Mission, a fundamentalist Protestant organization, but much of the evangelical work among the Kaluli was performed by Papuan pastors who gave the scriptural message a distinctly Papuan flavour. The speed at which conversion took place was startling, according to Schieffelin, and he explores various reasons why this was so. He concentrates on one particular aspect which is associated with the Kaluli's notions of reciprocity, and centres round the notion of *wel*. *Wel* is the exact return for something given or received. Thus it is a pig returned for a pig given, but it is also revenge for death by witchcraft. It is a matter of evening up the score, and these are the terms in which the Kauli have interpreted Judgement Day; God's *wel* in return for Jesus' death upon the Cross. The Kaluli found themselves in the uncomfortable position of being in the middle of an uncompleted transaction with God. Each individual, they were taught,is responsible for Christ's murder, and revenge could be expected unless one gave one's soul to Christ in compensation. The Christian message could be made to fit neatly with traditional ideas. The similarities of the Kaluli case with that of the Trio is striking, and perhaps nowhere more than when Schieffelin writes: 'With Judgement Day, one's conduct towards others is no longer a matter between person and person, but between each individual and God. That is, what one does towards another is directly a matter of one's relation to God'.

The Three examples of conversion discussed in this paper have much in common, but can they in turn be related to wider generalizations on the topic? Perhaps the most general claim about conversion is that of Horton[8] who argues that in Africa the success of Muslim and Christian ideas reflect their coincidental appearance with a cosmological horizon that was expanding

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[7] E.L. Schieffelin, 'Evangelical Rhetoric and the Transformation of Traditional Culture in Papua New Guinea', Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Meeting, Cincinnati 1979.

[8] R. Horton, 'African Conversion', *Africa*, Vol. XLI (1971), pp. 85-108; and,by the same author, 'On the Rationality of Conversion', *Africa*, Vol. XLV (1975), pp. 219-235 & 373-399.

for other reasons, and the two-tiered structure of existing African belief systems. The lower of these tiers consisted of local deities who became increasingly less relevant to everyday affairs as horizons widened, and there were no traditional means for dealing with the otiose deities of the upper tier. This want was filled by the world religions. How far Horton is correct with reference to Africa I do not know, but his tendency to treat Christianity as a uniform set of ideas, or rather his failure to discriminate between different forms of Christian teaching, may be unfortunate if the suggestion made in this paper is more widely true. That is that the particular form of Christianity is a crucial variable in the conversion process. However, this does not mean that there must be a direct fit between the symbols of the two belief systems. Rather, as Miller has argued, the relationship between the systems must contain a degree of ambiguity so that there is room for reinterpretation. This has clearly happened among the Kaluli, Toba, and Trio among whom an appropriate Christianity has blended with traditional ideas to form a new syncretic belief system.

Finally, reference must be made to one further problem. Given the large variety of forms in which Christianity can be retailed, it might be thought that an appropriate form exists for every society. This may be so but since all societies have not been exposed to every form, we do not know. However, this seems unlikely and it is more likely that there are numerous cases where there is no meeting-ground between the symbolic systems. On the other hand there may be more to it than this, and the example I have in mind are the Waiyana, the eastern neighbours of the Trio, who have mainly rejected the same missionary organization to whom the Trio succumbed so readily. There are historical factors which have to be taken into account in explaining these different reactions, but the key variable seems to have been the degree to which religious notions, myth and ritual, are embedded in the social structure. This is something that requires more thorough examination in the future.

PETER RIVIÈRE

BYWAYS IN OXFORD ANTHROPOLOGY

Selections from the Minutes of the
Oxford University Anthropological Society

On February 18, 1917 the Anthropological Society celebrated its hundredth meeting with a paper by Miss Pollard on 'The European Witch Mania'. From its foundation the Society had put on a varied programme which included folk-lore, ancient history, archaeology and physical anthropology. In 1917 the Society began to provide a brief description of the content of the talks which gives us an insight into the concerns of the era. Of particular interest is an interpretation of Areil Bread (funeral biscuits) which was delivered by G. Sidney Hartland on November 1, 1917.

> *The speaker took as his text a paper envelope which had contained a funeral biscuit. This and similar envelopes had been distributed at the funeral of Mr. Oliver who died on November 7, 1828. Mr. Hartland brought forward evidence to show that these funeral feasts were probably relics of a very ancient custom in various parts of the world of eating the flesh of the dead tribesmen.*

However, not all the descriptions of talks are as full as they might be, as is shown by the following account for October 17, 1918.

> *Dr. Schiller then read his presidential address entitled 'Anthropology and Psychical Research'. There was no discussion.*

The details of the minutes give a picture of flamboyance in the Society of this period and a talk by Mrs. Murgoie illustrates this well. On May 15, 1918 she gave a paper about 'Peasant Customs and Beliefs in Roumania', where lantern slides were shown and a dance was performed by a Miss Romalo in 'native costume'. The Society had gone to the trouble of inviting six Roumanian officers who were training in Oxford, and were impressed when one of the officers leapt up and executed a *pas seul* at the end of the talk.

The problem of subscription arrears bothered committee meetings from the start of the Society when the membership was 2/6d per annum. In 1918 the committee decided to clamp down when they introduced a rule to penalize offenders. They even sent round carefully printed reminders informing members that if they were one term in arrears it would be assumed that they had left the Society. Perhaps this type of policy was responsible for keeping the Society in funds. For example, on November 15, 1915 there was a surplus of £15 which the committee decided to invest. The Society also bought War Stock during World War I and in 1917 the treasurer found that the Society could not afford to buy a box large enough to contain all its War Loan receipts. The Society is indeed still benefiting from these shrewd investments and in the first half of 1980 it received a total of 60 pence from its War Stock.

MIKE HITCHCOCK
Secretary, 1979-80
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ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE OLD TESTAMENT: A REJOINDER

In his review of my book *Anthropology and the Old Testament* in *JASO* (Vol.X no.3, 1979), Paul Heelas noted that the book did not discuss whether anthropological theorising could be combined with theological approaches:

> ... the question remains whether some anthropological theories are not reductionist and therefore unacceptable. Bearing in mind the problems once faced by Robertson Smith, is there not today some tension between applying the ideas of Lévi-Strauss and writing for the 'Growing Points in Theology' series?

These are fair questions. I am grateful to Heelas for raising them, and to the editors of *JASO* for allowing me to attempt a reply.

The subject does not simply concern the relationship between anthropology and theology. There are differing approaches within theology itself, of which some would be more sympathetic to anthropological theorising than others. The question is also a part of the wider problem of the relation of theology to other disciplines, e.g. philosophy.

The most obvious reason why Old Testament scholars may wish to study anthropology is that the Old Testament records cultural activities that were not peculiar to the ancient Israelites. Sacrifice, divination, blood feud, magic, mourning rites, to name only some, are well attested in the Old Testament. Further, it contains much information of a genealogical nature. Granted that anthropologists make special studies of kinship systems, and of other types of behaviour found in many societies as well as in ancient Israel, it is not unreasonable for the Old Testament specialist to hope for some illumination from anthropological

studies. He may profit not only from the methods and approach of the anthropologist, but also from his theorising, especially if this is at variance with commonly accepted opinions within Old Testament study.

In some cases, Old Testament scholars have deliberately employed anthropological theorising in order to defend their theological evaluations of the Old Testament. In the latter part of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, British Old Testament critical scholarship used the notion of development in order to reconcile the religious and moral crudities of parts of the Old Testament with its continued acceptance as holy scripture. The Old Testament was seen as the record of God's gradual education of the Israelite people from lower to higher views of ethics and of obligation to God. This liberal approach was in opposition to an orthodox conservative reading of the Old Testament, which would not accept that there had been any development in the Israelite understanding of God. It is not surprising therefore that some of the liberals made use of the developmentalist theories of Frazer and Tylor to support their case. But they went beyond Frazer and Tylor, and asserted that in ancient Israel a divine providence had been involved in the nation's cultural and religious development. Whether they had good theological grounds for assuming this operation of divine providence is open to doubt.

W. Robertson Smith is an outstanding example of a theologian who used anthropology to support his theological position. At the trial which led to his dismissal from his post at the Free Church Divinity College in Aberdeen in 1881, he was charged, among other things, with holding that the levitical laws were not instituted at the time of Moses.[1] The theological principle at issue was whether it was possible both to accept the Bible as authoritative for Christian belief, and to accept the account of the history of Israelite religion afforded by historical criticism, when the historical-critical account differed radically from the account in the Bible. Whereas the book of Leviticus stated plainly that Moses had instituted various propitiatory sacrifices, Smith accepted the historical-critical view of his time that propitiatory sacrifices in ancient Israel had been introduced long after the time of Moses. One of the aims of his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* of 1888-1889 was to show, on anthropological grounds, that the earliest form of Semitic sacrifice was a communion meal shared between a clan and its deity, and that propitiatory sacrifices were not part of the most primitive type of Israelite religion. The case rested partly upon the view that totemism was a primitive form of social and religious life common to all peoples.[2] Smith was concerned to discover what

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[1] See T.O. Beidelman, *W. Robertson Smith and the Sociological Study of Religion*, Chicago 1974, p. 17.

[2] See J.W. Rogerson, 'W.R. Smith: Religion of the Saints', *Expository Times*, Vol. XC(1979), pp. 228-233.

was true about the development of Israelite sacrifice; but there was the theological implication that if he was correct, then his theological opponents were wrong, and needed to modify their views about the authority of the Bible.

An equally famous, and quite different use of anthropology for theological purposes was that of W. Schmidt and his Vienna school.[3] The aim here was to show that there had been a universal primitive monotheism and morality, and that polytheism was a 'degeneration'. In theological terms, this was a Catholic use of anthropology to oppose theories of religious development that had been put forward by anthropologists and which had been accepted in critical Protestant circles, and applied to the Old Testament.

In the past twenty years, a renewed interest in anthropology on the part of Old Testament scholarship has come as a response to the writings of Evans-Pritchard, Lévi-Strauss, Leach and Mary Douglas. In some cases, this was because these writers challenged assumptions that Old Testament scholarship had accepted from earlier phases of anthropology. For example, in the 1920s and 1930s, the ancient Israelite was sometimes presented in Old Testament scholarship as a Lévy-Bruhl type of primitive who understood magic in Frazerian terms and whose worship was a Malinowski-type use of myth and ritual. Survivals of such viewpoints are not uncommon among first-year undergraduates studying the Old Testament. Not only has Old Testament scholarship learned from recent anthropology that it must re-assess its indebtedness to earlier anthropology; it has begun to learn from anthropology, rightly or wrongly, that ancient Israel's sacred traditions and social behaviour can be seen as a complex of symbols articulating Israelite perception and understanding of reality.

It is this particular use of anthropology in Old Testament studies, namely the use of what anthropology has suggested about traditions and behaviour as clusters of symbols, that seems to me to put Heelas's question about anthropology and theology at its sharpest. Part of the intellectual heritage of Lévi-Strauss is Saussurian linguistics, with its stress on the closed world of linguistic signs. How can theologians use anthropological theorising that assumes a closed and self-contained system of symbols, in order to support theological claims about the transcendent?

In fact,this question is a specific instance of a general problem that has concerned theology for a very long time - the problem of the meaning of religious language. In the present century, this problem became central with the insistence of logical positivists that religious language is meaningless insofar as it claims to make synthetic statements. While theology has not accepted the validity of everything propounded by logical positivists, there has been some recognition of the validity of the point that religious language does not make synthetic statements. Some recent theology has been concerned with story and metaphor, and with the claim that these may point beyond

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[3] Cf. W. Schmidt, *The Origin and Growth of Religion* (trans. H.J. Rose), London 1931.

themselves to the transcendent.[4] It was for this reason that I concluded my contribution to a recently-published symposium on sacrifice by suggesting that whereas the anthropologist would look at the story of the institution of Old Testament sacrifice only in order to elucidate a coherent system of symbols, 'the theologian would concentrate upon sacrifice as seen in terms of the story (of its institution), and the insight into eternal reality which the story might contain'.[5]

My own approach to the Old Testament is basically phenomenological. The Old Testament contains, in my view, the religious witness of a smallish group of Israelites who preserved over a period of a thousand years the conviction that a god had chosen them, and was involved in the events of their history. The belief of this group was shared to a greater or smaller extent by the people as a whole, depending on the circumstances. It was partly institutionalised in worship and sacrifice, and it was articulated in religious traditions. As the Old Testament repeatedly shows, this belief of the minority provided a less satisfactory religion for the majority than the religions of neighbouring peoples. The majority turned repeatedly to these other religions, or adapted to them the belief of the Israelite minority.

The task of the theologian, as I see it, is not to treat the Old Testament as a set of ontological assertions about unseen reality. It is rather to seek to discover what the Israelite minority was claiming to believe. In this regard, the theologian's aim may not be so very different from that of the anthropologist who tries to describe the religion of a particular people. This being so, it is not surprising that the Old Testament scholar should study classical descriptions of religious beliefs by anthropologists such as Evans-Pritchard, Lienhardt, Middleton, Geertz and Turner in order to profit from their methods and results. He will be aware that some anthropological theorising is reductionist - but then some theology has been reductionist also.

The Old Testament scholar as one who seeks to describe the religious witness contained in the Old Testament stops, and the theologian as articulator of a system of doctrine starts, at the point where it is accepted that the Old Testament witness of faith can become a basis for religious belief today, and the attempt is made to work out the implications of this acceptance. A scholar, may, of course, be attempting to describe the witness of faith in the Old Testament, and he may also in some sense have accepted this faith for himself. There is thus the danger, as in all description of religious beliefs, that the assumptions of the observer will prejudice his observations. At the very least, a closer liaison between anthropology and theology

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[4] See, for example, P. Ricoeur, 'Biblical Hermeneutics', *Semeia*, Vol. IV (1975), pp. 29-148.

[5] J.W. Rogerson, 'Sacrifice in the Old Testament', in M.F.C. Bourdillon & Meyer Fortes (eds.), *Sacrifice*, London: Academic Press 1980; p. 58.

may assist the theologian to be more conscious of his prejudices as he attempts to describe objectively the religious witness that the Old Testament contains. It will be interesting to see whether these observations go some way towards answering Heelas's questions.

J.W. ROGERSON

COMMENTARY

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON FIELDWORK: A MORAL DILEMMA

I must be the ultimate urbanite. Reared in the centre of Manchester by parents who did not consider country walks good for the soul. Terrified of cows and spiders. No feel for geography - from my concrete jungle how could I imagine what constituted an 'ecological niche'? Even my M.Litt. thesis was on race relations.

By the time I set out to do fieldwork in East Africa, I was imbued with the importance of kinship, age groups, the position of women, and 'cattle ideology'. I had rather vague notions of what constituted ecologically 'marginal zones', and even vaguer ideas of tropical medicine. I stalwartly set out to study a small group of people, the Larim, nestling in the south-eastern corner of the Sudan. At the time I left them in March 1979 they were strong and healthy, with villages full of grain to eat. Large herds of cattle and goats grazed peacefully in pastures on the plains. Naïvely I expected to return to the stable situation.

On the morning of January 6th 1980, full of optimism and anticipation I boarded the flight to Nairobi. In the plane I read, quite by chance, Colin Turnbull's account *The Mountain People*, the story of an anthropologist forced by circumstance to study a group of people last in his list of preferences. When he arrived in their area, he found them starving on the edge of their fertile former hunting grounds which had been annexed by the Ugandan Government, as the Kidepo National Park. For many months Turnbull watched these people starve to death, shedding as they did so the cultural and social bonds tying them to neighbours, freinds, distant kin and, finally, close kin. I noted with passing interest that the Kidepo river flowed through the land of the Larim, the people I was on my way to study; then I put it out of my mind, and wrote a self-righteous list of criticisms of Turnbull's book. Why had he stayed watching those people as they starved? Why had he not done

more to get relief, to alert the government to their plight? How could he sit with his Landrover full of food eating, in the knowledge that his neighbours, however much he might not like them, were starving? Had he not in some strange way become as 'inhuman' as he made out the Ik themselves to be? Why did he not go elsewhere to 'people-watch'? What were the ethics of being in that position?

On that same morning of my flight on January 6th, a large force of Larim men, using guerrilla tactics common to groups surrounded by numerically dominant forces, encircled a large encampment of Toposa men, women and children. The Toposa, neighbours of the Larim, were camped on Larim land, eating borassus palm fruit from trees which they insouciantly felled as the fruit was unripe and did not fall easily. Both Larim and Toposa had been badly hit by drought. They were hungry, their animals were dying of thirst, their granaries empty. The Larim had allowed the Toposa on their land at first - until they saw the destruction of the trees. They were relying on the fruit to feed their own families until the next harvest, and on the trees for future famine years. Both groups had acquired automatic weapons from refugee soldiers loyal to ex-President Amin of Uganda. The Larim attacked, taking the Toposa by surprise. At the end of the day 171 Toposa and 42 Larim were dead. A few days later, two roadside Larim villages were burned to the ground with all their occupants. Small skirmishes became part of the daily expectations of herdsmen and cultivators.

When I arrived in Juba, the capital of the southern Sudan, I was warned by the Director of the province that there were 'troubles' in the south-east. Some fighting had been reported; a lack of water, and cattle dying of thirst or disease had been seen alongside the roads in the Kenya-Sudan border area. I decided to see for myself what was happening in the Larim area.

My first problem was transport in a country where there is no public transport, no hired vehicles, and no petrol on sale. I had hoped to rely on the offices of the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) organisation, which is the main development group in the south-east region, sending a nurse every three weeks or so into the Larim area. I was lucky to find a nurse from NCA just setting off when I reached their headquarters at Torit. The reason for her journey, however, was not auspicious, as she was going to help her colleague cope with a cholera outbreak in the northern Larim area. By then 34 people were known to have died.

While the two nurses coped with many patients - not requiring my unskilled help - I made contact with my Larim friends of the previous year and learned from them the events of the past six months. The rains should have started in April 1979 and ended in October. The 'little rains' lasted until June, and then after a short dry spell, heavy rains should have fallen in July, August and part of September. In fact the rain stopped early in August just as the main harvest was ripening. It was ruined. Waterholes and the natural hill-spings had dried up, and water was collected by the women from deep holes dug in river-beds four

kilometres away from the villages. Tamarind fruit, borassus palm fruit and edible leaves were the main food, with occasional meat supplements which increased as meat from animals dying in the drought was brought to the villages from the grazing grounds.

The question was: what, as an anthropologist, was I to do? The immediate solution was easy. I had to leave the area because of the cholera. That was a constant reminder of my relatively privileged position during the next six months. Whatever I tried to do, however much I identified with the difficulties, or lived with the people, I could always walk away.

My first priority was to contact the NCA Director to find out what NCA was doing for the people. The drought and its attendant problems were affecting the neighbouring Didinga as well as the Larim and Toposa. I was assured NCA was planning a small relief operation, having bought, and with difficulty transported,grain from the northern Sudan to sell in the stricken areas. There is no market infrastructure in the south-east Sudan. I offered my assistance with the relief programme. NCA was not interested in accepting help from outsiders, which made my position difficult. My difficulties increased when the nurse, while professing willingness, did not in fact offer a lift for the next three months. The fighting made it dangerous to approach the area on foot, and in any case I could not have carried sufficient food. Thrown on my own resources over the next six months, and aided by lifts from sympathetic colleagues and aid workers prepared to drive the 25 bumpy kilometres from the main road to my village area, I spent my time travelling between the Larim and the nearest towns, keeping in touch with, and building relationships with, the NCA nurse, relief wrokers and officials, as a kind of self-appointed liaison officer, keeping them aware of the situation and needs in my area. I also spent a total of three months with a Larim family, experiencing the deprivation at first hand.

It was not nearly as gruelling in the village as I imagined it would be. I even did some 'classical' fieldwork, learning the language and attending rituals. Unlike Turnbull's situation, people were not actually dying of starvation. 'My' family were in a relatively good situation sharing my food, and although I felt guilty about the neighbours, they were extremely hospitable and friendly. Perhaps the presence of a European in their villages was a sufficient novelty so as to be a distraction from their problems. Nevertheless it was hard, we all went hungry, and I entered a food-sharing network in which I also had to fight to conserve my limited food resources in order to stay.

By the time I left the Sudan in July after a bout of illness, the food shortages were acute, although the first harvest was expected in August. I now understand from reports however that the south-east Sudan, in common with other areas of East and Central Africa,has entered its second year of famine. It is feared that the whole of that region, from Somalia through to the Karamoja region of northern Uganda, may be facing a major famine due to the exceptional circumstances facing the region. The fighting in the Ogaden, in Ethiopia and northern Uganda, the increasing pressure

to maintain political borders, and the presence of so many fire-arms in the region, have prevented the peoples in the drought and famine beld from moving to more fertile watered places. In Karamjoa and Somalia large refugee or food camps are growing, dependent on outside relief and with no guarantee of returning to their former habitat if the drought ends.

This has been a necessarily personal account of emotional responses to a given situation, and the ethical problems it made me face. I do not think I am alone in having to face them. All anthropologists have to decide between a moral stance and 'scientific objectivity' at certain times in their lives. I do not claim to have analysed or answered the moral dilemma. Only to have posed it.

Perhaps these can be separated. I am not sure. While I do not think that anthropologists should expect to be part-time relief workers, or doctors, they are representatives of potential help and liaison with officialdom and the outside world. If faced with a situation in which the people one is studying are in danger, be it of starvation, extermination, or even forcible sendentarization, what should one do? And in 'doing' does one cease to be an anthropologist, and become merely a 'concerned person', or maybe an applied anthropologist?

There is a further large area of discourse to be considered, covering the whole ethic of outside interference in traditional societies. This may lead to large-scale enforced sedentariness as a result of increased government control acquired, albeit inadvertently, through development projects - or education in countries where no opportunities exist, or a frustrated alienated urban slum population, or disoriented rural population are created. Pastoral peoples are a classic target for this kind of 'development'; it makes them easier to tax and control. Therefore to what extent was I to try to involve outside agencies? Here was a rich cultural area - not, I hasten to add, just for anthropological study, but for the people themselves. For all I knew the harvest would be good in 1980, while outside interference might produce unforeseen problems.

My own position was anomalous in the situation. The autobiographical details at the beginning of this paper were not given gratuitously. I was particularly faced with my ignorance of factors relating to animal, grain and plant maintenance, of nutritional needs and measurements, of medicine. Sitting as an 'objective observer' in a village, without an interpreter, trying to learn the language from hungry women, who obviously enjoyed having me there, but who had only food on their mind, seemed all wrong. I could walk away, stay, or become a one-woman pressure group on aid organisations and government. There is, I suspect, no right response, and to some extent I tried to fulfill them all.

PATTI LANGTON

[Editor's Note: *Further contributions relating to the experiences of anthropologists in the field would be welcomed for future issues of* JASO.]

MYTH, HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY:

SOME RECENT BOOKS

I

MARCEL DETIENNE, *Dionysos Slain* (translated by Leonard and Mireille Muellner), Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 1979. xiii, 130 pp., Illustrations. £6.50.

This is the third book by M. Detienne to receive an English translation since 1977. The other two volumes, *The Gardens of Adonis: Spices in Greek Mythology* and *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Society and Culture* with J-P. Vernant have both appeared in England in translations by Janet Lloyd. It should be noted that *Dionysos Slain* is a bargain next to these two texts which sell for upwards of £20 each.

In addition to considerations of value, *Dionysos Slain* - well translated by the Muellners from the 1977 original (*Dionysos Mis à Mort*) - will no doubt receive wide circulation for its creative approach to Greek mythology. Of course classicists have long been familiar with the work of Detienne and his colleagues Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Nacquet. Together these three guide a team of researchers/students at the Centre of Comparative Research on Ancient Societies in Paris (in fact they occupy the old house of Auguste de Comte in Rue Monsieur Le Prince). This *équipe*, founded in 1965, is unique in the divisive world of Classical Studies for its relaxed and co-operative attitude toward research. Tribute to this is a long string of publications ranging from *Problèmes de la Guerre*, edited in 1968 by J-P. Vernant, to Vernant and Detienne's recent *La Cuisine du Sacrifice* of 1979, with more works planned or in press.

In recent years the popularity of their approach has been spreading to other fields including anthropology. A small sign of this was the Huxley Memorial Lecture of 1980 in which Sir Edmund Leach (always swift to seize a new idea) included a laudatory reference to Detienne's work on the symbolism of spices in antiquity. For all this, it is not simply a matter of anthroplogists finding the research of classicists to be of interest. The reverse seems to be the case and Detienne has entered our discourse through his own interest in anthropology, especially the structural analysis of myth as formulated by Lévi-Strauss.

It is heartening to see anthropologists and classicists once again collaborating and exchanging ideas. This has occurred at intervals in the past and has always given rise to lasting contributions such as Fustel's *La Cité Antique* (which stands at the origins of anthropology proper), Jane Harrison's *Themis* and E.R. Dodds' *The Greeks and the Irrational*.

Detienne's extension of structural analysis to the study of Greek myths has been particularly gratifying since literate Greece had in the past proved a sticking-point for Lévi-Strauss. Not only had the master been unable to answer the criticisms of Ricoeur ('Structure et Hermeneutique' in *Esprit*, 1963), who defied him to apply his methods to the texts of classical antiquity, but his own analysis of the Oedipus myth was fundamentally unsatisfying. This latter study, which the author admits was 'an example treated in arbitrary fashion', in fact, ignored primary sources and borrowed from Marie Delcourt's sociological interpretation made ten years earlier. Detienne critically points this out in his polemical first chapter entitled 'The Greeks Aren't Like the Others'. The analysis of the Oedipus myth was a failure precisely because the author neglected to take into account alternative versions of the myth as well as the ethnographic context of Ancient Greece. These oversights when corrected produced the highly convincing analysis of the 'Geste d'Asdiwal' and served as basic principles in the *Mythologiques*.

It was left to Hellenists such as Detienne and Vernant to apply structuralism more or less systematically to the corpus of Greek myths. Their particular method has had the advantage of developing in Paris and in dialogue with Lévi-Strauss himself (cf. L-S's review of *Les Jardins d'Adonis* in *L'Homme*, Vol. XII, pp. 100-2). Other attempts to apply structural analysis to ancient texts seem to distort the original ideas (in this regard cf. Momigliano's review of Kirk in *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 1971, p. 450). Detienne's harsh criticism of work along these lines in Britain reveals that the Anglo-Gallic split over these matters has not yet been resolved:

> ... the English anthropologist Edmund Leach came to the extravagant conclusion that the mediating aspect of myth was its only function. This functionalist misunderstanding, which made myth a logical tool designed to assure mediation between two contrary terms or situations, lead the same anthropologist and several others in his train to propagate a certain number of analyses of Greek or Biblical myths whose least deniable originality is to prove that one can call oneself structuralist while continuing to ignore the procedures and means elaborated by structural analysis for a decade or more.

The novelty of Detienne's approach is that it studies the Greeks as if they were no different from any other small-scale society. This has met with criticism from classical scholars who believe that the Greeks were the privileged literate inventors of philosophy. An extremely historical approach has also long held the field - one which trusts that there is an authentic and original version of a text to which later variants owe paternity. In his *Myth: Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Societies*, Geoffrey Kirk, Professor of Classics at Cambridge, has argued that Greek myths

> are quite heavily polluted in the form in which we know them. They show many marks of progressive remodelling and in particular of the exaggeration of folktale elements at the expense of speculative or explanatory elements.

In another context he has asserted that human idiosyncracy, chance historical events or local perceptions are bound to have a determining influence (*Rivista Storica Italiana*, 1972, pp. 568 ff.).

Detienne, coming from a Durkheimian perspective, responds that the relation between myth and social structure is *not* one of representation which literacy or local variation could easily destroy. The meaning of a myth will only emerge after variations as well as 'the totality of information about all facts of social, spiritual and material life of the human group' have been considered. There is no version which is a priori more authentic than any other.

One realizes that Detienne has taken a strong stance counter to the status quo in the conservative field of Classical Studies. At times the going has been rough for the Belgian scholar and the acceptance of his ideas far from automatic. His thesis for the degree of Docteur de Recherche (III^e *cycle*) studied two systems of thought in conflict. Entitled *La Notion de Daimôn dans le Pythagorisme Ancien: De La Pensée Réligieuse à la Pensée Philosophique* (Liège- Paris 1963), its publication was held up for four years. This non-appearance in print made it difficult for him to find a university post and subsequently caused him to cross the Belgian border in favour of a position at L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (VI section).

His recent articles return to this early thesis by once again examining the shift in meaning of the Greek word *muthos* from its original sense as 'speech' to its later meaning as 'untrue speech', 'fable', or 'tale'. This development occurred precisely as a competing term *logos* ('accurate expression' or 'reason') took hold. Myth took on form as opposed to or described by *logos*. In this sense it was a *discours de l'altérité* as Detienne puts it; the speech of one's opponents or of a past age. We should note that to label something as myth, no matter how innocuously done, is to take a very definite position toward it.

One of the consummate achievements of Ancient Greece - already in evidence by the time of Plato - was the construction of the term *mythologia*. Here the two discourses met and *logos* sought to describe *muthos*.

> The Greek ethnographers were both the emulators and precursors of structural anthropology. Their exemplary culture thought up the vivid *pensée mythique* which in surpassing itself gave rise to a logic of forms. Building on this the Greek undertook to think his own mythology by way of interpretation (Lévi-Strauss, in Bellour and Clément (eds.), *Textes de et sur Claude Lévi-Strauss*, Paris 1979, pp. 175-6).

Yet the emergence of reason did not wholly destroy the alternative discourse of *muthos*. Like E-P's Azande who possess an elaborate pharmacopoeia and procedures for classifying and treating illness but still persist with the use of magic, the Greeks preserved a similar duality. *Muthos* alternates quite happily with *logos* even through the philosophical texts of Plato and Aristotle. In Greece, then,we receive quite literal substantiation for the structuralist claim that myth is an alternative form to philosophy.

Detienne's methodological introduction gives way to a second chapter ('The Wind Rose') which plunges directly into an analysis of the hunter as represented by Adonis and Atalanta. As he unravels the myths, one is impressed by his control over primary and secondary sources. He carefully develops the theme of the hunter as someone who spends long hours in the wilds, assimilating him/herself to a beast of prey. This entails neglect for the institutions of the city, especially marriage.

On the one hand there was the seductive hunter, the youthful Adonis who only hunted animals which fled before him - hares, stags or does. He was associated in Greek art with the panther - an animal which was domesticated in ancient Cyrene and used as a hunting dog. Yet Detienne does not stop here. He discovers that the panther was thought to be unique by the ancient Greeks in that it emitted a fragrant, perfume-like smell which helped it to seduce its prey. This animal was the perfect emblem for Adonis himself. Born from Myrrh (a spice plant) and beloved of both Aphrodite *and* Persephone, he represented too highly-tuned a sexuality to be suitable for marriage.

At the opposite extreme was the figure of Atalanta. In childhood she excelled in running and hunting to the point of throwing her very femininity into doubt. She refused to take a husband and in fact devised a contest to challenge all suitors. She would give each one a start of a few paces and while the man was naked she pursued him armed with a sword. She thus inverted the usual marriage contest which pitted man against man for the hand of the bride. Atalanta turned the contest into a hunt where the suitor was the quarry.

Adonis and Atalanta stood to either side of the sociable compromise of marriage and Detienne isolates this question of marriage as the central speculation of these myths. Adonis met his end gored to death by the tusks of a wild boar. His body was found in a lettuce patch, a plant symbolically opposite to the hot, perfumed ethereal world of spices. The lettuce was associated with moisture, impotence and decomposition. The blood of Adonis was transformed into the anemone or wind rose, an odourless plant with an exceptionally short blooming season. Atalanta in turn was finally outdistanced by a suitor known as The Black Hunter. Part of the reason for her defeat, according to several versions, was that Aphrodite offered her a gift of apples after the chase had begun. Forced to gather up the fruits as they rolled off the path Atalanta was outrun. Apples of course were bound up with the idea of marriage in Ancient

Greek thought (in fact this association of apples, quinces and pomegranates with each other and with marriage has persisted into the folklore of modern Greece, where pomegranates are still thrown at weddings). Here is a typical example of how Detienne is able to fill out the ethnographic context to determine which role each culture attributes to a plant or animal within a conceptual system.

In any case, the moment the contest is over, Atalanta and her *de facto* husband are seized by desire and copulate wildly in the sacred space of a temple. For this they are punished by being turned into lions, predators *par excellence*, which were believed to have no sex life. As Detienne concludes, it is 'as if with one sweep of the hands the Greek imagination were exorcising spectres subverting the dominant model of male-female relations'.

Forgive me for having given away a part of the book's plot. This analysis deserves to be read in its entirety; particularly the final two chapters which explore the question of sacrifice via the Orphic myth of Dionysos slain.

If there is any one question or objection which one could have with M. Detienne's work it has to do with his sources and how he chooses to limit his field. The enquiry is almost certainly into *Greek* culture and society. Even though Latin authors were heirs to the Greek tradition one must ask if their accounts were not modifications of material in a way similar to that in which the Adonis myth was modified from a Semitic myth about vegetation to a Greek speculation on sexuality and marriage. Within the confines of Greek culture itself it is perhaps possible to rely on sources through Byzantine literature all the way to contemporary folklore and anthropological studies. Reportedly the most recent effort of the Centre of Comparative Research on Ancient Societies, a volume entitled *La Cuisine du Sacrifice*, includes an essay on contemporary Greek practices. This might also be the place to register an observation made by Evans-Pritchard some twenty years ago:

> An anthropological training, including fieldwork would be especially valuable in the investigation of earlier periods of history in which institutions and modes of thought resemble in many respects those of the simpler people we study. For such periods the historian struggles to determine a people's mentality from a few texts and anthropologists can not help wondering whether the conclusions he draws from them truly represent their thought (from 'Anthropology and History' in his *Essays in Social Anthropology*).

True enough, owing to the absence of any 5th-century Athenian informants we have no assurance that our formulations are correct. Furthermore, save for the occasional archaeological discovery, the field of enquiry and the sources of data are closed. In light of this classical philologians such as the reviewer of *Dionysos Mis à Mort* in *Revue des Etudes Grecques* (1978, pp. 201-3) prefer to shy away from any conclusions beyond what is preserved in writing or other solid forms of representation.

Detienne's enterprise consists, as he says, in treating the Greeks no differently than 'the Tsimshian, those salmon fishermen'. As this is the case one wonders in what ways a fieldwork period, perhaps in the Middle East or Mediterranean (especially Greece) would benefit Detienne or others attempting similar approaches to Ancient History. The one agreed privilege of fieldwork is that it grants the researcher a holistic perspective. This would indeed be an antidote for periods where the arbitrariness of the evidence would otherwise present a narrow or distorted picture of the way things were.

CHARLES STEWART

MYTH, HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

II

M.P.K. SORRENSON, *Maori Origins and Migrations: The Genesis of Some Pakeha Myths and Legends*, [n.p.]:Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press 1979. 95 pp., Illustrations, Index. £4.50 (Paper).

It is easy to be enthusiastic about *Maori Origins and Migrations*. This book of revised lectures is both witty and delightfully brief. At times it is humorous, yet its message is frequently profound.

Maori Origins and Migrations is not, as might be supposed from this short title, a final answer to the age-old question of when, from where, and how the Maori came to New Zealand. Rather, Sorrenson's book is about the nature and history of the question itself: what accounts for the fascination with Maori demography, what forms the study has assumed, and how prevailing social theories have influenced the question of Maori origins at different times in history. These are a few of the topics which the author covers in a mere ninety-five pages.

Why has so much attention been given to the question of Maori origins, and why have the Maori been the focus of so much intellectual debate from the eighteenth century onwards? Part of the answer rests in the fact that Maori society was both complex and alien; so developed was its social order that a surprising number of travellers willingly drew direct structural analogies between Maori and European customs. From the time of Captain James Cook, complex Maori institutions were periodically used by cultural relativists to illustrate the social meaning of exotic practices. More often, however, the Maori became the leading example in a number of grand social theories,

the contradictions among which certainly support Sorrenson's main argument: 'ethnographers,' in his own words, 'nearly always found in Maori culture what they expected to find ... the ethnographic record on the Maori is a fairly faithful reproduction of changing fashions in anthropology.' Thus, while the Maori played an important part in the romanticization of exotic peoples from the time of Rousseau and the *philosophes*, they were also proof for Rousseau's enemies that reason without culture, in Crozet's words, 'is but a brutal instinct'. As Sorrenson amply shows, the history of Maori studies is often one of blind enthusiasm for a variety of intellectual vogues, resulting more often than not in a renewed misunderstanding of Maori society.

How much has enthusiasm for intellectual fashion actually governed the history of Maori studies? To Sorrenson, the evidence that it has done so is clear. Some of the examples he recalls are particularly instructive. Especially abhorrent was the use of social Darwinism to support fascist arguments about the so-called primitivism of the Maori. Here the Maori were used to illustrate the inferior stages of social order. Other examples of theoretical excess cannot today but seem absurd. Among these one must certainly include the practitioners of craniometry such as A.S. Thompson who, in true Swiftian fashion, attempted to determine the capacities of the Maori mind by measuring the quantity of millet seed a Maori skull could hold. But the most compelling evidence for the controlling influence of intellectual fashion on Maori history comes by way of negative example: ironically, it was the unschooled Cook who remains to this day among the keenest known observers of the Maori. The fact that he did not visit the Maori in search of answers to this or that sociological question cannot be easily overlooked as a factor in his level-headed account.

Sorrenson however does stop short of stating that Cook's perceptiveness and his lack of formal training are actually connected phenomena, and it is to the author's credit that the main point of *Maori Origins and Migrations* - that enthusiasm distorts our perceptions - is made in a way which is not heavy-handed. Rather than being dragged off to new, and yet more abstract, horizons, the reader finds Sorrenson's message to be remarkably open-minded. One look at the stunning illustrations (if only there were more) of Maori canoes sliding gracefully in front of Arcadian landscapes, or being tossed mercilessly by a furious sea, reminds us of the romanticizing which both inspires great achievements and often makes our own cultural history look rather odd in retrospect.

Fortunately, there are occasions when the debunking of an absurd intellectual contrivance need not wait for the sobering influence of time. One of the most amusing examples that Sorrenson recalls is a spoof written by A.S. Atkinson, a late nineteenth-century lawyer and linguist. In his parody, Atkinson inverted philological convention by using Maori words to illuminate Aryan ways. To show how his new method worked, he proceeded to explain the origin of the phrase, 'a cock and bull story':

> The Maori word which explained it was *kakapo*, the ground parrot. *Kaka* was the Sanskrit for cock and *po* was bull: *kakapo* would thus mean 'the bull-like *kaka* or cock'. All of this proved, Atkinson said, that the Aryans had once visited New Zealand, seen the terrifying *kakapo*, 'a cock just like a bull', and returned home to tell the tale to those who had stayed behind ....

As with the rest of the book's humour, the message here, however, is quite serious: 'if they are not careful,' Sorrenson reminds us, 'scholars will find what they are looking for.'

DAVID NAPIER

MYTH, HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

III

JOSEPH C. MILLER (ed.), *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History*, Folkestone: Wm. Dawson & Sons Ltd., and Hamden: Archon Books 1980. xii, 279 pp., Index, Maps, Illustrations. £17.00.

The study of African history is sometimes viewed with scepticism by anthropologists. Historians were slow to recognize the value of oral traditions, but when they did they embraced them with almost religious fervour. Structural anthropologists in particular have criticized the historians' use of oral material, and the tone of their criticism has sometimes resembled that of an irritated old hunter trying to protect his preserve from the poaching of inexperienced newcomers. This book is a serious attempt to answer, without rancour, the objections of anthropologists. It is not a defence of the naïve euhemerism of an earlier generation of African historians, but it is a reaffirmation of the value of myths and other oral literature as historical evidence.

To acknowledge the validity of some anthropological criticisms is not to accept that oral traditions are useless as historical documents. The anthropologist who has tended to regard myth itself as the object of study has done so by ignoring the historical data embedded in the structure of the myth, or the evidence from parallel sources that can corroborate inferences drawn from the myths. Too often this arises from the anthropologist's limited view of history. Miller points out that Leach's dismissal of oral traditions as historical sources

because they cannot provide 'a complete and accurate reconstruction of the past, as it really is', is based on an assumption that the vast majority of historians have long ceased to hold as a working definition of history. For historians, history is 'the study of the remnants of the past that happen to survive into the present, which they can use as bases for drawing probabilistic inferences about what the past may have been like'. In this respect myths and oral traditions are very much a part of the evidence of the past, and the essays in the book demonstrate just what can be extracted from them.

The greatest value of Miller's introduction is his emphasis on the role of the 'oral' historian in structuring and interpreting the remnants of the past for his own society. The oral historian is not a passive transmitter, he is the creator of a coherent explanation of what the past means to the present. Almost all of the contributors demonstrate an awareness of the craft of the oral historian, and by examining the materials at his disposal they are able to discover just what remnants of the past can be found in the structure of his narratives.

Four of the contributors, Yoder, Schecter, Sigwalt and Packard, examine the work of oral historians in constructing and relating origin myths for various kingdoms in Zaïre. All of the authors make some use of the structural analysis of myth, but they do so mainly to identify the models that oral historians have used for their narratives. Each finds historical data within the myths. Changes in interpretation still leave traces of earlier interpretations. Data found in a myth need not be ahistorical merely because they are presented in cliché form. Using evidence from written, linguistic, genealogical and other nontestimonial sources the historian can construct a general outline of the history of a society which can then be used to study the myths themselves. The myths do not 'prove' the historical construct, but they can give a firmer outline to the past. The clichés of the local world-view may be applied to historical events to emphasise the lessons a society has learned from its own past, and while myths might not be able to give us a chronology of real events, they can give us a summary of the broad trends in a society's past.

This approach is revealing. Yoder shows how the Luba hunter-king motif, which was used by earlier Kanyok chiefdoms to legitimize claims to authority, was given a twist at the time the Kanyok broke away from the Luba. In the Citend myth the elements of the hunter-king story are used not to bind the Kanyok to the Luba, as the earlier uses of the motif had done, but to express Kanyok identity in the face of Luba oppression. Schecter demonstrates that the Luba-Lunda 'drunken king' cycle of myths is not just a philosophical discourse about the 'natural' vs. the 'cultural' order. They refer also to the establishment of political relationships, a shift of political power that can be corroborated by other evidence. Sigwalt finds certain word and sound clusters in the Bushi myths of the origin of kingship which have survived all the numerous alterations of the myths and

provide linguistic evidence of external influence on the development of Bushi politics. Packard gives a convincing picture of Bashu myths as 'a distillation of Bashu historical experience', depicting the gradual move from the plains up the mountains, becoming more closely tied with mountain cultivators than with the plains pastoralists. Packard in fact takes the other three essays to their logical conclusion. If clichéd tales, as Schecter observes, can reveal a world-view and historical events at the same time, Packard points out that the world-view is not born *sui generis*. A people's cosmology can be a product of their historical experience; thus historical experience helps to create the very structure of myths.

The only stateless society included in this collection is Bobangi, and Bob Harms demonstrates how evidence for intellectual history can be elucidated by focusing on the variations of and incongruities within traditions which are neither cultural charters nor historical chronicles. It is Harms' contention that if traditions are changing commentaries, their internal changes can document intellectual, social and political history. The documents document change as they change. Bobangi traditions cannot give the historian a chronological account, but they do define 'what it means to be Bobangi in an area where ethnic identity is particularly vague and fluid'. Being Bobangi defines who can trade on the river, and Bobangi stories are a collection of tales of inclusion and exclusion, of contracts made and contracts broken. The inferences made from these tales are supported by evidence from a variety of other sources.

The work of oral historians is contrasted with that of literate historians by three other contributors. Henige on the Ganda and Nyoro kinglists, Berger on the Abacwezi of Uganda and Berg on Merina historical literature in Malagasy illustrate how a suspicious co-operation between 'oral' and 'literate' historians produced traditions which are neither completely oral in transmission nor traditional in their creation. Henige shows how Ganda and Nyoro lists started to lengthen once they were written down, which in the Ganda case was in the 1870s. Since a long list enhanced respectability in the eyes of colonial administration the lists of these rival kingdoms kept pace with each other, the Banyoro refusing to be outdone by the Baganda. Both the Abacwezi and the Merina myths were interpreted by Europeans and Africans during the colonial period as accounts of the racial origins of ruling dynasties. The Abacwezi were transformed by Sir Harry Johnston from the remnants of an indigenous population to deified light-skinned rulers of the past who were both a product and a proof of the Hamitic hypothesis. The kings of Bunyoro endorsed this interpretation of their origins when they learned that this enhanced their prestige in the colonial hierarchy. Conversely, in Madagascar European prejudices and *hova* interest combined to demote the mythical and spiritual *vazimba* to a dark-skinned savage race of indigenes who the *hova* were supposed to have conquered and supplanted.

Both the Abacwezi and the *vazimba* figure prominently in the religion of their areas, and their transformation into 'ethnic' groups in the nineteenth century is the origin of the disagreement between historians who have taken their historical existence too literally, and anthropologists who see in them only symbolic value. To criticise the earlier historical interpretations is not to deny the historicity of the legends, as Berger points out. Not only do the historiographic critiques that both she and Berg offer reveal some of the intellectual trends within African societies during the colonial period, but the legends themselves, once stripped of their colonial interpretations, can reveal something about the pre-colonial past. For Berger the existence or non-existence of the Abacwezi ceases to be important; it is the groups who recount the Abacwezi myths and the reasons for their telling that gives them their historical value. From a comparison of various Abacwezi myths Berger suggests that they document a major political and social shift, with certain clans resisting the establishment of a monarchy and then continuing to exert their own counter-influence during the life of the kingdom.

Finally, two of the contributors, Cohen and Vansina, offer some caution to those dealing with narratives. Cohen proposes that historians go beyond narrative texts to seek evidence from other kinds of sources such as marriage data, office-holding and toponyms. His use of marriage data to chronicle the continuity of local populations despite migrations and political changes offers the most fascinating prospect for studying the history of areas that have undergone recent shifts in population or changes of language or political institutions. Cohen almost stridently claims a new and revolutionary path, but all the other contributors have used non-narrative evidence, though perhaps not as extensively as Cohen. While one would like to think he is offering us a way out of the limitations inherent in oral traditions, some of his sources, especially toponyms, have been tried with less than resounding success in the past. Finally Vansina offers us some sound words of advice on memory which are applicable to all sorts of oral evidence, whether couched in the form of a narrative, a genealogy, or merely a list of who married whom and when.

The examples of these essays have been grouped around Bantu Africa, and particularly around the peoples of Zaïre and Uganda, but one can easily think of other parts of Africa where the approaches outlined in the book could be applied. The main danger inherent in these approaches is that the African historian's task may degenerate into an endless historiographic critique, chronicling only changes in the way the past is viewed. But the principal argument of the book is forcefully and effectively proved. None of the contributors would assert that oral traditions by themselves reveal the history of a society. Nor do they suggest that oral evidence by itself is sufficient to reconstruct the past. They rely on written as well as oral sources, myths as well as less structured tales and nontestimonial evidence.

It is only by comparing all of the sources that the historical value of myths becomes evident. The corollary of this argument is one that more anthropologists should be willing to admit, that the analysis of myth divorced from its historical context and from other sources of historical evidence is an inadequate approach to the understanding of African societies.

D.H. JOHNSON

'CENTRE' AND 'PERIPHERY' IN HISTORY: THE CASE OF WARRIORS AND WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL ETHIOPIA

A consideration of the informal and the mundane aspects of the military traditions of the Ethiopians shows the omnipresence of rebels, independent soldiery and women warriors. These categories have social significance which conventional interpretations have not usually taken into account. This paper tries to draw attention to the importance of understanding these native models and the conclusion explains their relevance for analytical purposes.

Official literature on Ethiopia emphasises the state structure of the traditional monarchy and the official myths and approved history of the 'dominant' peoples in the 'core' regions of the central and northern highlands.[1] Accordingly, the official

[1] In Ethiopia there is a tradition of court scribes keeping chronicles. These chroniclers, being the only literate class, and the priesthood at that, have for over a thousand years sustained the association of the land and people with the Christian, i.e. Biblical, 'Ethiopia', and the government with the myth of Solomon and Sheba of the fifth century B.C. Over the last century professional historians of the European world have taken this approach as basic truth (cf. E. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, London 1960). There is a vast literature which has considered Ethiopia from the perspective of what constitutes the present-day territorial state (cf. R. Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa 1968, for such an approach).

political accounts deal with the so-called 'Amhara' and sometimes Tigre, or often a combination of the two peoples, who continue to pass as the only 'Ethiopian', irrespective of the differences even between ordinary peasants and government personnel. Here I propose to outline some of the ideas basic to the military practices which sometimes even controlled those of the government, and determined the socio-economic relationships between these 'dominant' people and the various other communities in present-day territorial Ethiopia.

It is not entirely unjustified to emphasize the formal structure of the state. From the comparative perspective, the traditional style of political and military recruitment is recognizable as the feudal process of raising levies through the land-tenure system. In traditional Ethiopia those in control, from the local to the larger structure of the state, marked out certain areas as reserved for military service. Consequently, the peasants in such lands had the obligation to serve in the army whenever they were called upon to do so, or else forfeit their right to the land. A look at the social history of the country however shows that the peasants had evolved a method of asserting their independence from such authorities.[2]

Among the 'Amhara' and the Tigre it was a social obligation for men to maintain the communal right to land. When men were not available in a family to fulfil that obligation, women took their place in order to pass the inheritance to their male descendants.[3] Political and military authorities had to struggle against this social expectation in order to maintain the feudal process of raising levies from lands they marked out for military service.[4] I contend therefore that even the importance of land-tenure-based recruitment is much more than simply a feudal system of recruitment. It is true that the monarchy was based on a feudal hierarchy, and it claimed to be a 'dynasty' of long standing. But the very nature of succession including that to the throne was based on the ordinary man's idea of what constituted politics and authority. In other words the control of

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[2] I collected oral traditions from the countryside between 1959 and 1975, and this article is based mainly on that material. It is possible to reconstruct a social history of the country from oral information supplementing it by records made by travellers. At least in the nineteenth century, a substantial number of travellers and other observers passed through Ethiopia (e.g. G. Massa, *I Miei trentacinque anni di missione nell'alta Etiopia*, Roma 1921-30; M. Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia*, New York 1854; N. Pearce, *The Life and Adventures of Nathaniel Pearce*, London 1831; etc.

[3] See my 'Women Guerrilla Fighters' in *North-East African Studies*, (Michigan), September 1980.

[4] Pankhurst, *op. cit.* pp. 135-181.

land redistribution was asserted by whoever had the propensity to assume military strength. Women fighters are mentioned by local literature and foreign writers echo stories about the presence of women on Ethiopian battlefields. Although the male/female roles and position are never clear, it is certain that women were the major factor in confirming the kinship relationship with regard to inheritance of communal land.

It should be mentioned that women were not excluded from participation in military activities.[5] Women appeared on battlefields as concubines, wives, sisters and pot-bearers (in the supply units) of the fighting men. Frequently they also appeared as fighters with guns or other weapons, in response to mobilisation decrees of the government. Such fighting women were rare, coming to the fore mainly in times of 'national' (i.e. government) crises. Close examination shows that they became involved only when lands they had inherited and lived in happened to be of the category 'reserved' for military purposes, and when there was a shortage of men to take the field as proxies. In the 1930s the government issued a series of proclamations prohibiting women from inheriting these reserved lands and enrolling in the army. However, partly because of the magnitude of the Italian invasion and partly because of the break-down of government order after the occupation, women continued to fight alongside the men during the period of resistance against Italian rule (1935-1941). For the 'Amhara'-Tigre peasant the participation of women was nothing beyond ensuring the inheritance of communal land by their infant or minor sons.

Warriorhood was valued highly, and it was not the privilege of any particular group to control military activities. Generally speaking, Ethiopians think of themselves as warriors. Nevertheless there were very few communities with standing armies. Where they had them, as in Walamo and Kaffa (two former kingdoms in the south), either the whole population was regarded as a 'slave' class distinct from the ruling families, or they were raised by periodical levies, returning to other activities when they were not required to fight.[6] Among all the communities, including those outside the so-called dominant peoples, men were socially expected to train themselves in the art of war and prove that they were valorous soldiers.

In the formation of military groups, therefore, the state structure was not necessarily the only source of authority. Among the 'Amhara'-Tigre communities, the interests of local

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[5] For a discussion on the involvement of women on Ethiopian battle-fields see Selassie, *op. cit.*

[6] See studies by Ernesta Cerulli, *Peoples of South-West Ethiopia and Its Borderland* (London 1956); W. Shack, *The Central Ethiopians: Amhara, Tigrina and Related People* (London 1974); and Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia, the Kingdoms of Kafa and Janjero* (London 1969).

peasants in maintaining their communal land and in exercising military power was not always dependent on, or contingent to, the formal military laws and rules of the state under the monarchy. The peasants had their own criteria of determining enemy and ally among their neighbours, and they valued the independent practice of warriorhood to the point of defying established authority. As a result there were constant wars that were initiated by peasants. Indeed, whenever there were wars which the peasants had not initiated they looted both the losers and the victors.[7] Such apparent rebellion against their own formal system was a reflection of their political and military ethos and its nature was basic to the widespread formation of bands of warriors from the 'core' areas, who lived and operated in communities which were not strictly under the state.

Men in these two communities start their training for the soldiery from childhood. They play para-military games as children, and as youths achieve the status of soldiers, euphemistically known as 'killers' by proving themselves as hunters of big game. Traditionally, they had to produce the tail of one such animal at least once in their life, as a trophy. Such a trophy had a symbolic significance in the transition rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. (The tail was considered equal to producing the penis of an enemy). It should be noted that in order to achieve the 'kill' men had to wander away from their own communities, explore the wilds, i.e. areas considered 'unfit' for human habitation, and pass through communities hostile, or that would naturally become hostile, at the appearance of large bands of armed men, as the hunters usually were. Men preferred to stay away in the wilds rather than return to their own communities without the trophy.

In the process of looking for the trophies, of which the more procured the better, they formed a series of bands of hunters and warriors, who appear in the literature as *shifta* or 'rebels against authority'. Strictly speaking they were known as *fanno* or 'leaderless bands of soldiery', although hunting *fanno* groups sometimes acted as *shifta*. *Fanno* lived and operated in the

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[7] Travellers such as Plowden, sometime British Consul in Ethiopia, were struck by such behaviour on the part of the Ethiopian peasants. See his *Travels in Ethiopia* (London 1868). Most of the rebellions between the period of 'the Era of Princes' and the establishment of a central monarchy (1769 to the 1880s) were such offensives by peasants, despite claims of 'factionalism' by modern historians, for example M. Abir (*The Era of Princes*, London 1968).

fringe lands of their own or other friendly communities.[8] Along frontiers which they regarded as foreign they engaged in raiding vulnerable communities for cattle, crops and slaves. It was mainly this which gave them the reputation that they were poachers by writers from the colonial boundaries around present-day Ethiopian territory.

Indeed such *fanno* groups sometimes became *shifta* and eventually assumed political power identifying with the feudal monarchy, and claiming the lands of those they raided as *fanno* and *shifta*. Whether this form of expansion was good or bad, the tradition of hunting and associated activities (as opposed to government military operations) was the main dynamic of the military activities of the so-called dominant people. It is also questionable whether these bands were held with equal admiration by communities other than their own. For example the daring adventures of the *fanno*, known as 'Tigre' in Boranna, southern Ethiopia, were sheer nuisance to the Borana themselves although the 'Tigre' were admired for them in their own communities in the north. The point is however that they formed a network of contacts between different ecological regions. It is these regions that are now officially held and perceived as the ideal 'homeland' and 'boundary' by the local official writers.

Despite this dynamic, peasants in these 'core' regions initiated military challenge when they considered their communities threatened. An outstanding example is their resistance to the authority of a new government trying to impose its rule in their region. For instance when all the nobles were deserting Emperor Towodros (1855-1868) for his attempted military reforms, one of them tried to establish his own authority in Gojam, an 'Amhara' province in the north-west. According to official chronicles peasants in the province refused to accept him, and in two local communities made joint efforts to drive away his appointee. Driving away the appointees meant coming out in force in the villages and telling the new-comer and his retinue that he could not take up residence, collect taxes or conduct judgment. In this particular case the appointees of the emperor had a base, and the rebel noble was 'related' to the communities; but they drove him away, without even waiting for the emperor's men to take action.

Peasant resistance in this manner is different from an individual or an organised group taking military leadership. They are not *fanno* because they are in their own areas, but like the *fanno* they have very temporary leadership. Their reaction is spontaneous, and in the case just mentioned their attitude towards the noble rebel was formed on the basis of his reputation for poor warriorhood. Peasants in another 'Amhara'

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[8] Unless otherwise stated, information on the *fanno* and the *shifta* is derived from my field notes, collected in preparation of my D.Phil. thesis (Oxford 1980).

locality, Shewa, had the same reaction to the representatives of the monarchy in the northern 'core' region of Gondar. Indeed a breakaway provincial kingdom was established in the 1820s after a series of treaties between the warrior 'kings' and the peasants there.[9]

In general the active soldiery under the monarchy treated the peasants like an independent body of soldiers. Indeed during and after pitched battles between two factions, peasants always posed as third parties. Often, both loser and victor at a field of battle were killed and robbed by the peasantry unless one or the other had secured their 'military support', which simply meant their neutrality in the dispute which had led to the war.[10] Of course such behaviour on the part of the peasants was instigated also as self-defence. Normally battle-fields were selected on the basis of the availability of loot for the supplies unit, which meant that the local peasants were liable for looting unless they took the offensive themselves after a battle. This accounts for the series of raids by government soldiers against peasants, reflected in the nineteenth-century military history of the 'core' regions.

With the importance of warriorhood and the possibility of anybody forming military bodies, breakaway groups of *shifta* were rampant in the society. Not infrequently, politicians made their way to power by starting off as *shifta*, as there was hardly any other political procedure which did not involve warriorhood.

Unlike the *fanno*, *shifta* live in hiding from authorities, sometimes protected by their own communities, sometimes fending them off, depending on their 'cause' for rebellion. Ideally, river valleys, lowlands and thick forests or mountain fortresses are associated with *shifta* as their usual retreat until they are prepared to resist authority with full military operations.[11] Government troops never follow *shifta* into these regions, and often they satisfy themselves by issuing orders to peasants to give up the *shifta* that they protect. Only in extreme cases, for instance when the government troops consider it strategic to free *shifta*-infested areas, do they make the effort to pursue them into their hideouts.

Shifta are armed at all times, and in extreme cases they would try to cut off their own communities from government troops and other forms of control. They do not however offer

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[9] R. H. Kofi Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire* (London 1975) is a recent study of this particular province and the rise of a kingdom there during the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

[10] Plowden, *op. cit.* p. 53.

[11] Indeed a modern Ethiopian geographer confirms that to be the actual case rather than the ideal. Masfen Walde Maryam, *Introductory Geography of Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa 1972, p. 54.

or accept battle until they are well-established; they 'run into the lowlands'. Their success or failure to face confrontation depends on their relationship with their own community. Initially, they are feared as ones who disturb the local peace for the sake of attaining their own ends. They are also liable to be joined by cut-throats, petty criminals and juvenile offenders. Nevertheless, the leaders often manage to convince peasants of the justness of their 'cause', and they make a more or less tacit understanding on the issue of peace for the locales.

Establishing a relationship between the *shifta* and their own communities is central to their organisation as well as their success. At the initiation of their rebellion *shifta* leaders would prepare or attend a feast and make their intention known through the *fukara*, a harangue of prose and poetry, usually translated as 'war-cries'. Their openness depends on how strong they consider their causes and their prospective following to be. Peasants of course try to suppress quarrels between members of their local community by effecting reconciliation. Elders and the family circle of the men involved would assume responsibility, so that in murder and revenge, for example, blood-money would be shared between them. On the other hand if the case stands between a member of the local community and a government official, the elders would make the effort to gain amnesty from the local officer. The whole community would turn against him if they consider his response unfair in any way. They would then close their eyes to whatever the disgruntled man would do, or even assist him, in his rebellion. In other words if anybody decides to take up arms against authority and the peasants consider it justified, they would support the rebel.

Local support for the *shifta* was expressed in various ways: *shifta*, instead of government officials, would be allowed to collect revenues; they would be allowed to buy cheaply from the local markets; they would be supplied with food; and arms and ammunitions would be smuggled for them by the peasants. In the Christian areas of the north, they would be allowed to worship in the churches. They would thus be given access to facilities as if they were normal members of society, or they would be treated even better in some cases for the admiration they commanded as fighters. Especially *shifta* with a political 'cause', like protecting the community from over-taxation, were considered as potential military and political leaders and were therefore treated with due respect. Indeed rebels who are already important locally, for example for being rich, or with a large retinue and social connections, do not even bother to go into hiding, as the peasants themselves would act as sentries in case of the appearance of government authorities. If their local support were limited to their own family circle, they would stay in the communal fringe-lands which in local terms are no-man's-lands. They would however be kept informed by the local community as a whole in case of imminent danger.

Whatever support is given to the *shifta*, peasants expect them to come out of their hiding either as winners or losers. If they lose a battle, peasants would not give them up to the authorities, but they would withdraw support from them. Peasants would try to avoid punitive raids by government troops. Nevertheless the spirit of the *shifta* would attract youths to their camp, even if they had to be on the move for some time after a confrontation.

Often *shifta* with political 'causes' are on the move, and the attempts of government troops to corner them result in various *shifta* communities formulating a common cause. Their contact however never went beyond that as they hardly ever succeed in uniting in their efforts to attack or repel attacks. If anything, the concentration of rebels in a particular area is a reflection of the weakness of the government authority there rather than the strength of the *shifta*. After a series of confrontations, the *shifta* with the largest following tend to initiate offensives and eventually build themselves into political 'masters' who even become solicited by government officers or sometimes even assume the throne themselves. Being a *shifta* is thus one step towards assuming control of the redistribution of land, even if only an accidental one.

Like the *fanno*, *shifta* on the move inadvertently create inter-communal relationships. They would be joined by men from various localities who aim to be rewarded with land. Often they would also control, or try to control, whole communities and their land, if they found them vulnerable. The possibility of assuming power through the admired practice of the soldier generated the constant warfare fanned by the *fanno* and the *shifta*, who nonetheless affected communities outside the 'core' regions of the 'dominant' people. If the *shifta* collaborated with the local community, the *fanno* allied with the government. The difficulties of the British Consul in southern Ethiopia, who tried to control the activities of the *fanno* in northern Kenya is a good example.[12] The government authorities allowed the *fanno* to operate although he had apprehended them poaching in British territory. Indeed, official history claims control over certain regions on the basis of the activity of *fanno*.

There is not enough evidence to support the theory of the 'entrepreneur' politician for the traditional Ethiopian peasant warrior. Indeed those who assumed great political authority did so only by force of circumstances. The value of warriorhood however was deeply rooted. I think it even accounts for certain communities in northern Ethiopia forcing the government of Haile Selassie (1930-1974) to waive tax arrears,[13] while those in

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[12] See Hodson's *Seven Years in Southern Ethiopia*, London 1927, p. 26.

[13] J. Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, Oxford 1974, pp. 376-387.

the south, although under the same government, did not manage to do so.

Recent historical writings on Ethiopia treat the presence of the *fanno* and the *shifta*, or the spontaneous uprisings by peasants, as a direct consequence of temporary government weakness. The emphasis on the 'government', and especially on the 'discontent' against it, is so great that even the existence of women guerrilla fighters is assumed to be a new phenomenon. This is perhaps understandable as the 'change' in social structure has been so substantial over the last fifty years that the underlying cultural values are not easily recognisable. In other words, hunting has been forbidden since the 1930s - so that not much has been heard of the *fanno*. Similarly a standing army was established at about the same time, leaving no scope for the rise of the *shifta* to military and eventual political prominence. Nevertheless, the deep cultural values have been persistent: during the revolutionary movements over the last two decades, calls were made for the dispersal of the *fanno* and *shifta*, but their numbers are increasing every day. The government decrees of the 1930s, which prohibited the participation of women on battlefields, has not affected the culture; women guerrilla fighters are now in abundance. It is a retrospective view to say the least that the 'cause' for the existence of these categories is the weakness of the governments.

An important factor in this retrospective interpretation is the model of the 'dominant' people. Ethnicity is now a major political issue in Ethiopia (as elsewhere in Africa). The identification of the 'Amhara'-Tigre peoples with the government and reference to them as the 'dominant' peoples confuses the formal structure of government and society with that of the popular, grass-roots level. It disregards the persistent custom of peasants rebelling against authority until they are forced to submit to it. In the main it is the peasants who form the ethnic groupings, and identifying them with the central institution of state leaves out their social and economic as well as political identity. The state distinguishes between its seat of power (i.e. centre) and its outlying frontiers: that is pertinent to the very nature of government - but peasants do not distinguish between their communal land and that of the boundary of state. They know only of their own land. For purposes of analysis therefore government and ethnic groupings should be kept separate.

TSEHAI BERHANE SELASSIE

BOOK REVIEWS

DAVID I. KERTZER, *Comrades and Christians: Religion and Political Struggle in Communist Italy*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1980. xxiii, 302 pp., Bibliography, Index. £15.00.

David Kertzer's book is, as he states in his preface, mainly designed for an American public.

> To most Americans [he explains], the strength of the Italian Communist Party is a great mystery. Associated with dark visions of totalitarianism and inevitably linked to Moscow, it is difficult for Americans to understand the appeal the Communist party has in Italy. That almost one third of Italian voters cast their ballots for the P.C.I. in 1979 is, in this perspective, a great enigma, unfathomable in the land of the Holy See.

According to Kertzer, sociological work on the topic of Church-Communist Party relations adds little to our understanding. Italian analyses are polemical and have little social scientific value, while American studies have a politically tinged heritage, though until recently all the partisans have been on one side. Noteworthy in this context is the cold war tradition of Almond and Cantril, in which Communism is treated as a disease and the Communist party is described as 'a special haven for the alienated' (an interesting reversal of Soviet psychiatric practice on which a study of Foucault - via Durkheim - might possibly help us shed some light!).

Kertzer's study is, then, 'to provide a glimpse into the social fabric of the Euro-communist experience' as well as 'an introduction to Church-Communist relations in Italy, focussing on the way in which the national conflict is played out in one local setting'. The book develops along two mutually relevant but separate lines: one is Kertzer's ethnography of a working-class neighbourhood in Communist-administered Bologna, the other his reconstruction of Church-Communist Party relations from about 1860, when Italy achieved national unity, to the late 1970s - that is, after his fieldwork was completed.

The fascinating history of the Church's relations, first with the Italian state and then with Italy's left-wing forces, is re-told in terms of the notion of a 'Catholic world', and of a lay or, later, 'Communist world'. Indeed as Kertzer explains, a clear-cut distinction between these two opposed and at times dangerously polarized political orientations originated with Italian unity itself, when, having to renounce temporal power, Pope Pius IX urged all Catholics to boycott the new state and initiated a policy of strong spiritual and social control. There

thus developed, in opposition to liberal and 'modernist' Catholic tendencies, a strong 'integralist' movement, the aim of which was to render unnecessary any institutions other than Church-inspired ones. According to integralist doctrine, the whole of an individual's life should be, more or less conspicuously, ruled by the Church, in areas such as education, employment and nursing assistance, as well as in the organization of free time and entertainment; the Church was thus to maintain its political power through its direct and steady influence on the lives of individuals by providing for needs which, in contemporary societies, are usually catered for by lay social and civil servants. (Indeed it was through his observation of the Church's power over people's minds that Gramsci, who was to exercise a very strong intellectual influence on the Italian Communist Party after World War Two, developed his notion of hegemony.)

A rapprochement between the Church and Italy's political and industrial leaders began to take place only in the 1890s, when the Socialist Party, founded in 1892, started to gather a large following, especially in the industrial North, and it was precisely after the first national strike in 1904 that Catholics were finally encouraged to vote and to take an active part in Italy's political life. The Church's control over religious education and its monopoly over individual rites of passage were strongly reinforced during Fascism; and the 1929 Concordat between the Church and the state, in which Catholicism was declared the state religion, initiated a period of co-operation between the state and the Catholic hierarchy which was to last well beyond Mussolini's government.

Antagonism between the Church and the left-wing consequently took on new vehemence after the end of World War Two, when the Communist party, strongly identified with the anti-Fascist Resistance movement, gathered a large number of adherents throughout Italy, particularly in Central Italy's 'Red Belt', while the ruling Christian Democratic Party continued the close co-operation between Church and state initiated with Mussolini's Lateran Agreements. In an effort to maintain its position, the Church threatened with excommunication those Catholics who spread Communist ideas or participated in Communist activities. During the forties and fifties Communist propaganda was, on the other hand, no less violent in its denunciations of the Vatican, while in the sixties - through a number of factors more complex than Kertzer's account implies - the Church's political influence suffered a decline.

Kertzer's historical account is effective and well documented. On some points, however, incisiveness is achieved at the expense of accuracy. For instance, a point which is nowhere sufficiently emphasized is the extent to which the Church's main antagonists during the first thirty years of Italian unity were the liberal bourgeois oligarchy who had led the country to unification and who constituted its social and political élite. The general movement towards secularization and the presence of centre political forces, which still represent the most vigorous oppo-

nents of Church interference in political matters, are therefore hardly acknowledged throughout Kertzer's book. This may partly be due to the social composition of Albora, where centre forces are indeed conspicuously absent - a fact which throws fully into relief the difficulties of illustrating national (let alone European) social phenomena on the basis of a local study.

David Kertzer's fieldwork in Albora was conducted mostly in 1972-73, a period of relative truce between the Communist Party and the Church which followed John XXIII's papacy and the Vatican Council's withdrawal of its excommunication order against Communists. During this period Communist leaders also sought to modify their unbending anti-clericalism of early revolutionary days. Paradoxically, however, while the Church had, at least in theory, given up its militant 'integralism', the Communists themselves had for some time started to develop integralist ambitions: the Party was now to penetrate society through a 'capillary action', and was to create infra-structures which would eventually grant it a position similar to that held in the past by the Church itself. New Party members were no more to be sought through ideological conversion; on the contrary, individuals or whole families were to be absorbed into the 'Communist world' through their participation in popular *festas* and in a variety of Communist-sponsored social occasions. There thus began a 'battle for ritual supremacy', with the Communist Party and the Church competing rather like Pueblo Indians or Melanesian Big Men to sponsor village and parish festivities.

Research in Albora, where the Communist Party has 'un-contested dominance', and where the Church is, as Kertzer makes clear, 'un-typically weak', leads him to make some interesting observations on Italian attitudes to ritual. For, while rites of community are now almost exclusively sponsored by the Communists, individual rites of passage (weddings, christenings, communions, confirmations and funerals) are still monopolized by the Church, and despite Albora's long-standing anti-clerical tradition a person who never attended Church would be regarded as unusual.

Unfortunately this fact which possibly represents the book's most interesting conclusion is not treated with any insight. An indication that it may be related to Italian family structure is hinted at but the difficult topic of relations between kinship and politics, which is neatly summed up in Kertzer's translation of a Bolognese satirical poem, 'But, alas, Grandmama', is nowhere analytically explored. Indeed for a number of reasons, some of a theoretical and some of a stylistic nature, Kertzer's ethnography does not entirely live up to its fascinating historical background. Ethnographic description and historical or statistical data are worked in together in the same chapters, so that, while Kertzer's exposition is enlivened by short biographical sketches of Communist Party members or Christian Democratic leaders, and also by such descriptions as of Communist Youth electioneering at Bologna station or morning Mass in one of Albora's churches, nevertheless his book lacks the coherence and unity which alone can engage the reader's attention in ethno-

graphic description. On the contrary, the reader is constantly shifted from foreground to background. The ethnography therefore remains rather fragmentary, while the history is presented as a series of digressions or explanatory flashbacks.

Despite Kertzer's prolonged fieldwork, his informants remain rather one-dimensional beings, since his concern with political activities leads him to isolate certain moments and aspects of their daily existence, such as the meeting, the interview situation or the *festa* - at the expense of a fuller anthropological account, which would eventually shed more light on politics itself. As a result Albora never comes to life as a nucleus of social as distinct from Party or parish life.

This lack of analytical depth may be due to Kertzer's theoretical bias, which, as he states in his Introduction, leads him to focus on the social rather than on the ideological bases of allegiance. This anti-ideological (or a-ideological) stand is repeatedly stated; the view that a system of beliefs can serve as a basis for social groupings is, in Kertzer's opinion, 'an assertion of dubious merit; it is more accurate to see the groupings and activities as primary and the beliefs as derivative'. The Communist Party's post-Vatican Council behavioural stand and its leaders' confidence that 'once social allegiances change, ideological commitments will eventually follow' perfectly coincides, then, with Kertzer's theoretical approach. But can a political party's recruiting tactics or even a widespread disenchantment with political ideologies really become a useful strategy for anthropological research?

Some implications of Kertzer's theoretical position are discussed in the book's final chapter:

> Given a social conception of the nature of religion [he writes], there appears to be no reason why the Church could not be substituted by the Party as the fount of all ritual. If ritual, as Durkheim portrayed it, is essentially the expression of societal sovereignty over the individual, the transcendental character of ritual does not consist of a prior belief in the supernatural; rather the supernatural quality is a product of the social experience ....
>
> The fact that the Party has not succeeded in replacing the Church as the sponsor of rites of passage should be seen as the result of an organizational failure ....

Indeed, in Kertzer's view, attachment to religion in the Soviet Union is not satisfactorily explained through psychological interpretations of the ritual impulse. In defence of the social perspective he therefore concludes that

> ... the discontent with state sponsored rites of passage in Communist nations could be attributed either to insufficient appreciation by the authorities of the importance of creating a satisfying symbol system for rites of passage or to dissatisfaction of the people with the symbolism of the Party.

The difficulty here seems mainly to hinge on Kertzer's unhappy combination of Marxism with Durkheimian sociology and on his narrowly materialist interpretation of Durkheim's *faits sociaux*. 'Social' in Kertzer's usage seems to be identified with 'material' or 'practical' and clearly excludes the 'symbolic order' which it is simply thought to produce in an act of continuous creation. His account of Italian ritual therefore excludes a priori the mutually shaping interplay of ideology and praxis. Making no allowances for the fact that Durkheim's hypotheses in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* have a chronological as well as a sociological dimension, Kertzer draws on Durkheim's explanation of the origins of ritual and religion in a hypothetical, very primitive, and clearly stateless, social setting - and then applies it to today's complex socio-political phenomena. As a result, social symbols and creeds which, in Durkheim's view, would be created at times of great 'collective effervescence', would be turned out - in the Europe of the 1970s - on instruction from the appropriate bureaucrats, like shoes or loaves of bread, on a purely supply and demand basis. Fortunately this is conjecture, as is, I hope, the foreshadowed vision of 'authorities', be they priests or commissars, busily 'creating a satisfying symbol system'.

In the book's final chapter, the 'two-world concept', which clearly provided the basic structure for Kertzer's study, is, after all, found 'inadequate' - on the grounds that it accounts for values and norms, rather than actual behaviour. Similarly the Gramscian notion of hegemony - which, although (Kertzer concedes) is 'a more fertile concept in understanding the Church-Communist struggle', and though it does recognize social factors, it nevertheless 'accentuates the ideological nature of the political process'. Unfortunately for Kertzer's argument, Gramsci's notion of hegemony, which obviously exercised a keen influence on the Italian Communist Party over the last thirty years, concerns precisely those ideological aspects of society to which Kertzer believes 'our Western intellectualistic heritage' has wrongly led us to grant primacy over social forces. The result is that the creative impact of art forms, traditions and ideas on society is not acknowledged, and Gramsci's revision of Leninist Marxism is left with no significance or originality whatsoever.

Despite a number of difficulties and contradictions, which may be partly due to the intrinsic complexity of Kertzer's topic, the book does successfully show how the Communist Party over the last thirty-five years has become an integral element in Italian life. Structural similarities between the Church and the Party may go some way towards an explanation of

> What seems a paradox to the outsider [but] is, of course ... a way of life to the Italian, who accommodates himself to the conflicting calls on his allegiance made by the Church and the Communist Party.

The paradox, however, remains basically unexplained, if in his last chapter Kertzer can rather lamely reflect on how 'human ability to syncretize diverse symbolic systems is legendary and

people are under no constraint to adopt only non-conflicting symbols'. Kertzer notes Nesti's *Gesù Socialista: Una Tradizione Popolare Italiana* (1974) as evidence of Italian syncretism. But a more precise understanding of popular religion (for instance in Carlo Ginzburg's *I Benandanti* (1966) and *Il Formaggio e i Vermi* (1976)) and a more detailed knowledge of the peoples', as well as the Party's, political ideologies, might have helped Kertzer and his readers gain some insight into a paradox which is at least as old as organized religion, but which, through a complex set of historical circumstances, has particularly beset Italian life over the last hundred years.

LIDIA DINA SCIAMA

RODNEY NEEDHAM, *Reconnaissances*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1980. 105 pp., Select Bibliographies, Index. $10.00 (Cloth), $4.00 (Paper).

In the three essays of *Reconnaissances* Needham continues the argument propounded in 'Polythetic Classification' (*Man*, 1975) and *Primordial Characters* (1978). In these essays (presented originally as a series of talks at the University of Toronto), Needham augments the ethnographic evidence which allegedly shows that 'archetypes discoverable in the comparison of collective representations act as primary factors of experience'. The paper on 'Unilateral Figures' ranges worldwide to collect mythical, folkloric and literary presentations of one-sided people and proposes that laterally-divided human figures are manifestations of a universal propensity for seeing in terms of bilaterality. Half-persons derive their power and their strangeness from their violation of this archetypal principle. 'Analogical Classification' sets analogical, or lateral, classifications off against hierarchical, or vertical, forms in order to propose the existence of an alternative classificatory logic and to show that hierarchical classification tends to be applied to pragmatic relations whereas analogical finds its pertinence in the creation of symbolic orders. The final essay, 'Dual Sovereignty', proposes that the dyadic principle of the complementarity of sacred and secular is of more value to anthropological analyses than typological figures such as the divine king. The essay traces manifestation of this 'diarchic principle' through a number of historical and contemporary cultures. The principle does not only subsume instances of divine kingship within its logic but can also be used to explain both the dualism of affinal mystical power and agnatic jural power in Kachin, Meru, Ryukyuan Japanese, and Purim

social theories as well as the division between spiritual and physical governance present in conceptions of social power in medieval European, Indo-European, Indian and many other cultures.

Needham essentially argues that certain archetypal relations inhere within the structure of the brain. They are manifested universally but tend to lie unperceived beneath particular historically and culturally-determined configurations of symbols and institutions. Needham's writings force one, whether or not one agrees with his hypothesis, to consider the formal similarities he discerns through a wide range of cultures and periods. Those who embrace the concept of archetypal representation will find reinforcement for their arguments in *Reconnaissances* while those who do not will find a plethora of materials which must be accommodated in alternative explanatory models. As Needham writes, 'the task of reconnaissance [is] to advance from the known to the unknown, and to probe in whatever seems the right direction, but in this terrain it is very hard to find our bearings.' Whether Needham has touched on a continent of the unconscious or has merely mistaken a multitude of islands for a new world, his reconnaissances make obvious the need for cartographers. Bearings must be found.

GLENN BOWMAN

JAMES R. WALKER, *Lakota Belief and Ritual* (edited by Raymond J. De Mallie and Elaine A. Jahner), Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1980. xxix, 305 pp., Appendices, Bibliography, Index. $21.50.

Lakota Belief and Ritual is the first of four volumes which Raymond J. de Mallie and Elaine A. Jahner have put together from notes collected in 1896-1914 by James R. Walker among the Oglala Sioux on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Walker was a medical doctor assigned to the reservation at a time when the older men were becoming aware that many aspects of tribal tradition would not survive them. Walker's tactful willingness to work with tribal 'medicine men' to improve sanitation and combat tuberculosis led him to take an interest in how the Oglala doctors brought relief of minor complaints by use of inert medicines and ceremonial practices. In turn, several traditionalist Oglala eventually agreed to reveal secrets to Walker which normally only an initiated holy man would be permitted to know. The anthropologist Clark Wissler, who was searching for ethnographic collectors, contacted Walker and encouraged him to gather

information for the American Museum of Natural History. The museum staff edited notes and texts in Indian languages sent in by field investigators for publication. Some of Walker's own contributions eventually appeared in print, including a compilation on the Oglala sun dance composed as a manual of instruction. Many ethnographers of Plains cultures worked only in English with paid informants. Walker depended on translators, but also on recorded statements written down for him in Lakota by knowledgeable Oglala. Despite Walker's lack of fluency in Lakota, the editors say that no account in the literature on Plains Indian sun dances makes so systematic an attempt at symbolic analysis as does Walker's own.

Evans-Pritchard once remarked that anthropologists seldom give to the ethnographic monographs and other writings they deal with the same kind of critical attention that historians regularly devote to documentary source-material. Considering the impact the early monographs on Plains Indians have had internationally on anthropological theories, we must welcome signs that Americanists are now seriously investigating the circumstances under which these studies were made. The documents in *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, many translated and published for the first time, give in their own words what the Oglala leaders thought were important principles in Lakota religion, at a time, as the editors point out, not long after the Wounded Knee massacre, when the Lakota appeared to be defeated and their conversion to Christianity inevitable. Some passages are poignant; others, such as the various efforts to convey the meaning of *wakan*, are of considerable interest to students of comparative religion. The many photographs and plates, such as Thunder Bear's drawings of war insignia, enhance the appearance and value of the book. Much of the text no doubt will be of use primarily to Siouan specialists. Other readers may be expected to consult the documents selectively, while turning to one of the several general studies of Oglala life or religion for an introduction. In Part I, the editors provide a useful summary of Walker's life based on material collected by Maurice Fink. The remainder of the book consists of ninety-two documents, two appendices, notes, bibliography, index, twenty-nine black and white photographs and sixteen colour plates. The book is reasonably priced and attractively bound and printed with justified margins on good quality paper - features worth mentioning in this era of slovenly books sold at high prices.

R.H. BARNES

M.F.C. BOURDILLON and MEYER FORTES (eds.), *Sacrifice*, London: Academic Press 1980. xix, 147 pp. £7.80.

Sacrifice is the result of a conference held in 1979 involving both theologians and anthropologists. There are nine contributors, two of whom, Rogerson and Bourdillon, have an active and continuing interest in both disciplines. As Bourdillon points out in his Introduction, there is a long tradition of interest in sacrifice - by anthropologists because of the central place it has in so many cultures, and by theologians because it is a central feature of the Judaeo-Christian understanding of man's relationship with God. There is a long tradition of interaction between theologians and anthropologists from which both sides have benefited; the aim of bringing together anthropological and theological approaches is thus not without distinguished historical precedents. There are few hints in this book of the bitterness that has sometimes characterised these encounters; the presentation is positive, aimed at synthesis and co-operation between the two disciplines.

The central idea of the conference was the suggestion that sacrifice is a redundant symbol, no longer needed by modern man. In the Catholic tradition sacrifice and the Mass are often synonymous. There has, however, recently been a growing interest in the connection between the Eucharist and sacrifice as part of the ecumenical dialogue between Protestants and Catholics. The interpretation of what happens at the Mass has sharply divided Protestants from Catholics since the Reformation. For Protestants Calvary was a sufficient, unique sacrifice which made further sacrificial acts useless; for Catholics the Mass is the same sacrifice of Calvary. The theme would thus appear to be of more immediate relevance to Protestant theologians. Nevertheless this book provides both theologians and anthropologists with the opportunity of considering the relevance of their continuing interest in this particular feature of religious action. If the two sides failed to respond fully to the challenge or to establish any real exchange of perspectives, they did establish the problems still to be faced. The theologians make positive suggestions for the re-interpretation of sacrifice both within and without their area of study. The anthropologists, who sometimes appear nervous of being included 'inside' any area of moral judgement, outline progress to date. For the theologians, sacrifice appears to have a changing, dynamic quality even though its origin in the Christian tradition lies in the unique historical enactment at the Crucifixion. For the anthropologists it appears infinitely variable in form yet strangely static with few hints of the provisionality that is part of sacrifice.

Most contributors give some consideration to the differences (and implicit similarities) between anthropologists and theologians. Some rather outdated arguments about the study of religion and objectivity are resurrected in order to establish common ground between the two sides. Fortes says that theologians are

actors within their own religious system and must believe - while anthropologists must necessarily be agnostic in order to achieve objectivity (a view most anthropologists must surely reject as irrelevant to their central concerns). Bourdillon's view is that both theologians and anthropologists look at animal sacrifices in the history of religions and analyse the meaning of these rites in their various cultural contexts; for Bourdillon the difference in their approaches lies not so much in the methods of analysis as in the 'evaluation of the communication'. The social anthropologist, he says,observes sacrifice to tell him more about the nature of man in society, the theologian to gain a concept to be used meaningfully in contemporary society. Rogerson, a theologian,maintains that the anthropologist approaches descriptions of sacrifice in the Old Testament in order to elucidate structure and function: he would treat the story as a means of establishing a coherent system of symbols. The theologian, on the other hand, views sacrifice in terms of the story and the insight into eternal reality which it might contain.

There is in the volume some consensus by both groups of an outside (anthropological)/inside (theological) division. While the anthropologist is presented as an objective observer, the theologian is characterised as unavoidably involved in his observation. Thus his interpretation of sacrifice in the Old and New Testaments forms the basis of his understanding of it in the present. Sacrifice for the theologian is a flexible symbol, stretching and retracting to meet man's changing needs.

The theologians are however anxious to point out that their preoccupation with sacrifice does not give them a monopoly on its interpretation. Sykes, a theologian, says

> The Christian is not, therefore, in a position to say that the sacrifice of Christ (or the Eucharistic sacrifice) expresses and fulfils the universally felt need of man to offer sacrifices to his gods. The Christian interest ought to be less in the intellectual theories of sacrifice than in the persons who sacrifice and their worlds of meaning.

On the other hand, the anthropologist is not always considered to be an adequate interpreter of other peoples' worlds of meaning. Fortes criticises Evans-Pritchard's contention that his fellow anthropologists were incapable of understanding the religions of non-Western peoples, because they were themselves irreligious or atheistic. While it is true that anthropologists should beware, as Fortes says, of approaching their studies from the standpoint of their religious values, the evidence of the volume suggests that the theologians' experience of re-interpreting a symbol of which they have a working knowledge often gives them an advantage in understanding what sacrifice means for other people. It might be added that the relationship between the study of religion and theology is essentially dialectical. As Ninian Smart has said elsewhere,

> As knowledge of the explorations of religion become widely known so men's perceptions of their traditions and their reasons for their belief or disbelief are altered (*The Phenomenon of Religion*, 1978).

The anthropologists do not attempt to define sacrifice but rather emphasize certain aspects of it. The general view is that any general theory of sacrifice is bound to fail because what is termed 'sacrifice' covers a wide variety of practices in which it is often difficult to find a common denominator. Bourdillon's useful Introduction summarises the theories of sacrifice which have been most influential in social anthropology (those of Tylor, Frazer, Westermarck and Robertson Smith) and suggests that each theory brings out the prominent theme in a particular type of sacrifice. He includes within the scope of the topic such items as calculated sacrifices, prestigious killings and the execution of criminals. He suggests that sacrifice, because it appears to be a central religious act in most societies, might be regarded as a 'natural symbol' expressing universals - for example that 'death is irrevocable' and 'death involves the destruction of vitality'. Beattie rejects the idea that sacrifice is a natural symbol; instead he claims that 'in the consecration of an animal for sacrifice ... the animal is made into a symbol'. He suggests that sacrifice, by harnessing 'power' or 'powers', is a dramatic, symbolic expression of man's dependence on outside forces. The sacrificial ritual is a form of art, a drama - believed by the performers to work - which, like a language, requires its own specific kind of understanding. Sacrifice provides a technique for making use of a force already in existence. Another social anthropologist, Suzanne Campbell-Jones, provides a bridge between anthropology and theology with her analysis of the ways in which aspects of the Mass change in emphasis and reflect the social life of the participants - in this case working nuns, who are themselves part of a theological tradition. She shows that the nuns are part of the drama of sacrifice. The emphasis in the Mass has changed away from sacrifice (which stresses the propitiatory death of a victim) towards communion (which stresses the community meal). This movement, she says, mirrors the gradual breaking of old boundaries in the secular world, and the increasing participation of the nuns in the outside world. Audrey Hayley by way of contrast provides a competent analysis of sacrifice among devotional sects in Aṣsam. The model of ritual interaction, in this case, is the alimentary system.

Rogerson, a theologian, who has given serious consideration to anthropological approaches to biblical material, discusses the problems involved in dealing with sacrifice in the Old Testament. These include the difficult task of handling material which has been 'worked over' for a considerable period of time, and the existence of the 'official', developed view of sacrifice alongside descriptions of 'popular practices'. He acknowledges that the attempted structuralist interpretations of biblical material by anthropologists such as Douglas and Leach can help to shed some

new light on the meaning of sacrifice, but nevertheless finds points of divergence with Leach's analysis of sacrifice. Sykes, another theologian, comes closest to the topic of central concern - the relevance of sacrifice to modern man - in his rather polemical contribution 'Sacrifice in the New Testament and Christian Theology'. He contrasts the 'familiar Wittgensteinian' approach, which acknowledges that acts of sacrifice have sufficient points of similarity to be called 'sacrifice' but which also finds them too plural and diverse to have any one thing in common, with the Christian temptation to identify the 'essence of sacrifice' and then to interpret the 'preferred example as the complete expression of that essence'. Every sacrifice, he says, must be judged in the context of the total meaning of the particular event; thus the Christian experience of sacrifice is unique. His main argument is that the use of sacrificial language in the Christian context is not metaphorical but real. Both the original act and its repetition at the Mass are real sacrifices. The sacrifice of Christ has a 'bi-focal' character. 'First it has to be seen as the act of God in the desperate context of human sin, of which God is the wrathful judge. Secondly it has to be looked at as the climactic act of a life of self-giving.' This bi-focal character of 'power' and 'humility' gives Christianity the ability to adapt to vastly different circumstances. Sykes' thesis is powerfully argued but his paper provides a good example of Fortes' observation that although anthropologists and theologians use the same vocabulary - symbol, myth, ritual, meaning - they by no means concur in its usage.

A final note of synthesis is provided by Barrington-Ward and Bourdillon. Their conclusion is that people use sacrificial symbolism to express ways in which they understand the world. To the Christian the sacrifice of Christ is a key to his understanding of life, and thus of all sacrifices; it provides him with an 'inclusive symbol', 'transcending other more restricted forms of sacrifice'. With regard to the problem of whether Christian sacrifice is real or metaphorical they say that it should be examined against the historical moment at which Christianity emerged, a period when the Hellenistic and Roman world was involved in a process of 'spiritualisation'. An attempt to draw the two disciplines together is expressed in the final paragraph.

> When a Nuer man [to quote a case described by Evans-Pritchard], on seeing his byre struck by lightning and catch fire,first speared an ox in sacrifice to God before rescuing his family and cattle ... he was in effect saying that there was something more important to him than all he stood to lose. When a Christian puts aside half an hour of a busy day for the sacrifice of the Mass, he is asserting to himself as well as to others, that the story of the life, death and resurrection of Christ points to something

> more profound in his own life than all the flux of opinions, aspirations and regrets, the enjoyment and the tedium that makes up so much of it.

I found this ending rather unsatisfactory. For the evidence offered in this book by no means establishes a convincing connection between the Christian experience of sacrifice and that of other peoples. Indeed, though providing a useful introduction to the subject - particularly for those not familiar with its now vast literature - the reader is not really left with a cohesive picture. But perhaps, after all, this is no weakness: it is well to be reminded that the divergent approaches of the two disciplines can still bring fresh insights to each other.

PAT HOLDEN

JEREMY MacCLANCY, *To Kill a Bird with Two Stones: A Short History of Vanuatu*, Port Vila: Vanuatu Cultural Centre [Publications No. 1], 1980.

Imagine a group of eighty isolated islands, each with its own cultural peculiarities, in the midst of a struggle for unity and independence, a land formerly governed as a condominium by the British and French, a place where anthropologists - unwilling to pay for information, unwilling to buy their prestige the way the natives themselves did - were thought to be thieves of *kastom*. If there were ever a test for the Oxford tradition that fieldwork techniques are best learned in the field - that adaptability and open-mindedness are an anthropologist's first priorities - then author Jeremy MacClancy must surely be one of Oxford's model ethnographers. Since 1978, when he first arrived in Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides), to the present day, MacClancy has endeavoured to come to terms with the lives and traditions of the ni-Vanuatu. In the process he has spent time with several groups and has had the unique experience of seeing *kastom* (the so-called native way) used as a weapon among local political factions, as a regional defence against national interests, and as a unifying theme of the new nation itself. In the process MacClancy often found himself in the midst of disputes as local 'big men' made their bids for more power in the unstable political atmosphere. However, as a result of his varied and often trying experiences, MacClancy was in a unique position to undertake perhaps the most difficult fieldwork task of all: attempting to write a book that would tell the history of Vanuatu to ni-Vanuatu in a way that would be interesting and informative, yet acceptable to the many factions which peopled the sensitive climate.

If the job of an anthropologist is to render into print an image of the world that is faithful to the native viewpoint, then being their historian is surely the ultimate test of whether one has got things right. *To Kill a Bird with Two Stones* is a model of what a short history should be. It is clear, concise, and entertaining; as a document, moreover, written primarily for the people studied, it holds a special place among books on Melanesian society. Tracing the development of Vanuatu from prehistory to the present day, the author shows an easy familiarity which should have a particular appeal to those who seek the sort of general understanding that, until now, has remained the sole province of a few experts. Unlike most specialists, however, MacClancy avoids the lengthy theoretical digressions which often make ethnographies inaccessible to all but the experts. Most importantly, *To Kill a Bird with Two Stones* confronts the urgent problems now faced by Vanuatu: how to accommodate sensibly the peculiar needs and attitudes toward *kastom* in a country characterised by small isolated communities; how to come to terms with a past that continually portrays the natives as falling prey to the schemes of both foreigners and one another; how to suggest that this tiny nation, whose population is that of an average English market town, can be transformed nearly overnight from a remote, if not a wholly primitive, place to a nation aware enough of itself and the rest of the world to protect its own better interests; how to present a unified national image when the gap between the lifestyles of resident Europeans and those of ni-Vanuatu was so vast that only in 1972 did the first aboriginal receive a college degree.

That the book was published at all in what must be a most sensitive historical moment is a tribute to the Cultural Centre, to the ni-Vanuatu, and most of all, to the perspicacity of the author himself. As something of a parting gift from the British Government (which helped fund the endeavour), *To Kill a Bird with Two Stones* will surely take an important, constructive place in the futures of the ni-Vanuatu. What better satisfaction might be derived from the anthropological discipline?

DAVID NAPIER

MAURICE LEENHARDT, *Do Kamo: Person and Myth in the Melanesian World* [trans. Basia Miller Gulati, with a preface by Vincent Crapanzano], Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1979. xxxiii, 205 pp. £9.95.

> You didn't bring us the spirit. We already knew the spirit existed ... What you've brought us is the body.
>
> Old Boesoou

Do Kamo is an exegesis of the Melanesian ambience, sensitively drawn, by an extremely gifted man. Leenhardt's express purpose in writing the book was to convey the manner in which myth is 'lived' by the Canaque of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands.

He regards myth as an 'affective' as opposed to 'rational' mode of knowledge and perception, and as the ground of man's social being in the primitive world. It is not, however, that there is a logical chasm between ourselves and the primitive; the term 'prelogical' is misleading. It is rather that the affects constitute the 'dominant structural element' in the consciousness of the primitive, and so the difference is but one of degree. Though ascribing such universality to emotivity in the universe of the primitive does not, in the final analysis, explain anything, it does raise the significant question of why Leenhardt (like Durkheim and Mauss before him) considered the affects to be some kind of ultimate explanatory given. Both the expression of emotion in social life and this predilection of the French School have yet to be satisfactorily accounted for.

The book contains much by way of ethnographic detail and theoretical insight which is of critical interest to the student of Austronesian languages and social formations. Thus Leenhardt devotes two chapters to the indigenous concept of the 'word', *no*, conceived as 'the manifestation of what is human in all its aspects'. *No* is the substance or intention embodied in a medium of communication such as that of speech, but also that of women who express enduring alliances between clans. He represents a system of symmetric alliance as a double helix, thereby reproducing on the social plane one of the most elementary structures to exist in the physical universe. The correspondence may not be fortuitous. Chapter Four is a remarkable exercise in conjectural history. Melanesian civilisation is divided into three strata which accord with the three migrations. In these strata it is possible to discern three primary forms of human experience, developmentally linked.

Leenhardt's evolutionary theory of the self comprises the major portion of the book. He views this process as one which involves the person disengaging himself from a 'mythic envelope' as a result of the transformation in perception which attends his Christianization and concomitant emergence into three-dimensional space. As a consequence of Christian teaching, Leenhardt argues, the Melanesian learns of Christ's Jerusalem

which he is able to locate geographically, temporally and emotionally as being a point beyond his immediate surroundings. 'Both territories henceforth play a role for him. His lived behaviour proceeds from these two points in space.'

Prior to this, 'space appears as a heterogeneous ensemble of places whose existence is felt by bodily presence; when the sensuous reaction to the resistance of the physical milieu is absent, space does not exist'. Similarly, the person appears as a heterogeneous ensemble of relationships. It is these which are named, not the person as such. Thus, the dual substantive *duamara*, meaning 'the pair nephew' refers to the 'symmetrical ensemble' of a maternal uncle and his nephew. The pair, 'which our eyes obstinately see as two', is apprehended as a single entity, a 'duality-unity'. It is this diffusion or 'participation' of the person in those around him (which is possible given that 'mythic thought' unfolds in only two dimensions, on a single plane) which constitutes the 'mythic envelope'.

Old Boesoou's remark, quoted above, reverberates throughout the primitive universe, perhaps with the same ring as the Gates of Eden clanging shut in our own tradition. With the discovery of the body in the round as it were, 'the circumscription of the physical being is completed, making possible its objectification'. The native can begin to set up distances between himself and other persons and objects in the world about him. He emerges into history, albeit laden with a Cartesian metaphysics.

Do Kamo cannot be read without a certain dislocation of our customary mental processes. One of the perplexities to arise has been remarked upon by Crapanzano in his preface. It is that what appear to be metaphors or conventions which the Canaque use to describe experience are often taken by Leenhardt as indications of experience. For example, the Canaque depicts the trunk of his body as a long rectangle with two narrow bands on either side to 'indicate the invisible sides of the trunk, the flanks'. He has thus 'unrolled' his body on a two-dimensional plane. It is held, on these grounds, that the Canaque only perceives and has knowledge of his body in two dimensions, and is therefore unable to experience his corporeality or that of other things in the round. Crapanzano holds that such inferences are unwarranted, because 'language and other modes of expression do not reveal what is experience but [only] what is said or can be said about experience'. This could be accepted without hesitation were it not for the nagging sense that it is precisely the boundaries of experience which are at issue in *Do Kamo*. Perhaps it is our theory of metaphor which is deficient.

Basia Miller Gulati's translation from the French is to be commended, for it is faithful to the often poetic turn of phrase in the original. More than an ethnography, *Do Kamo* is a treatise on humanity; an exploration of 'the possibilities of awareness' inherent in the human condition as these have been framed within an alien tradition.

DAVID HOWES

A.L. KROEBER and E.W. GIFFORD, *Karok Myths* [edited by Grace Buzaljko], Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1980. xlix, 329 pp., Bibliography, Indexes, Map, Illustrations. £15.00.

This is the first publication of two collections of traditional narratives and formulae of the Karok Indians of northwestern California - one compiled by Kroeber during the first decade of this century, and the other by Gifford some thirty years later. Like Kroeber's *Yurok Myths* (University of California Press 1976), to which this is a companion volume, the book thus fills an important gap in both Californian and North Pacific Coast mythography. The narratives themselves are preceded by a Foreword written by Kroeber's widow, who provides an interesting review of the work of the two anthropologists in this part of native North America and a useful background sketch of Karok culture and society. This is then followed by Alan Dundes's 'Folkloristic Commentary', in which he indicates the comparative context in which the myths are to be viewed; and by a Preface by the editor, Grace Buzaljko, who briefly considers stylistic and thematic differences between the mythology of the Karok and that of the somewhat better-known Yurok. Buzaljko also provides a useful 'Index of Parallel Plot Elements' as between the myths contained in this book, Kroeber's *Yurok Myths*, and shorter compilations of Karok texts by Harrington in 1930 and 1932 and by Bright in 1957.

As the Yurok and Karok, while speaking very different languages, are (or rather, were) culturally almost identical, one of the most interesting contrasts between their respective oral traditions concerns the apparently greater role played by women in Karok myths, regarding which Buzaljko cites a possible parallel in the ritual life of the two societies. Yet, as she also notes, this apparent feminine bias may simply be due to the fact that most of the later recorded narratives were taken from female informants; and since both Yurok and Karok culture are to all intents and purposes extinct, it is probably now too late to probe this issue further.

As for the main body of the volume, this consists almost entirely of unelaborated English translations of indigenous myths, the task of analysis being left to the reader himself. Thus, although the narratives evidence certain themes - such as that of the Bird-Nester - which have a wide distribution in the New World, *Karok Myths* is unlikely to be of much relevance other than to Americanists and folklorists. Nevertheless, whatever one's particular ethnographic interests, it should be an occasion for gratitude that such a substantial collection of oral literature from an aboriginal North American society has been preserved and has at last appeared in print.

GREGORY L. FORTH

OTHER NOTES AND NOTICES

A NOTE ON LORRY NAMES IN GHANA

Nearly all commercial vehicles in Ghana carry an inscription of some kind. This may be a sentence, clause, phrase, or sometimes a single word printed boldly on the sides, the front or the back of the vehicles. These labels are mostly in one of the dialects of Akan, i.e. Ashanti, Fante or Akwapem (each of which has a distinct orthography), English, Ewe and Hausa as well as an occasional inscription in Dagbane. There are also a few labels that mix English and Akan.

1. *Nkrabea* (Destiny) Akan.
2. *Future*.
3. *Akwei Allah* (There is God) Hausa.
4. *Nyameadom* (By the Grace of God) Akan.
5. *Onyame nwui* (God is not dead) Akan.
6. *Onyame nnaee* (God is not asleep) Akan.
7. *Aboa a onne dua, nyame na opra ne ho* (The animal without a tail is looked after by God) Akan.
8. *Allah bamu lafia* (Give us peace, O God) Hausa.
9. *Blood is thicker than water*.
10. *Mogya bi ye dom* (Blood is not thicker than water) Hausa.
11. *Abusua do funu* (The matrilineage loves death) Akan.
12. *Poor no friend*.
13. *Onipa ye 'bad'* (Mankind is treacherous) Akan-English.
14. *Fear Woman*.
15. *Suro nipa* (Fear mankind) Akan.
16. *Dugnia se Sanu* (Beware the world) Hausa.
17. *Boato ye na* (A friend in need is a friend indeed) Akan.
18. *Some Sonka* (Love those who love you) Akan.
19. *Sika mpe 'rough'* (Wealth does not endure rough treatment) Akan-English.
20. *Yebisa ne fie na enye ne sika* (Seek his home not his money) Akan.
21. *I shall return*.

22. *Sweet mother.*
23. *Show boy .*
24. *Saa nti* (So it is) Akan.
25 *Mind your business.*

The commercial vehicles in question are privately owned and are licensed to carry passengers and cargo. The owner of the vehicle may not be the driver of it, although some drivers of commercial vehicles save up enough money to buy their own vehicle, which is thus driven by themselves or else by an employee. Prosperity will determine whether a person continues in the profession or retires.

The vehicles fall into two categories: those that operate within the big towns and cities such as in Accra-Tema, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Cape Coast etc. These are called *trotro* i.e. 'penny transport'. What are called 'mammy trucks' usually undertake longer journeys between towns or between towns and the rural areas.

The transport business used to be characterised by intense competition and it is possible that the label on a vehicle served to attract passengers. The labels, if they were popular, soon became the name of both the vehicle and its driver, thereby giving some personality to the enterprise.

Some of the inscriptions on vehicles may appear frivolous and meaningless to one not acquainted with the context or situational background; this is particularly so when they are translated from the source-language into English. However, to the proprietors, their drivers and 'driver mates', kin, friends or neighbours few labels are so regarded. Names in Ghanaian societies, apart from 'day names' and a few other categories of names, are proverbs. This is true for most inscriptions on lorries too. Some of the inscriptions are taken from the traditional genre or are wise sayings in English. Most of the utterances allude to personal tragedy, or unfair treatment meted out to the proprietor by kinsmen, affines, friends - or society at large. There are, however, also those inscriptions which are in fact slogans or catch-phrases circulating in the country and disseminated by films, radio, pop songs etc. There are of course more categories than have been mentioned here.

A.K. AWEDOBA

KINGDOM OF GOLD: AN ASANTE EXHIBITION

The Asante Exhibition *The Kingdom of Gold* was opened at the Museum of Mankind in London on 18 February 1981 by the Asantehene, Otumfoo Nana Opuku Ware II, the present occupant of the Golden Stool. The opening was an exciting and memorable occasion. For those Asante present, it must have been reminiscent of the *durbars* (for which the Asante have been famous since Bowdich in 1817) and of the great and important days in the Asante Calendar such as the *Adae Kesee*. The Asantehene and his entourage resplendent in the *Kente*, the traditional dress of the Asante (a kind of Roman toga, ornate with ornamental gold), moved through a room, reconstructed to resemble his palace at Kumase, but here crowded with anthropologists, reporters, T.V. cameras *et cetera*. The pouring of the libation, the invocation to the ancestors and ancestral gods asking them to bless and bring success to the occasion, the talking drums and the hot, glaring T.V. lamps together produced an illusion of tropicality. The Duke of Gloucester and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs were present to observe the necessary protocol. In the opening speeches hopes were expressed for the furtherance of good relations between the two countries. The slightly embarrassed references to the past were glossed over with humour. It all faintly recalled those handing-over ceremonies in newly-independent Africa. All this in the Museum of Mankind!

The aim of the Exhibition is to present Asante at the height of its power in the 19th century. The collection consists mainly of material brought from Asante in the 19th century by British travellers, explorers and soldiers involved in the Asante wars which led to the subjugation and colonisation of the kingdom by the British. Most of the gold came from the 1874 British expedition to Kumase under Sir Garnet Wolseley which ended in the sacking, looting and burning of the Asante capital and of the palace of the Asantehene. The 'Sagrenti' War (the Asante still remember the conflict) is a dark episode in Asante history, and an even darker one in British colonial history.

Gold is the main theme of the exhibition and there is plenty of it to be seen. The richness of the kingdom is expressed in gold weights (always a delight because of their intricate designs and the stories and proverbs they depict), the gold replica of the *fotoo* (the Asante Exchequer chest), the gold chest *akyeampoma* and the staff which confers authority to the linguist, the chief spokesman of the king or any Asante chief. Gold-dust was the principal currency of the kingdom, and the Asantehene had much of it at his disposal to enable him to conduct the economic, social and foreign affairs of the state. Until very recently a newly installed and consecrated Asantehene could not become *de facto* leader until the *fotoo* (the chest which at one time was reputed to contain gold worth £1,5000,000) was placed at his disposal. Contending factions for the Golden Stool always made sure the *fotoo* was in their keep before they made a strong bid for their protégé, and, like the Golden Stool itself, it was tampered with on pain of

death. Gold also produced the extensive trade links which resulted in the European and Islamic influence evident in many of the objects on display.

Warfare is also a prominent theme in the exhibition. In its heyday the kingdom extended over the whole of the middle of present-day Ghana to Bondoukou in the Ivory Coast and down to the coastal areas of Ghana. The Asante war-song is *Asante Kotoko; wokum apem a apem beba* ('The Asante porcupine, when you kill a thousand a thousand will come') and among the exhibits a gold cast porcupine serves as a reminder of the invincibility of the kingdom: like the porcupine, the Asante could never be provoked with impunity. Other items of war (from the British booty of 1874) include firearms, ornate swords, hats, tunics and talismans. One interesting exhibit is the tunic of the Asantehene which he wore in battle. Its gold-covered pockets were believed to have the magical power to render the wearer bullet-proof.

The exhibition is well worth a visit. The exhibits include reconstructions of a house, a courtroom and funerary groves. The exhibition is enhanced by uncluttered walls and interesting old photographs and clear texts accompany the exhibits.

Malcolm McCleod's *The Asante* (British Museum Publications 1981), a book intended to accompany the exhibition is extremely well-written and beautifully illustrated. It is written for the general reader but its fine presentation of Asante history, values and social life, perceived through its material culture make it a necessary and valuable souvenir for all those concerned with Africa past and present.

CHARLOTTE BOAITEY KWARTENG
PAT HOLDEN

JANE C. BECK, *To Windward of the Land: The Occult World of Alexander Charles*, Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press 1979. 309 pp., Bibliography. £9.00.

Another of the expected *doppelgangers* of the Don Juan tetralogy, but lacking the excitement of the Castanedan authorial *savoir faire*, Jane Beck, an American folklorist, met Alexander Charles, a West Indian smuggler and medicine man, in the early 70s, and her book presents his autobiography and philosophy in a series of conversational chapters. Beck is so pleased with her success at getting the Santo Domingan to 'open up' that she almost totally neglects the necessity of doing anything more than transcribing his rambling discourses. There may be some practices and beliefs related in the conversations of interest to a student of this

particular region, but there is nothing anthropological, neither insights nor methodological innovations, which could serve the interests of the generalized student of culture. The few attempts at analysis are commonsensical and cliché, and the study has an unfortunate tendency to present platitudes such as 'an indication of the quixotic and volatile West Indian nature'. Not to be recommended; if you hunger for this sort of thing - a fascination with the mystical framed by an anthropological discourse - read the originals. They are no more useful than *Windward of the Land* as anthropology, but they provide a much more interesting read.

G.B.

KASTHURI SREENIVASAN, *Climbing the Coconut Tree: A Partial Autobiography*, Delhi etc.: Oxford University Press 1980. xiii, 157 pp., Glossary, Index, Photographs. Rs 60.00.

In *Climbing the Coconut Tree* the author, an Anglicized Indian, tells us his life-story - a story which at times bears an uncanny resemblance to that of Horatio Alger: bare-foot boy from Tamil Nadu makes good, following a path from village school, to school in the regional city (Coimbatore), to college in Madras and finally to university in Manchester - ultimately to become respected both as Chairman of the Indian National Textile Corporation and as an author (not only of this autobiography but also of 4 novels, a translation of the Tamil classic *Tirukkural* and numerous short stories and poems which have appeared both in India and in Britain).

The bulk of the book focusses on the author's early years in his natal village of Karadibavi and in Coimbatore. The last 40-plus years of the author's life - from the time of his entering the Presidency College in Madras, to his encounters as a student in Manchester, the war years, his marriage to an Englishwoman and return to India, to his becoming a captain of industry - are compressed into the last 40 pages of text.

In the telling of his autobiography, Sreenivasan displays both perception and wit. The story is by no means complete however - at times it resembles nothing so much as a series of unrelated anecdotes. Some of Sreenivasan's observations are nevertheless priceless - as exemplified by his recollection of a caste *panchayat* (council) held in Karadibavi when he was a boy. Sreenivasan's family hosted a caste conference that drew representatives of the Kamma caste from a wide area. For several days the Kamma delegates camped on the author's grandfather's land and discussed important issues. We learn little of the actual content of this

conference, or of intra-caste dynamics involved. The conference seems to have had little effect on the Kamma community. But we are told that at least one person was delighted with the outcome. Sreenivasan tells us of his grandfather's comment at the conclusion of the conference: 'Our small farm ought to yield a good crop next year. A thousand people have used it for their morning ablutions for three days.'

Climbing the Coconut Tree, while not an anthropology text in any proper sense, will nevertheless be of some interest to the student of India. This first-person recollection of growing up in rural India provides a unique insider's view of Indian society, one which complements existing ethnographic literature. Although it lacks the detail of other first-hand accounts of village life in India (e.g. Mohanti's *My Village, My Life*), *Climbing the Coconut Tree* really cannot be faulted for that. Although, like Allen's *Plain Tales From The Raj* there is no attempt at profundity, *Climbing the Coconut Tree* is a gentle, human, humane book, one which makes a good read. What it lacks in ethnographic detail it makes up in anecdote and wry humour.

S.S.

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CONTENTS

REVIEWS

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THE SEVERAL PEACES OF YEMENI TRIBES

A recent article in this Journal drew attention to 'imprecisions' which seem to inhere in some societies as well as in books written about them. In a discussion of 'family and kinship' in part of Greece the author suggested that

> what one is dealing with is predominantly a series of values, attitudes, and even - to use a word not popular in anthropology - sentiments, rather than a series of social rules or a variety of social structure. And whilst these may exhibit regularities ... they are nevertheless by their nature uncertain, labile and from context to context, contradictory.[1]

The mention of sentiments inevitably refers the reader to ***Structure and Sentiment***, an extended essay on methodology which dealt in particular with the Purum. The Purum are perhaps rather different:

> what one is really dealing with in such a society as this is a classification, a system of categories, which orders both social life and the cosmos.[2]

It was not, then, suggested that all societies, or even most, have such a comprehensive and definitive system. Plainly many societies do not. However, individual sentiment was dismissed as a means of explanation for all societies, and with good reason; not because sentiment is vague or labile but because structure is logically prior to it. This point was demonstrated by examining a particular case but, being a matter of logic rather than experience, cannot really be rebutted.

What I think Just draws attention to is an idea which has gained currency in recent years; that the use of any analytic means which are not translations of indigenous terms is somehow 'not faithful' to the facts.[3] In those societies which do not elaborate definitive systems of categories an analysis constrained by this idea leaves an enormous residue of matters unexplained. This does not mean that structure cannot be found in those societies but that one must look beyond indigenous linguistic usage and, indeed, it is only by doing so that one can make sense of the local terms themselves.

The tribes of northern Yemen are sedentary but their emphasis on such matters as honour and blood-debts is broadly comparable to that of the nomadic Arab societies which are better known from the literature. As far as is known, they have always been the armed strength of the country but they elevate descendants of the Prophet to arbitrate among them (something which others do as well) and they have repeatedly elevated some of these to rule them as Imams.[4] A few Imams have ruled the tribes with a firm hand. The last episode of this kind was in the present century when the tribes who before 1911 had stood off tens of thousands of Turkish soldiers and after 1962 were to inflict appalling losses on Egyptian armies were in the intervening period apparently powerless to resist Imams Yahya and Ahmad in turn. The rhetoric of the Imams is in terms of a unitary state organised by the single law of Islam and in these terms the provisionality of tribalism is difficult to conceive. The rhetoric of the tribes is of an honourable independence organised by fragmented customary law which is administered largely by the disputing parties. Yet it is the tribes who have repeatedly raised Imams to power.

At a more mundane level, analysis of 'social structure' (in something like Radcliffe-Brown's sense of the phrase) is unsatisfactory, not least because tribes are not constant solidary groups. Again, most tribal sections have a shaykh and some tribes have a 'shaykh of shaykhs' but what 'rules' may be elicited or deduced about their position are broken as often as not. The tribesmen are not tied to their shaykhs, by land tenure for example,[5] and if two men from the same section are at odds, they can, if they wish, go to the shaykh of another section to have the matter settled. Nor is there any pressing local theory of authority and the tribesmen themselves often say, 'there's a shaykh in every house'. In fact it transpires that Arab tribesmen subscribe to very much the same myth about Arab tribesmen as we do - 'the nation is free because each of her sons disdains a base submission to the will of a master' - but

their claims to personal independence are complemented by what can properly be called a fascination with strong leaders. At first glance much of what they say on these subjects seems contradictory.

Social life, especially that aspect which we roughly call political, is often disorderly and events are often not fully accounted for even after they occur. The terms in which public life is transacted are, however, fairly constant. The most salient of these terms are those to do with honour: ***sharaf***, ***ʿard***, ***naqāʾ*** and many others. To understand these one must go beyond a simple gloss or brief translation:

> The tribesman regards himself as the possessor of a quality called ***sharaf*** or honour, but the most important constituent of this honour seems to be the tradition of bearing arms and being capable of defending oneself and one's dependants.[6]

The ability to defend one's own is marked by the dagger which every tribesman wears upright at the centre of his belt and by the rifles which most of them carry in public. 'Weak' people (a category which includes butchers, barbers and certain others) are not themselves tribesmen but live under tribal protection. They wear their daggers to the left and do not carry rifles. Jews too live under tribal protection but do not carry weapons at all. Descendants of the Prophet or ***sayyid***s wear their daggers to the right and may carry rifles if they wish but, being under the protection of the tribes, they seldom do so.[7] The tribesman's ***sharaf*** depends on his belonging to a tribe (which gives him 'authenticity' of lineage) and in many contexts the word could properly be translated as nobility. It is in terms of ***sharaf***, an eminently public quality, that men are opposed to men and tribes to tribes.

By comparison with the 'weak' people the tribesmen do form a sort of aristocracy but apart from this the indigenous terms by themselves tell us little. ***Sharaf*** explains nearly everything and so explains almost nothing. When a man is doing well his ***sharaf*** is intact, if not augmented, and when he is doing badly his ***sharaf*** is in danger of being 'broken', but the term cannot be defined by situating it among other terms in a 'moral taxonomy'. As it stands it suggests only that all tribesmen should be opposed to all others which is partly true but insufficient.

The 'weak' people are called ***jayrān*** (properly ***jīrāu***, pl. of ***jār***, 'neighbours') but this same word is used of 'strong' tribesmen who take refuge with others or who are fellow members of a tribe or section. On most counts, it should be noticed, 'weak' people and 'strong' people are reckoned utterly different. Whichever is referred to as 'neighbour', the saying goes that ***al-jār fī wajh mujawwir-hu*** which might be translated as 'the protected person is on the honour of his protector'. ***Fī wajh*** might be translated literally as 'in the face of' and the 'face' (***wajh***, pl. ***wajīh*** or ***wujūh***) is the common way of referring to an

individual man's honour and good standing. It is whitened by courage, generosity or noble deeds and blackened by cowardice, miserliness or disgrace. A truce may be concluded *fi l-wajh* and, more generally, if a tribesman wants to promise something emphatically he will say 'my face' and draw a finger down his cheek, but in many circumstances the phrase requires two translations if the sense is to be conveyed in English: 'on my honour' and 'under my protection'.[8] The tribesman states his honour precisely by protecting something or someone from other tribesmen. What blackens a man's face 'breaks' his *sharaf*.

The couple *jār/mujawwir* may refer to a 'weak' person and his tribal protector or to a tribesman seeking refuge with another but it may also be taken to comprehend various other couples such as *ḍayf/mudayyif* 'guest and host' or *rafīq/murafiq* 'traveller and escort'.[9] The importance of the relation these denote is shown by the provisions made in tribal law for its breach. In the simplest case a tribesman who kills another is liable to pay only the standard blood-money, which most of the time I was in Yemen was fixed at about £6,000 - but a man who killed his protégé, his guest or his travelling companion would be liable to pay four or even eleven times this sum, depending on how heinous were the circumstances. Indeed cash compensation may not be accepted at all. It is often said that the murderer's own people would kill him to wipe out the disgrace he brought on them, but if this happens it is rare. Most often the victim's people will press for revenge and then agree to heavy compensation. For a lesser offence by a protector against a protégé multiple amends are also required; so many times the wound-money or the cost of the damage done. Even if the protégé suffers no actual harm or loss, the protector who offends against him owes him amends and in a simple case a sheep or a goat would be sufficient. In general, an offence against a person who is 'one one's honour' is *ʿayb* ('disgrace' or 'shame') and a serious offence, especially murder, is *ʿayb aswad* or 'black shame'.

If someone else offends against his protégé the protector is honour-bound to extract the protégé's amends from the offender and he is also entitled to amends himself for the insult he has suffered. The extreme case is murder. Rossi mentions an example from the diary of Hayyim Habshush, in which a Jew was killed and the murderer's people were required to pay four times the usual blood-money, half of which was to go to the dead man's kin and half to the tribesmen under whose protection he had lived.[10] Multiple compensation of this kind is the rule in cases involving not only Jews but 'weak' people, *sayyid*s, guests, travellers and many others who are for the moment 'on someone's honour'. For lesser offences a multiple of the wound-money or of the damages would be demanded and divided. Even if the protégé suffers no actual harm or loss the protector is owed amends and in a simple case a sheep or goat would be sufficient.

This is only one example of the partial symmetry (between offences committed by oneself and offences committed against oneself) which allows us to speak of *sharaf* and its associations as honour. If the protector cannot extract amends for his protégé

from the culprit then he must himself pay or else he slights the protégé and his people. If, on the other hand, the protégé and his people take matters into their own hands then they slight the protector. If two men argue and then fight in someone else's house then even if they do no damage to themselves or to the furnishings they owe the householder amends. These amends are known as *hajar al-bayt*. If, on the other hand, the householder offends against one of them then he owes amends to the one offended. In either case the reason is that they are *fī wajh-hu*, 'on his honour'.

A structure emerges from these various instances which organises what are otherwise fragmented and particular 'rules' about whose honour is at stake on which occasion. One could, of course, concoct another set of rules to specify when the first rules are applied but this would be cumbersome and would provide no intuitive understanding of the facts. One can say instead that, although there is no one Arabic word which would denote it, every tribesman has a 'peace' resembling the old English *mund*. The breach of that peace requires amends, like the *mundbryce*, apart from or, more properly, before the damage done requires specific compensation.[11]

Such peaces are the basis of particular men's honour. However, there are also peaces which involve particular men but which are not themselves the peace of any one man or the basis of any one man's honour. There is an asymmetrical relation between escort and traveller but there is also a symmetrical relation between men who are all travelling companions to one another. The famous bond of 'the bread and the salt' is also often symmetrical, so that of a group of men who eat together none can offend against another for a specified period without it being *ʿayb*. There is an asymmetrical relation between 'strong' tribesmen and 'weak' people under their protection called *jayrān*. But *jayrān* is also used of fellow tribesmen in a group who have symmetrical and mutual claims on one another. Such cases are more difficult to deal with in that the public use of indigenous terms stresses opposition and leaves the possibility of combination under-stressed.

In a wide range of societies (Mediterranean and Middle Eastern alike) the public existence of men or groups seems, as it were, to throw a shadow; a private space which each preserves against the others. The men of a Yemeni village or tribal section are 'brothers', which is to say that they all partake in the *sharaf* of the group's eponymous 'ancestor', and it is in these terms that they are opposed to other groups. The men within a section are also 'neighbours' (*jayrān*) who are joined together in that they have a common *ʿarḍ*. This latter word is found in many Arab ethnographies applied to the particular 'sexual honour' which depends on the chastity of a man's womenfolk, but the 'control of women' is only an instance of something more general.[12] In Yemen, where the men are mainly farmers, there is a characteristic area of linguistic uncertainty which associates this 'honour' with the rule of 'neighbour-right' (*juwārah*).

> A private landowner who wishes to sell one of his fields is constrained by *juwārah* to offer it first to members of his settlement group and secondly to his fellow tribesmen (*ya^{c}ruḍ ^{c}ala l-mujāwirīn*).[13]

The verb 'to offer' is from the same radicals as the word meaning 'honour' and *^{c}arḍ* is thus a homonym meaning 'honour' and 'offer'.[14] *Ahl al-^{c}arḍ* are the people whose honour is one's own in a particular circumstance but they are usually precisely the people to whom one offers first refusal on one's land, and both derivations are produced in explanation. But quite apart from particular linguistic clues one can reasonably say that men are united in a section by their land as they are united in a family by their mothers and sisters. I doubt that *^{c}arḍ* can neatly be defined but it is to do with 'togetherness'.

Wherever there is *sharaf*, honour as it is bruited about against others, there is *^{c}arḍ* on which it rests and which it includes. In opposition to others what is one's own is vulnerable, and again there are linguistic parallels which suggest the generality of this fact. For example, the most common word for a woman, particularly for someone's wife, is *ḥurmah* (a cognate of words meaning roughly 'sacrosanct') but it is also said that one of the salient obligations on a tribesman is to defend *ḥurmat al-watan*, which Rossi translates exactly as 'inviolability of territory'.[15] Again, as the importance of women is their chastity so the importance of land is as territory, not to the exclusion of all other considerations but as a man is opposed to others in terms of honour. Public life is organised by such opposition and the way in which words are used can easily suggest that the only reality is in aggression and defence; but in fact the matter is more complex, just as it is with the individual's obligations. A tribe or section has a peace. If, let us say, a man from A is killed in tribe B's territory by a man from C, then it is for B to take revenge or extract amends from the culprits, and these amends would be divided between the victim's kin in A and the men of B in whose territory the murder happened. If B failed to extract amends, they would have to pay A from their own pockets. If A took the matter into their own hands, they would slight B. All of this is comprised in defending one's territory and one's borders, not only standing up to outsiders who may threaten invasion. Nor is a tribe's peace limited to the space within its boundaries - but any offence against a Jew, a 'weak' person, a *sayyid* or anyone else who is protected by the tribe implicates the tribe itself wherever that person may be when he comes to grief.

This implication may or may not be accepted. It is important to realise that if a man from tribe A shoots a man from tribe B, this does not necessarily mean that the whole of A and the whole of B become involved against each other. Between what the analyst may see as the structural implications of an event and the political groupings, if any, which in fact ensue there is a

whole language of giving rifles and livestock, especially bulls, accepting them or rejecting them, raising and lowering various flags and drumming up support. The segmentary proverb, 'myself and my brother against my cousin, myself and my cousin against the stranger', is misleading in that one may join the stranger against one's cousin or be abandoned by one's brother when the stranger attacks.[16] A tribe or section is not a solidary group. The tribe has *sharaf* (that of its eponymous ancestor) but each section has its own and each man also has his own; the general fact of opposition may lead to conflict anywhere and the peace of the tribe is vulnerable not only to external aggression but also to internal disorder. Moreover, although a tribe has *sharaf*, it has no *wajh*; one might say, roughly, that it has no legal personality.

A tribe's commitments are made by the *wajīh* of specific individuals, usually a number of shaykhs.[17] The weekly markets held throughout the northern areas of Yemen will serve as an example. A tribe or group of tribes is responsible for preserving the market peace on market-day and this usually extends to the roads on which people travel to the place. A breach of the market-peace requires amends which are called *hajar al-sūq*, as the amends for breaking a house-peace are called *hajar al-bayt*. For minor infringements this is usually a particular fixed fine but the accepted penalty for major offences is everywhere *bi-l-muḥaddash*; eleven times the blood-money or eleven times the damages with perhaps eleven bulls as well. Half of this would normally be paid to the victim or his people and half to the shaykhs who have signed the document establishing a particular peace. These shaykhs are called the 'guarantors of the market' (*ḍumanā' al-sūq*). It is they who extract amends for anyone who suffers a loss there, and if the victim takes the matter into his own hands, he in turn offends them. The market is *fi-wajīh hum*.

The market itself on market-day is said to be *hijrah*. The same word is applied to a few *qāḍi* ('judge') families who are elevated by particular tribes or sections, and to the *sayyid*s (descendants of the Prophet) who are all *hijrah* from all the tribes but are nevertheless each, according to his family, under the specific protection of a particular tribe or group of tribes. An offence against *hijrah* people is dealt with in very much the same way as an offence against *hijrah* places.

The shaykhs who sign the document which commits the tribe to the protection of a place, event or family, guarantee a specific peace by assimilating their personal peaces to it. Whether the tribesmen will rally to their support if the shaykhs are offended by an outsider is always problematic and whether they will support them against an offence by a member of the group is more problematic still. As we have said, there is no assumption of authority or of the right to coerce. What the shaykhs may do in guaranteeing a market peace (against disturbances from inside or outside the tribe concerned) they do in settling a dispute, and one sometimes hears them referred to in the latter role as

'shaykhs of guaranty'.

> The ***shaykh al-damān*** pays for what has perished, i.e. blood-money, damages of all sorts, etc. He then goes to the shaykh of the guilty man and recovers the blood-money, or damages if it be some different type of offence, from the shaykh of the murderer's group.[18]

He guarantees the loss his men have suffered. In doing so he also guarantees their good behaviour since by his intervention they are taken 'on his honour' and an offence by them, against them or by one of them against another is an affront to him, for which he is entitled to amends. He will often take a rifle from those 'on whose behalf' (*ʿan-hum*) he acts which signifies this relation. The shaykh of the offender's group will take a rifle from those involved on his side. Both shaykhs are then guarantors of their group for the other, for their group to the other and also 'guarantors of the proceedings' together (***dumanā' al-mawqif***). They assimilate their personal peaces to the peace established to compose the problem.

That there is such a peace is shown by the results of its being broken by any of those involved, but there is no one term or phrase to denote it. Neither is it attendant on any one ***sharaf***. If it were, then two sections or two tribes could only resolve their differences in so far as both belonged to a tribe of higher order, as the simpler readings of segmentary theory would suggest, but this is conspicuously not the case in practice. The structure attendant on tribal classification does not specify or determine all the instances of dispute and settlement which arise. The same point needs to be made of tribal meetings where a breach of the meeting-peace requires multiple compensation (as with a market-peace) and all the shaykhs who attend are, ***de facto***, guarantors of the meeting. There is no one word for the meeting-peace but to assume that such a thing exists makes sense of what happens at meetings, and meetings may be convened within or between any combination of groups. They are not confined to A_1 and A_2 meeting as A.

Whether the particular case involves markets, settlements of dispute or meetings, the shaykhs involved guarantee the event and guarantee their men at the same time. The difference between the inside and the outside of a group, which in terms of honour, particularly ***sharaf***, appears to dominate everything which happens, in fact turns out to be of secondary importance from another point of view. What a shaykh does in composing a dispute within his section is very much what he does when representing his section in a dispute with another. He takes a rifle from each of the disputing parties and for as long as he retains the weapons those involved are 'on his honour' (*fi wajīh-hu*). If one of them then offends against the other, he offends the shaykh and owes amends; if one owes compensation to the other it is for the shaykh to extract it; and if the party who is owed

takes matters into his own hands he too offends the shaykh. The parallel between a shaykh's position and that of a householder, host, escort and so forth need not be laboured.[19] If someone breaks the peace he may be said to 'shame the shaykh' or 'shame the proceedings' (*yuʿayyib al-shaykh, yuʿayyib al-mawqif*).

The individual's peace on which his honour depends must be preserved against internal and external disruption alike. The same is true of a tribe's peace or the peace which belongs to no one in particular but arises in resolving a dispute, convening a meeting and so forth. A section shaykh who is successful continually assimilates his own peace to the section peace and guarantees it 'on his honour' - whether against infractions by members of the section or against outsiders, whether within the given bounds of land and dependants or in taking on additional, and honourable, commitments to the defence of markets, 'weak' people, travellers and others. The tribesmen's wish, repeatedly stated, for strong shaykhs makes sense in these terms, terms which are familiar from early English history:

> From Aelfred to Aethelred English statesmen were obsessed by this problem, internal peace against theft and disorder, and external peace against the Danes, and the legal history of the period is largely that of an intense effort to bring about a common peace in a nation where every minister and church, every local assembly, every great landowner and official had his several peace, but where there was no peace of the realm.[20]

Mutatis mutandis it is this effort which is played out repeatedly in every village section and tribe throughout the north of Yemen, and probably always has been. The apparently contradictory wishes for personal freedom and for a strong shaykh are partially resolved when it is realised that the shaykh is wished for less as a ruler than as a *mundbora*; the man whose greater personal peace ensures all the others.

This is no more than the implication drawn from the way the terms are used and things are done. None of the terms, however, can usefully be thought of as a 'concept' or a 'category'. A particular problem of analysis is that the use of words is in itself a public practice and public life is transacted in the terms of honour (in this case *sharaf*) which by their very nature stress the fact of opposition and leave the other possibilities, as it were, in shadow. To stop short of the importance of *sharaf* would leave one with the implication that life was a 'war of everyone against everyone' or, at best, that order was precariously maintained by a wary formality and equivalence. In fact, as Herzfeld puts it, 'the so-called egalitarianism of Mediterranean societies' (which applies also to Arab societies) is 'a nominal equality of access to moral resources'.[21] Behind this appearance lies the possibility of unequal combination whereby one man enters another's peace, or men together have a

peace which is guaranteed by someone else. There is no indigenous theory of a 'social contract' by which the individual is assumed to surrender a portion of his freedom in exchange for order[22] but instead the theory that the several peaces may all be preserved in a greater one. The 'concept' of honour (specifically *sharaf*) may imply that the outside of a group or of an individual's space is utterly different from the inside but the deeper implication which emerges from considering the ways the 'concept' is applied is surely that the two are very much the same.

At the level of 'concepts' and of rhetoric the tribes and the Imams who often ruled them seem incompatible. In the histories, written by religious men of learning, the tribes hardly appear other than as 'warriors in the cause of God' or virtually as infidels - depending on whether at the moment they are with the Imam or against him. Yet it was the tribes which sustained the Imams and which in allegiance would send them hostages, only to find themselves constrained by the Imam in power and their custom often condemned as contrary to Islamic law. The tribesmen seem repeatedly to sell their birthright for very little. The analysis sketched above suggests not a formal resolution of contradictory statements from one rhetoric or another but an approach to understanding the compulsion which repeatedly drove the tribes to such episodes of order. The appeal of the Imamic summons was presumably not that of an autocratic ruler whose honour was augmented by reducing that of others. Presumably it was that of a guarantor who undertook to preserve the several peaces of his followers in the single peace of Islam; internally against disorder, externally against the enemies of religion.

I do not suggest that this analysis is the only one possible, but what is necessary is that something be added to explain the terms and facts as they are given in the ethnography. In the present case the almost dead associations of the English word 'peace' are appropriate because the Yemeni material involves armed men maintaining order against others. In another case another word would have to be scavenged or, especially for purposes of comparing one case with another, an apparatus of italics and quotation marks may be needed. In other cases still a formal notation of opposition and equivalence may be needed. Whatever means are used, the structure revealed provides not only a formal description but an understanding of the compulsions, or even sentiments, which inhere in part of the society.

In many societies the people's own understanding of themselves or the terms in which they live do not form an exhaustive classification. This does not mean that structure cannot be found there. An example from the Greek material drew the comment that

> What remains basic is the question of respect.
> And further, while there may be a definable
> 'concept' of respect, it is not the concept,
> but the sentiment, which informs behaviour.[23]

It may well be that the local term is not used as a concept

and the author is no doubt right to say that, from a certain point of view, it does not inform behaviour. But certainly sentiment does not and never could do.[24] What informs behaviour is what anthropology is in the habit of calling 'structure', and the point is well taken that the structure in a case like this may not inhere in a single local usage or in any simple relation between local terms. How one apprehends it depends, of course, on the particular ethnography, whether one uses the English word 'respect' to start with (suitably italicised perhaps) or starts with terms scavenged from elsewhere, or uses some formal notation.

The fact that something always needs to be added needs to be stressed. However, it is nothing new. The Nuer have ***buth*** and genealogies but what informs their tribal politics is balanced opposition. The Dinka, we are told, experience divinity but a passing mention of ***passiones*** helps explain the way in which they do so. The Purum have ***pu*** and ***tu***, which properly can be called 'categories' (if not concepts), in a way that many indigenous terms cannot, but it is the analyst's contribution that reveals them as one asymmetric dyad among many.

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Notes

1 R. Just, 'Fathers and Fathers-in-Law', ***JASO***, Vol. XI, no. 3 (1980), p. 185.

2 R. Needham, ***Structure and Sentiment***, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1962, p. 96.

3 Linguistic usage is, of course, the essential starting-point. Herzfeld argues cogently that 'inefficient English-language glosses' have obscured much in Greek ethnography and he shows how the 'concepts' of various words in fact vary in their relation to one another from case to case within Greece (M. Herzfeld, 'Honour and Shame: Problems in the Comparative Analysis of Moral Systems', ***Man***, Vol. XV, no. 2 [1979]).

However, he himself deals in terms of 'moral taxonomy' that unavoidably suggests that many of the contributors to ***Honour and Shame***, particularly Pitt-Rivers, were not much aware of what they were doing. Surely neither 'honour' nor 'shame' was ever thought particularly interesting as a (mis)translation, but the important thing was the analytic couple 'honour and shame'.

4 The first Imam was invited into Yemen by a number of northern tribes at the end of the ninth century A.D. The last was driven out of the capital in 1962, left Yemen in about 1970 and now lives in England.

5 This is true of the major tribes, in the north and east of the country, but not of those in the west and south where a similar vocabulary in fact denotes a very different organisation of society. A few of the northern shaykhs are great landowners but their estates are in these latter areas, not in the tribal territory.

6 R. Serjeant, 'South Arabia', in C. Van Nieuwenhuijza (ed.) ***Commoners, Climbers and Notables,*** Leiden: Brill 1977, p. 227.

7 The interested reader is referred to Serjeant's article (***ibid.***) for an account of the different estates of South Arabian society.

8 A parallel case where ***wajh*** apparently means the actual protection offered by a great man is to be found in A. Musil, ***Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins,*** New York: American Geographical Society 1928, ch. 17.

9 Specifications of these terms and many others are to be found in E. Rossi, 'Il Diritto Consuetudinario Delle Tribu Arabe Del Yemen', ***Rivista degli Studi Orientali,*** Vol. XXIII (1948), where most of the salient features of customary law are discussed in some detail. Many of these couples were repeatedly explained to me by shaykhs and others as instances of ***jar/mujawwir***. In passing I would like to acknowledge that the use of 'couple' is due to Tim Jenkins, although if I am abusing it the fault is mine. It means a complementary pair, not an opposition or a dichotomy. As was suggested in footnote 3 above, 'honour and shame' is a couple.

10 ***Ibid.,*** p. 7.

11 It is a commonplace that in a society like that of northern Yemen any injury is, to some extent, also an insult. One can, as it were, have ***injuria sine damno*** but not ***damnum sine injuria***. Even the simplest material compensation is accompanied by something akin to formal apology and this often takes the form of an animal slaughtered as ***ghalāq*** to 'close' the matter.

The use of 'peace' is intended as a means of talking about a structure in Yemeni society and only works, if it works at all, precisely because most of us know so little

about pre-Norman England. Extended parallels are sometimes drawn between particular ethnographic facts and the ideas of famous writers etc. (quite why I am not sure) but that is emphatically not what I am trying to do here.

12 This whole topic has been illuminated in a pair of articles by Meeker which, perhaps because they were published in a journal concerned only with the Middle East, have not come to the attention of anthropologists with different but related interests. They throw particular light on the problem of *ʿarḍ*, a quality which is genuinely nebulous and difficult to grasp (see M. Meeker, 'Meaning and Society in the Near East: Examples from the Black Sea Turks and the Levantine Arabs', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. VII parts 1 and 2 [1976]).

13 W. Dostal, 'Sozio-ökonomische Aspekte der Stammesdemocratie in Nordost-Yemen', *Sociologus* (new series), Vol. XXIV, no. 1 (1974), p. 10.

14 In classical Arabic 'offer' is *ʿard* and 'honour' is *ʿird* but the tribesmen do not give the words the distinctive vowelling which the dictionaries prescribe. Philologists must say on their own grounds what historical relation there may be, if any, between the words and I do not even suggest that the tribesmen think that they are 'one word'. The Yemenis say 'land is honour', *al-ard ʿard* (cf. A. Cohen, *Arab Border Villages in Israel*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1965, p. 56 note 3). Also note *jār-uk al-qarīb wa-lā akhūk al-baʿīd*, 'your neighbour is close while your brother is distant' (cf. *ibid.*, p. 59 note 3).

15 *Op. cit.*, p. 19. The amends for an affront may be referred to as *ghālī hurmat-hu*, 'the price of his honour', but this is, I think, fairly rare. The various uses of *hurmah* probably do not appear to the individual mind as a single 'concept' but the grammatical congruence does point to a genuine similarity.

Rossi's list of ten principal 'obligations' in customary law contains what at first seem quite unrelated 'rules'. They do not form a taxonomy of any kind but instances of something more general which I am trying to approach here by using the word 'peace'.

16 *Anā wa-akhī ʿala ibn ʿammī wa-anā wa-ibn ʿammī ʿala l-gharīb*. This proverb occurs in various forms all over the Arab world. For some of them see under *anā ʿadū ibn ʿammī* in I. Al-Akwaʿ, *al-Amthal al-Yamāniyyah*, part 1, Cairo: Dār al Maʿārif 1968, p. 239.

17 It is interesting to note that in classical Arabic literature great men are often referred to as *wujūh* in such a way that the word could be translated as 'nobles' or 'notables'. The tenth-century Yemeni author, al-Hamdani, uses the word in this way of men who are evidently tribal leaders.

18 Serjeant, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

19 A shaykh gains honour by offering guaranty rather as a householder does by taking in guests. It is for this reason that ***shaykh al-damān*** seems often to be used almost as a rank, where one shaykh in effect claims to offer guaranty for a whole tribe or section to the exclusion of the other shaykhs within it. On occasion I heard shaykhs arguing in these terms about the 'shaykh of shaykhs' of Hashid who is also ***shaykh al-shaml*** (cf. ***ibid.***). The shaykh of shaykhs was claiming to be 'guarantor' for the whole tribe and the others were claiming each to guarantee his part of it quite independently.
Shaykh al-damān is more like a rank in the west where 'pecking orders' of some stability are bound up with questions of tax-gathering and land tenure. In the north ***shaykh al-shaml*** does seem to be a distinctive title in a way that ***shaykh al-damān*** does not.

20 I. Jolliffe, ***The Constitutional History of Mediaeval England,*** London: Adam & Charles Black 1961, pp. 113-14.

21 *Op. cit.*, p. 342.

22 It has been pointed out to me that there may be a 'moral contract'. The concern with something akin to 'morality' is certainly always present where there is a concern with ***ʿard***, but what 'contractual' element there may be (in oaths, promises, and so forth) is essentially between individuals, not between the individual and any representation of 'society'.

23 Just, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

24 I believe certain psychologists say that it does but this does not make it right (nor, to be fair, does it necessarily make it wrong) and presumably what is meant is that sentiment is an efficient cause. It is not a formal cause. What 'informs' things, properly speaking, is surely an idea but for some reason this word now seems to upset people.

PRIDE AND VILIFICATION - TWO TRIBAL VIEWPOINTS[1]

In countries with a tribal diversity, such as the Sudan, one encounters the view that tribalism is divisive and consequently detrimental to the progress of the country. This view is to be found mainly among educated people who dislike the fact that tribalism is still prevalent in the ordering of their lives both in rural areas and in urban centres. But despite their apparent aversion to the persistence of tribalism, these same educated people are proud of their tribal background and they are the first to defend their tribes against criticism. This reaction against tribalism is based on certain controversial assumptions: that tribalism is an anachronistic form of organization and a parochial means of identity, that it creates conflicts and divisions between people, that it perpetuates favouritism, and that it is an unfashionable or a backward way of looking at society. According to the historical and political circumstances of a particular country, it may happen that a colonial power is blamed for the perpetuation of tribalism and the exploitation of tribal differences. The alternative aim expressed by educated people is the creation of a new national identity in which cultural, linguistic and political uniformities should prevail. Nevertheless, it is the case that the same educated people who shun tribalism are seen to act in a manner which not only furthurs the interests of their own tribe, but also inclines towards the prominence of one tribe over others.

In a multi-tribal society such as the Sudan, it is not surprising that people should emphasize or accentuate their tribal identity. The proliferation of tribes is looked upon by people as an interesting cause of social and cultural differences. People conceive of their society in terms of cultural and social

diversity: multiplicity of tribes, languages, religious practices and modes of living. The Sudan has a largely rural population brought up with a deep-rooted tribal awareness as a component part of a person's ideology and social reality such that tribal identity is not easily abandoned and does not run counter to the concept of national identity.

Generally speaking, the pride of people in their tribe leads an individual to defend and to elevate his own tribe if criticized and to demean others, in such a way that the dividing line between fact and fiction becomes blurred. Through time particular tribes have come to be associated with certain labels, accusations and falsifications which have been perpetuated and considered to be a true representation of reality. They have become common beliefs manifesting themselves not only in people's actions but also in their statements and in their folklore. The poems quoted in this paper illustrate how two tribes, the Shaygiyya and the Danagla,[2] make a subjective assessment of each other in terms of their respective backgrounds, achievements and history.

The poetical contest, ***musājala***, between a Shaygi and a Dongolawi, who were friends and well-known poets in the Shaygiyya homeland,[3] took place in the 1940s and pertained to pride in tribal identity, its assertion and the relative superiority of tribal characteristics. This poetical contest involved insult, abuse and vilification, ***shatīma*** or ***ni'ail***, by both poets. The vilification started with the Shaygi poet demeaning the Danagla tribe and glorifying the Shaygiyya. The cause of this literary exchange was that the Shaygi poet had fallen in love with a Dongolawi woman. However, her family refused to give her to him in marriage and quickly married her to a member of her own tribe when the relationship came to be known. The Shaygi poet felt that this was an insult to him as by marrying the Dongolawi woman he considered that he would be doing the Danagla a 'favour'. The Shaygiyya, as a mark of superiority, do not give their women in marriage to Danagla men and the latter are only allowed, as popular Shaygiyya statements stipulate, to marry the ex-slave women of the Shaygiyya. Thus the Shaygi poet would have elevated the social standing of the Dongolawi woman had he married her. However, in marriage tribal loyalty and identity are of primary importance and love is of only secondary consideration. Generally, no Shaygi would give his daughter in marriage to a Dongolawi man and no Dongolawi would give his daughter in marriage to a Shaygi. They are both proud of their tribal identity and both emphasize the exclusiveness of their respective tribe. Though a few inter-tribal marriages have taken place, objections are raised particularly by women and pressure is brought upon people in order to dissuade them from such marital arrangements. Marriage is not looked upon as a matter of personal choice but rather as a matter that concerns all members of an individual's

kinship group. With the constraints of belonging to a closely knit kinship group, it would be difficult enough for a person to marry a woman from another related tribal group, and even more difficult to marry a woman from a different tribe. Among northern Sudanese communities, a crucial assessment made in the process of choosing a bride or a bridegroom is whether a person is ***mu'aṣṣal,*** of known descent or genealogy. A common question is asked about a stranger: ***jinsū shinū*** (literally, what is his race?), meaning what is his tribal affiliation. Such affiliation influences an individual's relationship with others in regard to marriage, as well as in social and economic relationships. Known descent refers to descent primarily from an Arabian tribe which is a matter of pride and respectability. There is boasting among the tribes of the North as to who can claim such descent and the poetical contest opened with the assertion of this claim by both poets.

The poetical duel consisted of five poems: two by the Shaygi poet and three by the Dongolawi poet. The Shaygi poet opened the contest and the Dongolawi poet replied; then the Shaygi poet wrote another poem and the Dongolawi had the last word with two poems. As my intention is to elucidate themes from these poems, the works will not be given in full but couplets or stanzas from these poems will be cited. The themes which I will elaborate are those of descent and genealogy, mode of living, history, character and cultural traditions. I realize that poetry should be translated as poetry but this is difficult to achieve without some divergence from the original text and in my translation I have tried to convey as nearly as possible the meaning of the Arabic.

After the marriage of the Dongolawi woman to a man of her own tribe, the Shaygi poet began his attack on the Danagla tribe by glorifying the genealogy of his tribe in the following line:

We are Shaygiyya and Abbasi[4]

The implication is that the Shaygiyya are ***mu'aṣṣalīn***; they are descendants of Shayg, the founder of the tribe, who in turn is claimed to be a descendant of Al-Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, of Quraysh tribe. Such descent is considered prestigious and the Shaygiyya share this with other tribes chiefly the Ja'aliyyin group who inhabit the banks of the river Nile from north of Khartoum to al-Dabba. The Arabic language is associated with this descent claim. To the Shaygiyya, who speak no other language but Arabic, the Danagla are people of the ***ruṭāna,*** a non-Arabic language, and thus their claim of descent from an Arabian tribe is in doubt. Hence the Shaygi poet berates the ancestry of the Danagla:

You, Dongolawi of lowly origins[5]

to which the Dongolawi poet retorts:

It is obvious your tongue is too long
And you are a thousand miles away from truth
We are the descendants[6] of al-Abbas but we
do not boast
Unlike so many people who falsely claim such
descent and are a burden on al-Abbas
We are the sons of the virgin Fatima[7]
We are also the descendants of the exemplary ten[8]
We are descendants of notables from earlier times
Consult history and look with impartiality
Our genealogy goes back to the Hasanain[9]
It is too well-known[10] to need boasting about.

To the Dongolawi poet the Shaygiyya's claim of descent from al-Abbas is false:

To al-Abbas they (the Shaygiyya) are like a
dummy calf [tolchen in O.E.D.] to a cow
Or like attributing the pyramids to the sphinx

Moreover, the Dongolawi poet debases the Shaygiyya ancestry on the pretext that it is obscure:

All knowledgeable men have agreed
That Shayg's genealogy is obscure
He must be a jinn or a ghoul - we do not know
which
Only his language[11] made people suppose him
human
We are not descended from Bitt al-Jibail[12]

The Dongolawi poet's assertion that the Shaygiyya are not related to al-Abbas does not conform to the statements of the Shaygiyya. From local traditions and genealogies the Shaygiyya relate themselves to al-Abbas through Ibrahim Ja'al who is claimed to be the ancestor of the Ja'ali group of tribes in the Sudan.[13] But the Shaygiyya, like the rest of the riverain tribes of the North, are labelled as Arabized Nubians,[14] a term which implies an intermixture of immigrant Arabs from Arabia with the local Nubian population. Thus there is no contradiction between claiming Arabian descent and being partially Nubian, assuming that the intermixture took place and assuming that the land occupied by the Ja'ali group of tribes was inhabited by Nubians. However, the riverain tribes do not look at themselves in this way: they regard themselves as Arabs. The term Ja'ali with its connotation of Arabized Nubian has been applied to people living as far north as Dongola, the homeland of the Danagla. Holt states that

The most northerly tribes of the Ja'ali Group
lie downstream of the Shaygiyya, between al-
Dabba and the country of the Barabra.[15] Their
homeland is the historical region of Dongola
(Arabic: Dunqula), whence these tribesmen are
known collectively as Danaqla (singular:

> Dunqulawi), i.e. 'men of Dongola'. Among them there is far more consciousness of Nubian origin than among the tribes of the southern Ja'ali Group, and a Nubian dialect continues to be spoken.[16]

The Dongolawi poet denies the lowly genealogy attributed to him by the Shaygi poet in the following couplet which gives credibility to the incorporation of the Danagla within the Ja'ali Group:

> What else can you say against us except that we are Danagla
> The name of our home has nothing to do with our genealogy

It is not my intention here to discuss the validity of the genealogical links claimed with Arabian tribes of the Shaygiyya or the Danagla. However, Holt's classification of the Danagla within the Ja'ali Group does raise the question: how did it come about that the southern Ja'ali Group lost their Nubian dialect or 'consciousness' while the northern Ja'ali Group retained the Nubian dialect and 'consciousness'?

In addition to his denigration of the Shaygiyya, the Dongolawi poet berates the Shaygi poet personally and suggests that he is not a Shaygi:

> I know you forebear by forebear
> History proves that you are not a Shaygi[17]
> The Isayab[18] are kind and helpful people
> When they saw your grandfather passing through their homeland
> They asked him where he came from and he replied: from Wad Hamad
> They made him welcome and among them he settled
> They made him head[19] of a Koranic school and he showed ability
> You and I are strangers in the Shaygiyya homeland
> We do not own a water-wheel[20] or a plot of land

Mode of livelihood features prominently in the contest. The Shaygiyya are sedentary agriculturalists. In view of the relatively wide area of cultivable land along the banks of the river Nile, most of the Shaygiyya are farmers cultivating mainly cash and some subsistence crops. However, a number of Shaygiyya sections are nomadic, roaming the Bayuda Desert: this mode of life does not exist among the Danagla and is looked down upon by both tribes. Moreover, surplus men in the middle age groups among the Shaygiyya tend to leave their villages and seek employment in towns and cities. This is partly due to the limited land available for cultivation and partly to the absence of alternative sources of livelihood in the area. In contrast, migration among the Danagla, like the rest of the Nubians, is more noticeable as the existing agricultural land is more limited than

that of the Shaygiyya. The Shaygi poet belittles the Danagla migratory way of life by praising the sedentary mode of living of his own tribe:

> The Shaygiyya are settled in their homeland
> Tenacious of their leader and their tribal boundaries
> To help those who come round begging, they cultivate bigger plots[21] than they need

Traditionally all the riverain tribes of the North, including the Danagla, grow date-palm trees but the Shaygi poet boasts about the varieties of dates harvested in his homeland:

> They (the Shaygiyya) harvest ***tamūda***, ***kulma*** and ***gundail***[22]

The Shaygi poet is contemptuous of the Danagla way of life; the Danagla's pursuits are not respectable and are looked down upon by the Shaygiyya:

> They (the Shaygiyya) do not pull or moor boats

As boatmen, the Danagla need to store food on their journeys, a custom scorned by the Shaygiyya:

> They (the Shaygiyya) did not carry salted fish[23] nor take other food with them

The Danagla, like the rest of the riverain tribes of the North, are engaged not only in agriculture but also in a variety of occupations at home and much more so in urban centres. However, there are two traditional occupations known to be prevalent among the Danagla which are stigmatized. The Shaygi poet highlights these:

> You (the Dongolawi) are either a boatman or a helmsman
> And if you succeed you become an Englishman's cook[24]

The Dongolawi poet retorts:

> You fool, what is wrong with helmsmen?
> With their intelligence they have conquered the Nile
> They know what is possible and what is not[25]

He is proud of this profession and continues:

> I am a helmsman and the son of a helmsman and I know how to steer a boat with a pole
> And in my boats I was well brought up

The Shaygiyya do not have the experience of the Danagla as boatmen. Hence the Dongolawi poet mocks the Shaygiyya in the following line which implies that the Shaygiyya are afraid of sailing their small boats in the middle of the river:

> And among you are those who pull the small boat

near the river bank

As the Shaygi poet demeans certain aspects of the Danagla way of life, so also the Dongolawi poet shows his contempt of the pursuits of the Shaygiyya. But first the Dongolawi poet claims that if it were not for the Danagla the Shaygiyya would still be backward. Thus he taunts the Shaygiyya and becomes grandiloquent about the Danagla:

You (the Shaygiyya) only know how to clear the mud from the canal
We came to civilize you greatly
You became clean and stopped wearing rags
We are not people who sleep at the foot of date-palm trees
We have taught you to sleep on a bed[26]

The vituperation of the Dongolawi poet is further expressed in demeaning an array of occupations to be found among the Shaygiyya as well as among other riverain tribes:

Among you the wicked tax collector[27]
And among you the lowly builder
And among you the porter with his rope
And among you the cross-pollinator of date-palm trees
And among you the trimmer of donkey's hair[28]
And among you the eulogist[29] with his drum[30]
And among you those who wander in the deserts[31]
And we (the Danagla) did not mix mud[32] in the midday heat

Both among the Shaygiyya and among the Danagla there are people engaged in occupations which are necessary and useful to their society but which are considered lowly occupations by the sedentary agriculturalists of both tribes. Moreover, there is an additional stigma attached to these lowly occupations by members of the other tribe because they are not customary to that tribe. For example, the occupations of boatman and cook are to be found among the Danagla but not among the Shaygiyya but these occupations are necessary and much in demand. Among the Shaygiyya some of these lowly occupations are undertaken by people who are non-Shaygiyya and this has occurred as a result of the developing cash economy. For the Dongolawi poet to include the eulogist among the lowly occupations of the Shaygiyya is surprising since the eulogists referred to in the poem are famous in the Sudan and are respected people among the Shaygiyya and elsewhere.

The Shaygi poet shows his pride in the important people in his homeland:

Among us there are those who are a tribal head and a Branch President[33]
And we have those who are guarded by policemen

The Dongolawi poet replies by asserting the superiority of military ranks among the Danagla:

We are officers and there is no sergeant major
among us

He continues to taunt the Shaygiyya who are traditionally associated with the occupation of policemen and soldiers in the army:

If it is true that you have a police guardsman
Then his only duty is to collect date tax

Another theme dwelt upon by both poets is that of religious education. The spread of Islam in the Sudan came via the missionary work of indigenous people and immigrants. They established Koranic schools, ***khalwas***, and founded religious brotherhoods, ***ṭarīqas***. Among the Shaygiyya were such men of religion who became famous for their piety, zeal and work and who either remained at home or established themselves elsewhere.[34] The Shaygi poet boasts about this achievement:

We read the books of Traditions[35]
And we teach the Koran
And at night the religious institutions[36] are
ablaze with light for the teaching of our
children

To the Dongolawi poet such claim to religious fame is unjustifiable:

You read but you do not understand what Khalil[37]
states
May the words of God be cleansed of you

In evaluating the role of the Shaygiyya and the Danagla in the history of northern Sudan, the Shaygi poet takes it for granted that people already know the heroics of his tribe and thus he says little. The Dongolawi poet, on the other hand, portrays the history of the Shaygiyya in a subjective manner. An important landmark in the history of the Shaygiyya was when the Shaygiyya confederacy became powerful and asserted its independence from the Funj Kingdom of Sennar (1504-1820) during the seventeenth century. It appears that the revolt of the Shaygiyya against the Funj took place in about 1690 after which the Shaygiyya cut off Dongola from Sennar. Later in 1782 they ejected the Funj representative from Dongola and thus the Shaygiyya remained dominant and 'absolute masters of Dongola and the surrounding areas...'[38] Their raids and battles, particularly with the Turco-Egyptian forces in 1820-21, lead the Shaygi poet to say:

Everyone knows the history of their ancestors'
wars
In war we are found in the thick of the fight
We do not retreat from the battlefield
We hurry to rally round the flag

The bravery of the Shaygiyya which is mentioned so often by historians, and their descent and way of life leads the Shaygi

poet to come to the conclusion that:

> Other tribes have copied our tribal markings[39]

The power of the Shaygiyya was checked when the Mamelukes, due to the policy of Muhammed Ali to drive them away from Egypt, came to the northern Sudan after 1811. A number of battles ensued and in collaboration with the Danagla, the Mamelukes succeeded in removing the influence of the Shaygiyya from the Dongola area. It is likely that the humiliation of the Shaygiyya portrayed by the Dongolawi poet refers to this period. He parallels the alleged cowardice of the Shaygiyya with that of their ancestor, Shayg:

> At the hour of decision Shayg says
> You wait here, I want to go and relieve myself

He goes on to shame the Shaygiyya on their performance in battle:

> When the war drum was beaten
> You retreated from the battlefield one thousand miles
> You abandoned the wounded and the dead
> And those who survived became captives
> We have not forgotten your past shame
> You always say: close the line and keep it straight[40]
> But you ran and hid in the water-course
> And the witness to your cowardice are the dom-trees of al-Shikail[41]
> We have compelled your women to sing death songs many times
> And the guide did not know what to do about your child[42]

In contrast to the alleged cowardice of the Shaygiyya, the Dongolawi poet exalts the bravery of the Danagla:

> To our enemy we are like fire and our swords are drawn

The cowardice of the Shaygiyya as portrayed by the Dongolawi poet is not supported by the observations and reports[43] which speak of the Shaygiyya's courage, military superiority and dominance in the region. To give one example, Waddington and Hanbury reported that the Shaygiyya 'are singularly fearless in attack, and ride up to the very faces of their enemy with levity and gaiety of heart as to a festival, or with joy as if to meet friends from whom they have separated....'[44]

The Dongolawi poet is also sarcastic about the Shaygiyya character in respect of two socially esteemed patterns of behaviour, generosity and hospitality. In his description he elevates his own tribe and denigrates the Shaygiyya. Of the Shaygiyya he says:

> You chase after alms[45] like galloping horses
> Even when you have had your fill you also

take the leftovers
You are proud of *kharrūm*[46] and roasted millet
You are so hungry that you eat the unripe dates[47]
You salivate for beer
But the distilled spirit is for us[48]

As for the hospitality of his own tribe, the Dongolawi poet boasts:

Our generosity to those we love is like
torrential rain
We have charitable watering-places[49] by the
road
And we have the guest-room for hospitality
We welcome guests
From the guest we do not run away or waver
God forbid! we do not say it is night when it
is day
We are generous with the little we have

Moreover, the Dongolawi poet reproaches the Shaygiyya for their insincerity:

You do not understand the friend or friendship
And I do not betray a brother or a friend
And I do not tempt my women neighbours at night

The Dongolawi poet's portrayal of the Shaygiyya as inhospitable is a misrepresentation of the reality.[50] Traditionally, among the Shaygiyya, like the rest of the riverain communities, each household contains a guest-room for entertaining relatives, friends and guests. From my experience of living with the Shaygiyya for two years they are generous and hospitable; they value friendship and they welcomestrangers and try to assist those in need of help in any way they can. Politeness and etiquette in the serving of food are strictly observed. The inhospitality of the Shaygiyya may have become a popular myth since I have heard remarks about their inhospitality from members of other tribes who have not been among the Shaygiyya. In comparison with the rest of the riverain tribes of the North, the Shaygiyya are relatively prosperous due to influx of wealth resulting from cash crop cultivation and this prosperity is displayed in their style of life including the way they entertain and look after guests.

The Dongolawi poet wants to demean the Shaygiyya further but refrains on account of his love for his Shaygiyya wife:

Were it not for the beautiful woman
The one with the long hair and the narrow waist
The one with blushing cheeks
The shy one who does not look people in the
eyes[51]

Otherwise, as if the Dongolawi poet had not been offensive enough to the Shaygiyya:

I would have cursed your ancestors
And I would have made your day into night
My language is not like yours, not the
chatter of birds[52]
I care nothing for you or people like you

After this impassioned contest in which both poets make unpleasant statements about the other's tribe, they decided to be reconciled and the vilification ceased. The poems speak of social values and give the outsider a clear picture of esteemed as well as derisive patterns of behaviour. The portrayal of the characteristics of each tribe in the poems is meant to evoke an emotional response since it touches upon the very essence of tribal identity and background. The poetical contest shows how deeply each poet felt about the honour of his own tribe to a point where, in his criticism of the other's tribe, each poet has cared little about falsification of the reality. The poems provide us with ethnographic data of interest and they also illustrate the stereotypes of the Shaygiyya and the Danagla which are challenged by both poets. Each poet shares a common purpose: the glorification of his own tribe and the denigration of the tribe of the other. The defence of and pride in his tribal identity is the duty of an individual and he should seek to counteract accusations or false impressions about his tribe.

My main concern with the poems has been the understanding of their meaning and the elucidation of their implications. Both poets have shown, deliberately or otherwise, pretention and ignorance about the tribe of the other. It could be said for each poet that his own portrayal regarding both tribes is to the other poet a falsification of reality. The stereotypes constructed by both poets, whether based on fact or falsehood, emphasize the social distance between their two tribes and the tribal differences which exist. In the country at large there is a diversity of tribes, each with its own cultural and social characteristics, and the poetical contest illustrates people's awareness of and pride in their tribal background. While both the Shaygiyya and the Danagla tribes have some characteristics in common (e.g. Islam, certain cultural practices, ecological conditions and, to some extent, language) the poems emphasize the distinctive characteristics of each tribe which are important to people in establishing their tribal identity. Whereas the two poets have confused reality with falsehood in the emotional contest of their poetical dialogue, the significant fact remains that two individuals from different tribes have each sought to defend the integrity of his tribe and its honour.

What first provoked this poetical contest was love and a proposal of marriage between two people of different tribes: a relationship which is discouraged. The normal pattern of marriage is for a person to marry within his own tribe. Had there been regular intermarriage between the Shaygiyya and the Danagla, no objection would have been raised to the union of

the Shaygi poet and the Dongolawi girl, and the poems would not have been written. But intermarriage between these two tribes is rare and this maintains their separateness and inequality. The themes I have chosen and illustrated by lines from the poems express poetically a sense of inequality and mutual dislike between members of the two tribes. Thus, in order to exalt their own tribes, the Shaygi and Dongolawi poets must demean each other. An impartial assessment of separate 'equality' is of no interest to either poet. Accepted 'equality' cannot be separate; it has to be proved by a tradition of such intermarriage as the one which, being refused, provoked the poems.

AHMED AL-SHAHI

Notes

[1] My thanks to my wife Anne, Peter Lienhardt and Mahmood Taha Abd al-Gadir who made valuable comments and suggestions. Mr. Ahmed Mahdi has assisted me in collecting poetry from the Shaygiyya region and I am thankful for his help. The Ford Foundation financed my research on the Shaygiyya tribe and the University of Khartoum granted me leave of absence, while I was teaching at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology (1965-1970). My thanks to both. I also thank the British Council for their help in facilitating my passage to Khartoum to attend the Symposium on Folklore and National Development in February 1981 at which this paper was given.

[2] The Shaygiyya and the Danagla tribes are riverain tribes of the North who inhabit the banks of the river Nile. The Shaygiyya are sedentary agriculturalists in the main and inhabit the bend of the Nile in the Northern Province. The Danagla live north of al-Dabba where the river Nile swings northwards and within the same province, and they pursue the same mode of livelihood. However, the Danagla are economically poorer than the Shaygiyya due to the small area of cultivable land in their homeland. Both tribes inhabit the narrow strips of cultivable land on both banks of the river. On the whole, the settlement pattern among both tribes is of a lineal type though in certain cases settlements are located away from the river banks. The Shaygiyya and Danagla number 216,054

and 146,114 people respectively. See: The Republic of Sudan, H.Q. Council of Ministers, Department of Statistics: ***First Population Census of Sudan,*** Final Report, vol. 3, Khartoum 1962, pp. 170 and 174.

3 The Shaygi poet was born in Barkal and had a Koranic school, ***khalwa***, education. He joined Sudan Railways but left in 1943. He is a deputy, ***khalīfa***, in the Khatmiyya religious Order and works as a chief of stores in Kareims for the property of the Mirghani family, the spiritual leaders of the Order. He is a staunch supporter of the Khatmiyya politics. He did not write down his poetry but it is known among the Shaygiyya. Though the Dongolawi poet's family came originally from Dongola, he was born in Merowe East in the Shaygiyya region. His Koranic schooling was cut short and he had to rely on himself and on his brother for the continuation of his education. Like the Shaygi poet, he worked in Sudan Railways and rose to the position of station master. He retired in 1955. He wrote down his poetry himself. I am grateful to both poets for making their poetry available to me.

4 ***'abbābīs***, the descendants of al-Abbas, Prophet Muhammed's uncle, of the Quraysh tribe.

5 ***jinsak/rakhīṣ***, literally: your origin is cheap.

6 ***assig***, also means a date-palm shoot.

7 Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammed who married Ali, the Prophet's cousin. She is described by the enigmatic epithet ***al-batūl***, the virgin. This term is also used for Mary the Virgin.

8 The exemplary ten, ***al-'ashra al-'adūl,*** are thought to be men of religion who were the ancestors of the Danagla tribe and who claimed descent from al-Abbas. They were buried in Old Dongola.

9 Hasanain: is a dual name for Hasan and Husain, the sons of Ali and Fatima.

10 ***asīl***. A literal translation of the line is: It is not shameful if a person is of known descent.

11 Language implies Arabic.

12 Bitt al-Jibail, literally 'the daughter of the mountain'. It is related by the Dongolawi poet that the grandmother of the Shaygiyya was known by the name of Nasira (Naṣīra) Bitt al-Jabal. It is alleged, by the Dongolawi poet, that she was a jinnie and lived at Jabal Barkal. Jabal Barkal is a massive hill on the right bank of the river Nile close to Kareima. The Jabal is an archaeological site consisting of temples and pyramids built during the Napatan period (or the XXV Dynasty) c.725-660 B.C. The implication of this line may be that the Shaygiyya are the descendants of a foundling woman.

[13] These traditions and genealogies were collected by me during my fieldwork research among the Shaygiyya tribe in 1966-7. P.M. Holt's claim that the Shaygiyya tribe 'does not claim Ja'ali origin' is not consistent with the Shaygiyya genealogies. See P.M. Holt, ***A Modern History of the Sudan,*** 1961, p. 7. Genealogies collected by certain writers confirm Shaygiyya's Ja'ali origin. See W. Nicholls, ***The Shaikiya,*** Dublin 1913 and Sir. H.A. MacMichael, ***A History of the Arabs in the Sudan,*** Cambridge 1922.

[14] Holt, ***op cit.***, Chapter I.

[15] The Barabra are the Mahas and Sukkot people who inhabit the area north of Dongola to the Egyptian border.

[16] Holt, ***op cit.***, p. 7.

[17] It is thought that the Shaygi poet belongs to the Hamadtayab, a group of people who claim descent from Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, and known as Bakriyya. However, he considers himself to be a Shaygi. The term Shaygi has acquired a regional connotation: people coming from the homeland of the Shaygiyya, whether they have true or fictitious genealogical links with the ancestor of the tribe, consider themselves to be Shaygiyya.

[18] The Isayab is a large clan of the Shaygiyya.

[19] ***shaikh***, also means a village headman.

[20] ***matara***, technically it means the well on which a water-wheel, ***sāgiya,*** is erected in order to draw water for irrigation. With the introduction of mechanical irrigation, the word now refers to the plot of land irrigated by this method.

[21] The word used is ***ḥaud***, a customary measure of a small plot of land measuring 42 sq. metres.

[22] These varieties, with the addition of ***barakāwī***, are considered the best types.

[23] ***tarākīn***, dry salted fish. The dish made out of salted fish is known as ***malūḥa***. Though this culinary speciality is associated with the Danagla, people of the riverain communities do occasionally eat this dish. Fishing is considered a lowly occupation among the riverain tribes.

[24] Traditionally some of the Nubians, to whom the Danagla belong, are employed as cooks and house servants by Sudanese and non-Sudanese.

[25] The implication of this line is that because of their experience as boatmen they have become proficient in river navigation.

[26] The implication is that the Shaygiyya sleep at the foot of date-palm trees or know only the use of ***'angarib***, a bedstead made of a wooden frame with a seat made of ropes. The poet

uses *al-sarīr* which is considered to be a modern bed and is made of a metal frame with a base of wires. This bed requires a mattress. The view expressed by the Dongolawi poet illustrates line two of the stanza and indicates that the Danagla are more in touch with city life and customs in view of their travels.

27 *hajjānī*: a camel-riding soldier or *'askarī* who is responsible for supervising irrigation canals and for collecting taxes from farmers.

28 *gaṣṣāṣ*: in general it is considered a lowly and grimy occupation.

29 Reference to the famous eulogists, *maddāḥīn*, Awlad Hajj al-Mahi of Kasinjer in the Shaygiyya homeland.

30 *ṭiwair*, diminutive of *ṭār*; a circular hand drum used by eulogists to accompany the chanting of religious praises.

31 *ṭāsh*, wandering and *'atāmīr* (singular *'atmūr*), deserts. The implication is that some Shaygiyya are homeless vagabonds.

32 The plaster which is used for building traditional houses, locally known as *jālūṣ*, is made by mixing mud with straw. It is a specialized but messy occupation and those practising it do not share the same status as farmers.

33 Tribal head, *nāzir*, and Branch President, *ra'īs*. These two offices were part of the dissolved system of Native Administration according to which the riverain tribes of the North were divided into tribes, branches, districts and villages. This system was abolished in 1969 with the exception of the position of *shaikh*, village headman.

34 See Muhammed Daif Allah, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, Cairo 1930. This book contains biographies of holy-men who lived during the Funj Kingdom of Senna (1504-1820).

35 *kutub al-aḥādīth*, books of Traditions which refer to the manuals written by jurists and others. They contain traditions, sayings and actions attributed to Prophet Muhammed, and these manuals became the standard references of the major Sunni sects in Islam.

36 *ma'āhid* (singular: *ma'had*) is a modern terminology which the poet used to describe the modern religious institutions, *ma'āhid dīniyya*.

37 Khalil refers to Khalil Ibn Ishaq known as al-Jundi (d. A.D. 1365) a well-known Egyptian Maliki scholar. He wrote an important manual on jurisprudence by the name of al-Mukhtasar (*Summary*).

38 See W. Nicholls, *op.cit.*, p.21.

39 Tribal markings are known as *faṣāda* or *shulūkh*. Among the Shaygiyya men and women the tribal markings are recognised by the three horizontal lines on each cheek. It is true that

some people who are not Shaygiyya by descent, have adopted Shaygiyya tribal markings. Tribal markings are a means of identity and are considered to be beautiful. This custom is dying out.

[40] The implication is that the Shaygiyya flee from the battle-field.

[41] The implication is that because dom-trees are tall, they are the only 'witness' to the Shaygiyya hiding in the water-course. Al-Shikail is a water-course south of Merowe East.

[42] The implication is that many Shaygiyya men were killed in battle and the guide was perplexed with so many orphans who were trying to identify their fathers.

[43] See F. Cailliaud, *Voyage à Méroé*, Paris 1826; J.L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, London 1819; and G. Waddington and B. Hanbury, *Travels of the Visit to Some Parts of Ethiopia*, London 1822.

[44] G. Waddington and B. Hanbury, *op. cit.* p. 98

[45] *ṣadagāt* (singular: *ṣadaga*): to commemorate the death of a person, an animal - usually a sheep - is sacrificed and the meat is distributed to the poor.

[46] *kharrūm*, Randia nilotica, is a stiff, spinous shrub with leaves usually obovate, flowers usually creamy-white and the fruit is subglobose, crowned by calyx lobes. The fruit is said to act as a fish poison and is a useful emetic. The shrub is to be found in Kordofan, Upper White Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal.

[47] Unripe dates, *ṣīṣ*, usually used as feed for domestic animals.

[48] The essence of the brew, *khulāṣat al-'asīr*, referring to the spirit *'aragī*, brewed from dates. The Danagla area is well-known for the brewing of this spirit.

[49] *sabīl*: a group of large water pots made of porous clay, *azyār* (singular: *zīr*), erected by people in public places or adjacent to their homes.

[50] In one of his poems the Dongolawi poet retracts his criticism of the Shaygiyya as being inhospitable. He considers himself to be a guest of the Shaygiyya and he recalls the generosity shown to him by them:

> God is witness, we made our living with their help
> They are the people of plentiful and limitless wealth

[51] The expected behaviour from a woman when meeting a man.

[52] *kalām ṭair*, literally: bird's speech or language. The under lying meaning of the line is that his description and statements about the Shaygiyya are meaningful and to the point.

WESTERN VIEWS OF IRANIAN WOMEN:

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Up until recent times and even today in many cases, the male experience was considered the universal one and the female version would only be a specific within that larger universal. Outstanding behaviour or nonconformity would be classified as deviational. As a rule, women were not an independent topic of study up until the early twentieth century in the West, and their behaviour, as worthy of attention and investigation on its own inherent merit, only attracted scholars through the initial formation of 'Women's Studies' (and this in the United States) by way of an interdisciplinary approach. Several different fields are now granting independent status to the study of women, and scholars have come to recognize the female experience as an entity apart, with its own related problems and characteristics, not in the manner of an aberration or eccentricity, but as a subject which requires sensitivity and insight if the rich complexity of society is to be understood. This is not to deny that sometimes women's lives may mirror, as in a microcosm, the lives of men, and in turn their larger social structures. But to reduce and limit women in any field to a mere unworthy detail is to condemn them to invisibility, to limit the understanding of human behaviour and disregard their contributions over time.

Turning to the study of women in Iran, women cannot be divorced from other aspects of society and with regard to Western Orientalism, have been a silent and vulnerable target for the perpetration of fallacies and injudicious statements.

There are several factors contributing to this misrepresentation in the past. The first is geographical. Earlier in the century Iran did not conveniently fall into the popular and

specific designations of what Said calls 'imaginative geography'.[1] It was wedged between 'Arabia' (the Arab world), and the Indian subcontinent; it did not conjure up a particular and separate image - the sort of thing that is nowadays ambiguously called a 'culture area'. There was no precise classification of the Iranian people within an identifying and illuminating category apart from the too general term 'Near East'. Notions of Ottoman Turkey or Arab invaders only added to the confusion. Thus up until the oil-boom when a great many of these misunderstandings were hastily rectified, Iran remained a cultural and geographical misfit.

The second relates to the travellers who visited the country early in the nineteenth century. None had been trained to assimilate and analyse their findings and observations. If we are to reckon that modern anthropology began with Durkheim and Malinowski, we realize that the bulk of the turn-of-the-century writings on Iran predate the existence of a satisfactory anthropological methodology. Historians of the time were uninterested in women and concentrated either on the classical period or on aspects of events relating to the West. Iran was far from the mainstream of European thought, and even when the tide of interest turned later in the century, the nation was not immune to the insensitive schematizations and learned disquisitions of Western Orientalism. The threat and spread of Islam had imprinted a latent image of Mohammad as heretic and imposter on the Western mind, and his doctrine was considered to be unacceptably discriminatory to women. A host of missionaries were thus driven to wage individual crusades against this contagious evil. Nevertheless, the bulk of writings concentrated on other aspects of politics and society, and where women do appear, they are incidental. An effort was never made to translate existing Persian documents; only recently, for instance, was the extensive role of women in the Tobacco Uprising of 1892 investigated, and that by a female anthropologist. It can be said, therefore, that the nineteenth or early twentieth century account may be more interesting for the light it shed on the 'expert-adventurer-eccentric' himself, than for the accurate image it would give of Iran. While for one the harem was a 'hell of intrigues and violence', for another is was a '*vrai paradis terrestre*',[2] a haven of erotic promises. This line of thinking evolved, through the process of what Said calls 'intertextuality' or inbred cross-referencing, to persistent modern day fallacies. Penzer, in his classic work on the harem, describes some of these problems in the following way:

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1 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London etc: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1978.

2 Gaspard Drouville, *Voyage en Perse 1812-1813*, Vols. I-II, Pluchart 1819.

> There are perhaps two main reasons why such false ideas have lingered so long in the Western mind. In the first place, so great has been the secrecy which has always surrounded the Imperial 'harem' that first-hand and reliable information was seldom forthcoming. In the second place, the dividing line between fact and fiction, as far as the 'harem' was concerned, was very thin and ill-defined. After all, it had only been popularised in Western Europe early in the eighteenth century, when Antoine Galland first published the *Arabian Nights*, and the public were much too intrigued by the novelty and fascination of the tales themselves to entertain any desire to question the 'mise en scene' or seek to dissipate the clouds of romance and hyperbole that hung so heavily over this newly discovered creation of the Orient.
>
> The vague, and sometimes conflicting, descriptions of travellers that followed, the meagre accounts of English governesses and companions, the letters and diaries of ambassadors' wives or secretaries, were the sole source of information. But even so the number of the intelligent reading public was small, while many of the more important first-hand accounts still remained in manuscript, and had long since found their resting-place amid a host of dusty archives or on the shelves of some State library uncatalogued and forgotten. Thus all kinds of misunderstandings, exaggerations, distortions, and occasionally deliberate fabrications, have merely tended to add confusion to the indifferent and scanty accounts of the 'harem' already existing.[3]

Penzer's criticism may very well seem outdated in the present context (he did write in 1936), but he is nevertheless accurate on the nature of the Western literary and documentary legacy, strains of which have permeated the works of some modern scholars.

Part of the problem lies in the fact that the training of Middle East historians in social theory and methods is an almost exclusively post-World War II phenomenon. Be that as it may, it would seem that the methodological difficulties have been nowhere near so great as the attitudinal ones. To demonstrate the point in question, I refer to an article by Nikki Keddie on 'Problems in the Study of Middle Eastern Women'[4] as well as her recent book, *Women in the Muslim World*.[5] The first is a summary of gaps in methodology in the works of social scientists, and the second is a collection of essays in which the author feels she has overcome

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[3] N.M. Penzer, *The Harem*, London: Spring Books 1936, pp. 13.

[4] *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, No. X. 1979.

[5] N. Keddie and L. Beck (eds.), *Women in the Muslim World*, Cambridge , Mass. and London: Harvard University Press 1978.

some of those shortcomings. My aim is to point out a few of the discrepancies between what is held in theory and what is actually produced, thereby indicating a further underlying set of problems.

One of the main objections to the generic term 'Muslim women' or 'Muslim World' is that they are, like the term Orient, vague, evocative of monolithic images, and unsatisfactory. This is perhaps a modern version of the older 'imaginative geography', an extension of past inabilities to come to terms with the diversity and multiplicity of alien cultures. But in the present context of sophisticated scholarship, the term is rather a source of confusion. One wonders where exactly this 'Muslim world' is situated, and which countries are considered Islamic? If the official religion of a nation is the criterion by which the selection is made, then why are Muslim populations of India, the Soviet Union, Zanzibar and its neighbouring islands - to mention but a few neglected groups - not included in most studies? Furthermore, if the title of a book such as the one in question centers on the word 'Muslim', is it not natural to assume that many, or all of the conditions described are directly attributable to Islam? Where, then, is the place for customary law, departures from Islamic law itself, ethnic and local variations, and a host of other factors which go to make up the social fabric? While similarities undoubtedly exist between these groups, it is helpful to remember that the problem stems from reductive categorization as a consequence of careless attempts to find common, binding laws, not from the reality of the similarities themselves.

For instance, while Keddie cautions in her article against neglecting the consideration of all factors influencing a woman's status, she proceeds to give in her book a composite description of what she calls, 'an "ideal typical" picture of the Muslim Middle East - not an exact description of any group but a distillation of a number of studies which often reveal remarkably similar patterns....'[6] One wonders what could be the use of such an exercise if not to encourage the very same categorization which she has warned us against.

Another contradiction arises from the issue of whether westernization along with modernization has been of benefit to Middle Eastern women. The author's own unspoken assumption is that it has, but the matter is presented in an ambivalent way. In the article she says, 'Imperialists use historical arguments to try to show that women's position in the Middle East was dreadful until these areas came under Western tutelage...'[7] a stance which she decries, while she observes in the book that:

> ...we get a complex picture whereby upper and upper middle class groups closely tied to the West materially and

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[7] Keddie, op. cit. (1979), p.226.

> ideologically have taken important steps to improve the status of women (Turkey, Kuwait and Iran could be added to the relevant countries here) whereas less well off anti-imperialist groups, whose material and cultural interests are often hurt by Western incursions, may become defensive about traditional ways, and seek security in a return to tradition and preservation of male domination.[8]

Later on in her article, Keddie describes this as a 'two-culture' phenomenon, where class and urban-rural gaps are increased, with the benefits mainly affecting the urban upper-classes, with no evidence of a 'trickle down effect'. Keddie does not question this exacerbation of differences as a greater (or at least equal) evil than the progress of materialism and westernization for a limited group of people. Meanwhile, she ignores the fact that there is no real evidence to suggest that Muslim women are any worse off than their sisters in Latin America, Greece, Japan or non-Muslim African countries.

She then proceeds, having diagnosed the problem, to prescribe the usual solutions of legal reform, literacy programs, urbanization, industrialization, extension programs, vocational training, demand for labour and so forth, all of which appear desirable on a theoretical level. Nevertheless no recent empirical evidence from studies carried on in Third World countries necessarily indicates betterment of the woman's lot through these measures. Conditions are steadily worsening for lower-class, working women who at best may have literacy or education without any social options, who are overpowered by the force of religious or customary law in the face of 'legal reforms', who are exploited as cheap labour, dispossessed through industrialization, capitalist penetration, or socialist land reform, and oppressed through class stratification. These are merely a few consequences of imposed measures without a sympathetic appreciation of these women's condition - women who are rarely consulted about what they feel or would wish for themselves.

In her emphasis on methodology, Keddie advocates the use of the 'best social and economic theory of contemporary anthropology', a point which would be well taken were it not for the fact that in the past it has often led to a disregard of cultural attitudes and symbolic and traditional values. As an example, I point out a common misconception regarding marriage customs in the East: earlier on, the exchange of money in the marriage contract had a much greater symbolic connotation than social scientists ever came to understand. The term 'chattel' was a Western invention, and it took years before it was accepted that the exchange of cattle for a woman was not necessarily a demeaning thing - wife-givers have a higher status generally, than wife-receivers. Again, with regard to inheritance, the socio-economic analytic

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[8] Keddie, op. cit. (1978), p. 234.

attitude has been to consider this as all-important, whereas in reality among many Middle Eastern societies, women often willingly forego their rights and through that act obtain the life-time protection of their male agnates. Clearly, these practices break down with the onset of industrialization and they are no longer a reality outside the context of the traditional society of which they are a part. However, the symbolism and attitudes persist, and it is useful to consider these points when writing social history, and when choosing the socio-economic approach.

In her assessment of modern problems regarding the study of women and feminist movements in the East and West, Keddie mentions two important points: ideology and analysis. With respect to ideology, while undoubtedly nationalism or cultural biases are deterrants to the full understanding of history, one must also remember that in many previously colonized countries, nationalism was inextricably tied to women's movements. It is difficult to divorce Huda Sharawi from the Egyptian nationalist movement, or to ignore the greater public role of women during the Constitutional Revolution in Iran for example. In fact, nationalism has been one of the main motives for self-generated female emancipation. This understanding becomes doubly important in understanding the 'backsliding' of a situation like that in Algeria, which is a result of resistance to Western influences through the emphasis of traditional customs and institutions. This would seem obvious enough, were it not for the fact that in Keddie's book, many of her contributors grieve the relapse of Algeria, or Turkey after Attaturk much as a mother would worry over a recovering child, without seeming to comprehend the underlying social and historical factors.

In fact, most of the writers have taken themselves to be the self-appointed judges of a competitive race for a group of 'backward' countries towards the ideals of Western feminism, the most unfortunate aspect of this being that the Middle Eastern women among them are participating in their own 'misrepresentation'. Iran is quoted as having done 'better than' Algeria, and Tunisia is 'the next best' in terms of legal reform etc. In engaging in this race, Middle Eastern feminists have neglected to create their own models, and have propagated beliefs which most often only succeed in dismantling traditional ways without replacing them with viable alternatives. To cite an example, no serious studies have been done of the means of power at the disposal of women in traditional Islamic societies. In the case of Iran, no reference has been made to the practice of 'bast neshestan' (a form of striking, loosely translated), or 'khahar khandegi' (sisterhood-by-oath), decision-making within the domestic unit, resorting to one's own kin (particularly the much feared 'madar-zan' or wife's mother), and the concept of the 'lioness'. The following paragraph by Louise Sweet is illuminating, but is an attitude which has not found favour amongst most feminist scholars:

> Nothing seems to be more difficult than to persuade the commercial Western world that Middle Eastern women were

> never powerless or oppressed or subordinated *as women* any more than their brothers in traditional Arab, Kurdish, Persian or Turkish society or in tribal nomads' camps, in peasant villages, or in urban communities and whether Christian or Muslim. Many of those activities which once were performed by women *within* a distinctive lineage-based householding political economy, with a strong, complementary division of responsibilities between men and women, now have become 'public' professions and occupations. When, as in the past, the 'domestic sphere' of social life is the center of resource control, then indeed the place of women is important.[9]

Lastly, Keddie emphasizes in her article, the need for more anthropological studies on sexual habits as an enlightening avenue to the understanding of women's status, and with this in mind, she recommends Paul Vieille's essay in her own book.[10] Although the truth of this statement cannot be contested, Vieille's statistically-oriented study of 150 households (he does not say where in Iran), with its unsubstantiated syllogistic thinking, falls far short of the mark. He clearly uses his own experience as a reference point, and does not give any information at all as to his methodology, or to the shortcomings or problems encountered in gathering data for such a sensitive subject, proceeding to apply his limited findings to the whole of rural Iran. He refers to popular myths regarding the Orient (Flaubert?) when he claims that the East is 'bathed in a diffuse eroticism', and that sexual politics in Iran have given rise to a 'culture of injury': 'the woman takes pride in her deprivation, she refuses to demand anything of her husband.' For those interested, it is instructive to compare these findings with Fatima Mernissi's detailed study of male-female dynamics where she clearly perceives the female as aggressor and power-figure in Islamic societies.[11]

To summarize briefly, it can be said that current scholarship favours women as an independent topic of study and there is much to be done with regard to the history of women in the Middle East. The greatest problems encountered by Western scholars are not necessarily methodological ones. Greater familiarity with culture and symbolism, as well as attention to the multiplicity of factors which contribute to the composition of the social fabric, should guard against hasty and reductionist conclusions about the nature of Islamic societies. Lastly, an awareness of possible bias due to left-over monolithic images from an older Orientalism may prove invaluable in the understanding of women who have rarely been able to represent their own realities so far.

ROXANE ZAND

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9 L. Sweet, *Many Sisters*, Glencoe: Free Press 1974, p. 379.

10 P. Vieille 'Iranian Women in Family Alliance and Sexual Politics' in Keddie and Beck, op. cit. (1978).

11 Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil*, New York and London: John Wiley & Sons 1975.

LOGICAL GRANDMOTHERS

AHMED AL-SHAHI and F.C.T. MOORE (trans.), *Wisdom from the Nile: A Collection of Folk-Stories from the Northern and Central Sudan*, (with an introduction), Oxford: Clarendon Press 1978. xii, 242 pp., Bibliography, Appendix, Index. £10.00.

In the northern Sudan, village grandmothers and other old folk still pass away some of their evenings telling stories to the children. They may not go on doing so much longer: the folk tradition is already passing away in towns, for much the same reasons as apply here in England. Some years ago, Dr. Al-Shahi and Dr. Moore, one teaching anthropology and the other philosophy at Khartoum University, very sensibly took the opportunity of gathering a body of folk stories while they still could. Conditions were not ideal. Other people had to be relied on to collect most of the stories on the spot, and there were no tape recorders to spare. Hence, the method the editors adopted can easily be faulted; but if people were to wait for the ideal conditions which reviewers sometimes seem to take for granted, or even to demand, little would be done at all and more would be permanently lost than is being lost already. What the present editors did was to ask a group of university students to collect these Arabic stories in their home towns and villages, keeping as closely as they could to the colloquial language and style. Of course, some did better than others.

The fruit of the enterprise is a translation of 71 stories out of 120 collected. Several are variants, and some others share themes and details. As has been usual in The Oxford Library of African Literature, the stories are prefaced by a lengthy introduction.

Translated with a confident mastery of local language and reference, the stories make entertaining reading - more so, in my

view, than quite a lot of the stories in the *Arabian Nights*. They are rich in lively description and unexpected, even startling, detail. Little imaginative touches enliven the narrative:

> When the girl saw her [the ghoul] coming like that, she looked at her in great fear, and refrained from waking Muhammed in case the ghoul should kill him. When the ghoul came near, the girl wept silently and her tears ran into Muhammed's ear, and he woke in panic.

Some stories are complicated and difficult to interpret. Others are plain, like the satirical story of the cat who went on the Pilgrimage and grew long whiskers:

> The pilgrim cat replied: "May God bless you all. I assure you that after my pilgrimage I repented, and decided that I and my children will never eat mice again from now onwards, and that we shall all be friends...." Most of the mice had moved quite a distance from their holes, and some had gathered in circles, and were dancing on their hind legs, and going "Sss, sss, sss, sss!" The grandfather of mice sang out to them: "Put your tails inside your holes. The pilgrim's eye is gleaming red for you."

There is a well-known Persian poem on the same theme (one wonders how often it is quoted in Iran now) where the cat becomes a mullah and leads the mice at prayer. This is the only story in the collection for which I remember such a clear literal variant, but I am no expert in Islamic folklore.

It is not surprising that the prudence of age is one of the themes of these stories that grandmothers tell. The wise old folk mouse saves the young ones from the disaster into which their desire for easy happiness is leading them:

> They wanted to dance and sing, for just that one occasion, free from the fear of cats.

The weak and poor manage to save themselves from the malevolence of the strong and rich, and the happy ending is usually that they become strong and rich themselves. Neglected orphans are ultimately rewarded. In all this, providence plays a great part, but not to the exclusion of courage, determination, ingenuity and prudence.

We learn from the Introduction to *Wisdom from the Nile* that the story tellers often expressed their own views about the themes of the stories, by saying, for example, that they were 'about courage' or 'about cleverness'. It would have been interesting to have these views reported in detail, though some are presumably represented in titles such as *Muhammed the Clever*. I doubt, however, whether these views would have been of much help in interpreting the more complicated stories. For the adult

reader, Muhammed's cleverness is no more than child's play when his is outwitting the ghoul. One could not say the same of a later detail in the story, where we come to the counterpart of fitting Cinderella's glass slipper:

> Then the ghoul attacked with her seventh head, and Muhammed severed it by the roots with one great blow, and she fell wallowing in her own blood. Muhammed the Clever went to the girl and put his ring on her finger. He put his hand in the blood of the ghoul, and dabbed [pressed] it on her thigh.... Everyone who made the claim [to have killed the ghoul] had the ring tried on him and was tested against the [hand] print on the girl's thigh; but they did not match. Finally, Muhammed came towards the Sultan in all his manhood and courage....

The Introduction to *Wisdom from the Nile* includes an ethnographic account of the working life of the people among whom these stories are told, but it tells one little, in ethnographic detail, of their imaginative and moral life. Instead of this, a substantial part of the Introduction is devoted to an imaginative and quite subtle, or at least ingenious, attempt to interpret one group of the stories in terms of dichotomies between marriage in and marriage out, cultivated land and desert, and so on. Incest is identified as the logical extreme of the preferred marriage of parallel cousins, and marrying a jinn or a ghoul as the extreme of marriage to a stranger. Without a better account of the ethnography of the imagination in this area, I myself find it difficult to accept some of the interpretation. The family of Fatma the Beautiful refuse to help her to take a bowl of water from her head unless she accepts their proposal that she should marry her own brother. The interpretative comment is: 'The proposal is shocking in itself, but it is doubly shocking in that it is made as a condition for the simplest act of the farmer's life - the bringing of water to the land.' Quite a lengthy argument about agriculture rests on this interpretation, but people certainly cannot irrigate their fields with bowls of water, and these would seem more fitly associated with the house and the women than with the land.

The editors claim that this breaking of the imaginative code will explain the meaning and the function of the stories:

> These considerations provide an important key to the semantic analysis of our stories and of the story of Fatma the Beautiful in particular. We shall find depicted clearly in a picturesque world of the imagination the problems of marriage in the communities where these stories are told. In fact, it would not be going too far to say that the stories express the theory of marriage in these communities, the theory which professional observers with all their techniques and researches do not always find it easy to penetrate, but which is

> already being grasped intuitively by the young child who asks his grandmother to tell once more the story of Fatma the Beautiful.

This is a big claim, and I myself am not entirely happy about it, more particularly because of its main foundation, a somewhat laboured account of why the preferential system of marriage could not work if it were prescriptive. But it is not prescriptive. Moreover the kinship diagrams used in the argument are all so logical as to be entirely symmetrical. Of course, this can be called an 'abstraction' but what is it abstracted from? Perhaps grandmothers in the northern Sudan, like grandmothers here, ask awkward children, 'What would happen if we all did it?' but even if they do, I doubt whether they spend much time, consciously or unconsciously, speculating on purely logical questions based on premises so remote from experience.

PETER LIENHARDT

BYWAYS IN OXFORD ANTHROPOLOGY

Selections from the Minutes of the
Oxford University Anthropological Society

Members Past and Present: 1. Professor Meyer Fortes

Over its 72-year history the Oxford University Anthropological Society can boast a remarkable list of members and visitors. One name which may be more usually associated with anthropology at Cambridge rather than at Oxford is that of Professor Meyer Fortes, who recently renewed his links with the Society when he gave a talk in May 1980 entitled 'Some Aspects of Sacrifice'. He had mentioned informally beforehand that he remembered that the first public talk he had ever given on the Tallensi was to the Society in 1936 or 1937. He had vivid memories of Marett, Rattray, Evans-Pritchard, and the Seligmans taking part in the discussion.

Before he was invited to begin his talk in May last year the Secretary, as well as customarily reading the minutes of the last meeting, read to Professor Fortes' obvious delight the minutes of the first two meetings he had addressed in Oxford. Though the first meeting was in fact in 1935 his memory had served him well, for the names of Marett, Rattray, and Mrs. Seligman are recorded - along with the usual 'and others' as discussants.

Between this first meeting and the next one he addressed in 1938 Fortes was proposed by his 'older brother' Evans-Pritchard (see Fortes' Foreword to *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, London: OUP 1945, at p. xiv.) as a member of the Society, and indeed had been elected on 25th November 1937. Before the end of 1939 Dr. Fortes was co-opted as a member of the Committee to replace Max Gluckman, who had taken up an appointment in Northern Rhodesia. Fortes' interest in anthropology at Cambridge was soon revealed when at a Committee Meeting in 1940 he reminded the Secretary of his agreement to exchange fixture-cards with the Anthropological Club of Cambridge University. Duties in West Africa prevented him from maintaining his position on the Committee for any length of time, and in October 1941 he was replaced by Professor A.S. Barnes. He had addressed the Society for the third time in May 1940.

In 1943 his name occurs again as a discussant and then in 1944 there was a rush of activity in the Society on his part when he addressed the 404th Meeting on 'West Africa Goes to War', was elected President for the 1944-45 Session at the 408th Meeting (having gained the Committee's nomination for the Presidency

because of his already 'long connection with Anthropology at Oxford'!), and gave the Presidential Address at the 409th Meeting under the title 'Anthropology at the Cross-Roads'. As President he was able to chair only two meetings and one Committee Meeting at which 'It was decided that when the President was re-called to the Gold Coast, vice-presidents should be asked to preside at the meetings.' Before the next meeting he had gone.

Fortes was to address the Society once more before his most recent talk when in 1946 he took the opportunity by giving a talk entitled 'Ashanti Revisited' to praise the work of his predecessor in West African studies, Rattray.

It was to be some 34 years before Professor Fortes returned to Oxford to address the Society; as a former President and therefore a Vice-President for life he was particularly welcome. The quality of the minute-taking at meetings of the Society has varied considerably over the years but on each of the talks given by Fortes there is a summary of sorts. Perhaps one day an enterprising student will endeavour to make sense of the scrawled notes which face the neat minutes of the first meeting Professor Fortes addressed in order to compare those first impressions with the ideas contained in the well-known published writings of one of Social Anthropology's leading scholars.

Society Meetings addressed by Professor Meyer Fortes:

312th Meeting, on 28th November 1935. Sir Charles Harper, President, in the Chair. 'Some Aspects of the Ancestor Cult in a Tribe (Tallensi) of the Gold Coast Hinterland' (illustrated with slides).

337th Meeting, on 3rd November 1938. Miss Grace E. Hadow, President, in the Chair. 'Anthropology and Administration on the Gold Coast'.

371st Meeting, on 23rd May 1940. Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, President, in the Chair. 'Names in West Africa'.

404th Meeting, on 17th February 1944. Dr. William Cohn, President, in the Chair. 'West Africa Goes to War'.

408th Meeting, on 2nd November 1944. Presidential Address, Dr. William Cohn taking the Chair. 'Anthropology at the Cross-Roads'.

426th Meeting, on 13th June 1946. Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, President, in the Chair. 'Ashanti Revisited'.

724th Meeting, on 3rd May 1980. Professor John Beattie, President, in the Chair. 'Some Aspects of Sacrifice'.

JEREMY COOTE
Secretary, 1980-81
Oxf. Univ. Anthrop. Soc.

THE PROBLEM OF DOMINANCE

At the post-plenary meetings on the 'Invisibility of Women' after the International Congress of the Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences at New Delhi, in December 1978, Professor Leela Dube and other organizers kindly invited me to make a few general remarks on themes in various sessions of the main Congress concerning women. The remarks I made then were informal and intended merely to provide a basis for discussion. It would not be appropriate now to accord all of them the permanence of print. I was asked, however, to present a note on one of the general points I raised: the problem of dominance. This will ultimately be published in the proceedings.

In the plenary sessions, there were various accounts of male dominance, some of which seemed at the time to be rather mechanical. Whatever the nature of dominance is, to reveal it will require more than the examination of crude, arbitrary, cruelties or exploitations. Dominance when applied to women is also only patchily related to the economic structure. For example the difference between Euro-American women and peasant Asian women economically and socially is so striking that nothing would seem, on the face of it, more inappropriate than the view of apparently privileged women that they are silenced or invisible. Women learn (as do some men) that progress up a social hierarchy may involve the inevitable acquisition of a privileged status in relation to their former fellows which in itself seems to silence the right of complaint. Professor Srinivas's excellent paper, 'The Changing Position of Indian Women'[1] refers to the increasing 'immurement' of Indian women as the price of the rise in apparent status. We detect parallels with mid-nineteenth century England. A.J. Munby, a Victorian gentleman, made studies of working women in 'dirty' occupations - miners, glue-makers,

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[1] M.N. Srinivas, 'The changing position of Indian women', *Man*, n.s. Vol. XII No. 2 (1977), pp. 221-238.

fisherwomen, and others. He was an odd-man-out among liberals of his day in that he opposed the loss of working women's independent industrial occupations, arduous as they were. When he visited a new secretarial school for girls, he asked whether the constraining of girls into artificial and protected 'lady-like' ways, and into the straitjacket-like clothing of the period, was a gain or a decrease in freedom.[2] It is indeed a fact that there is a kind of independence about working women inside the often exploiting work, which is not necessarily preserved as their material position improves.

Nonetheless it is folly to romanticize the lives of such working women: the independence, cheerfulness, and vigour of individuals who are young and have their health and strength show only one side of the question. Modern middle-class writers often similarly describe the working *child* of the last century as sturdy and independent, and some imply that a serious loss resulted later from education. Of course, the match-selling boy was frequently happy, master (as he might think) of his fate. At the age of fifty, perhaps by then a pauper or broken in health, he would not have thanked you for admiring his independence at eight years of age. In judging the 'happiness' of people with their lot, the whole life must be taken into account. The happiness of the hardworking, 'independent', industrially-employed or peasant woman is likewise precarious and dependent on forces she may not be aware of. In a different way, the lot of élite women in the third world, whose 'happy independence' depends on servants, is also precarious. This lesson was learnt by western middle-class women in our time.

It is as if we have to work through the outer defences of the economic and authority systems of the world before we can even *see* the underlying structures of dominance. That is why women so often must become privileged, with a life-style which, perhaps, a peasant woman would gladly settle for, before they perceive its ultimate nature. Dominance then appears like an intricate silver chain that has lain at the bottom of the sea for so long that it has become encrusted with so many particular exploitations that the basic shape has been hidden. Chip away these objective encrustations by social reform, and only at the end is the intricate final chainwork revealed - still intact.

The problem of dominance is, then, a problem of humanity, and no revolution has ever abolished it. Even the most complete and cruel upheavals, destroying authority structures, amending the channels of power, replacing élites, and eliminating individuals in every walk of life, have left the 'templates' of dominance

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[2] See D. Hudson, *Munby, Man of Two Worlds: The Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby 1828-1910* (London: Murray 1972), for a biography of A.J. Munby, who was psychologically obsessed by working women. Nevertheless, his accounts of their way of life are of great value, and very revealing.

unaffected, able to replicate again in new forms, with new accretions, some more superficially attractive but usually strangely the same. It seems then that authority and power, as generally understood, are not dominance. The charisma of dominance comes from a particular power - that of ultimately defining the world in which non-dominants live. Nothing could be more practical and 'action-based' therefore than a theory of dominance. Robert Hertz[3] showed many years ago how human populations select what may be a very slight, and perhaps in itself trivial disparity, and build elaborations one upon another, until a complex structure of asymmetries emerges. He notes, in his classic example of handedness, that 'The slight advantages possessed by the right-hand are merely the occasion of a qualitative differentiation, the cause of which lies beyond the individual, in the constitution of the collective consciousness'.[4]

If 'An almost insignificant bodily asymmetry' as between the left- and right-hand can be exploited in this way, similarly very slight imbalances in the relations between individuals have become the basis of dominance structures. If these imbalances are persistent and consistent, they are conceptually polarized and are further built upon until they become 'over-determined'. A slight imbalance is thus raised to an imparity, an imparity to an inequality, an inequality to an exploitation, and so on to become the basis for a whole systematization of power. When a set of specific imbalances coincide, the resulting intricate process acquires considerable momentum. The developments become both symbolic *and* action-based, both ideological *and* production-based. The dominance structure always tends to grow as fast and as far as it can. Those of its aspects which involve processes of production are normally the specialization of the historical materialists, who have made useful contributions to this field.

The theory of dominance is not therefore a theory concerned with women alone. It is a theory of the modes whereby societies create the daily realities that their members experience. It is not a branch of anthropology: it is one of anthropology's general theories. The case of women is thus highly instructive: it is perhaps the oldest structural dominance, which has now acquired both decorative and beguiling as well as harsh and occasionally desperate features.

I have time to suggest only one pathway of the structure of dominance as it affects women. There is a certain imbalance of a social kind that occurs between boys and girls in the years about puberty - I say 'social' because it is a mistake to see the imbalance as biological. The 'biological' side lies merely in a set of differences in the chronological age at, and in the physical nature of puberty. Such differences could be potentially

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[3] R. Hertz, 'The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: A Study in Religious Polarity', in R. Needham (ed.), *Right and Left*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1973.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

neutral in social terms. For example, boys pass through critical adolescent experiences at different ages and rates. Yet, on the whole, imbalance between youths in strength, kinds of experience, or sexuality, does not become permanently embedded in their later social life. Between the sexes, however, a similar difference does characteristically develop such consequences. It seems to stem from an absolute difference in the socially-derived significance of choices made by girls and boys in very young adolescence.

In seeking for the roots of this social difference we may note the degree to which self-identification through identification with the parent of the same sex assists in prejudging the issue. The identification of sons with their fathers differs from the identification of daughters with their mothers in a minor respect which, however, plays its part here. The importance of identification in the first few years of life, when the polarity of the parents' roles and occupations may be very marked, should be noted. In imagining herself as her mother, motherhood becomes the earliest female role that a daughter grasps - so that the onset of puberty is easily seen by the girl-child as the entry to motherhood, even if this may conflict with other roles (such as helicopter pilot) which she will later perhaps, be more aware of. In a sense the most demanding human role of all is conceptualized for her first of all - not last of all or simply later on. For the young pubertal male, in contrast, the 'male' roles that impress his imagination are not preempted by his merely impregnating role. His hard education in male competition begins at once. The young, inexperienced, pubertal female can be trapped - even mesmerized - by the sexual and procreative life. It must be emphasised that we are considering very young girls, aged nearer 13 than 18 - an age of choice in which the sexual fate, as wife, prostitute or unthinking follower of an older male, may be embarked upon with a zest which is literally premature. The 'free' pubertal girl is, if you like, readily distractable from following what the male youth already perceives as a race towards self-fulfilment. It is an injustice to tell her later, or at the time, that this, her first choice, *is* her self-fulfilment.

The problem of according or denying free choice to young pubertal girls is the first problem of women. It is an unfair problem - it is life's first socially derived imbalance between the sexes in their fully human role. A conscious humanistic feminism therefore is dependent on a certain structuring of society in advance - that is, on a willingness to encourage the female to forgo a particular freedom on the very threshold of adult life. This is like the child which loses its eight-year-old independence as a street-trader by opting for the disciplines and subjections of education, to avoid paupery in old age. But the harsh dialectic of dominance begins at once. The requirement of special assistance for very young girls through the sexuality trap requires the cooperation of males as well as of older females - neither of whom necessarily find it in their immediate interest to provide it. The assistance required may be minimal,

but the dominance process has begun. Over-elaboration occurs: assistance becomes protection, which becomes over-protection. These begin to develop their own momentum. The males, potentially equal playmates of the girls before puberty, proceed over the hill to participate in the society at large. They can devote energies and time to the sheer excitement of 'creating' society for better or for worse. Girls who were delayed at the trap struggle up later, and try to learn the rules, in which they are already by now allocated their place. No wonder that, even in enlightened days, many generations of being first into the fray have bequeathed males a world which speaks to them without interpreters, which is their own club.[5]

It is unlikely that any group difference of strength between males and females would have affected the issue of dominance between the sexes if the sexuality trap did not tend to introduce an imbalance into the adolescent age-group as a whole, preventing its maintenance as a continuous social entity. The humane 'protection' of girls from a premature sexual choice, leading to 'over-protection', generates an equal and opposite image of female 'vulnerability' on the male side. The males become ideologically stronger and stronger, the females weaker and weaker. The idea becomes event, and daily evidences of its physical manifestation confirm its apparent 'natural' reality. It is quite characteristic of human social semantics that arabesques and detailed elaborations develop from quite simple 'simultaneities' of definition and action. The one chosen here to illustrate this proposition is a minor 'hiccup' in the differentiation of males and females at puberty: that 'absolute' freedom of choice produces totally different ultimate social results between pubertal females and males; requiring, in order to restore parity, some positive social action.

Since this is simply the first of many imbalances in life-trajectories[6] introduced by the reproduction cycle, it would still be likely that structural dominance in the defining of society, and of the cognitive experiences within it, would tend to favour males. Nevertheless, the puberty trap by being the first imbalance sets the structure askew from the beginning. It is suggested that social reform and material betterment, by reducing the 'encrustation' or crude elaborations of dominance, begin to reveal the ultimate 'silver chain', and that that is why western women are more concerned than peasant women about the subject. Peasant women may not even question that the reproductive choice

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[5] See E. Ardener, 'Belief and the Problem of Women' and 'The Problem Revisited', both in S. Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women*, London:Dent/New York: Halsted 1975, and other papers therein; S. Ardener (ed.), *Defining Females*, London:Croom Helm/New York: Halsted 1978. The argument of this paper has special relevance to the theory of 'muting' and the way groups are defined.

[6] For work on life-trajectories see also *Defining Females*, *ibid.*, pp. 40-43.

at puberty is the only life-choice. In the west it is a paradox that 'freedom' has left the 'puberty trap' relatively unattended. 'Reformed' sexual mores have left choices of pubertal females highly imbalanced vis-à-vis those of males.

Yet the dialectic can work in other ways. If the particular effect of the identification of daughters with their mothers introduces a slight disparity between males and females with dangerous possibilities, the identification of fathers with their daughters has its own ambiguous effects. It is often the unexpected source of some female emancipation, providing one reason why changes *do* occur - why, for example, girls' education becomes permitted. Some fathers treat their daughters as surrogate sons. Human love (or ambition) is thus a great emancipator, although the emancipation of daughters in any historical period can expand only as far as the vision of the most indulgent father. It may be that when other historical conditions are favourable, these 'surrogate sons' are poised to be the first to take advantage of them.

It seems that life imposes many kinds of handicaps and disadvantages upon us all, rather like hands of cards for a game we did not choose. Perhaps taking all in all, as far as peasant societies were concerned the supreme importance of progeny and the hard life of everyone in subsistence economies made the power-play of men of little interest and even a thing of fun for women. Perhaps it was the growth of literacy and the storage of information that exaggerated the imparity of the sexes. When the women woke up, the men's game had become a serious matter - they had changed the world. There is surely no need, however, for women to be continuously represented as downtrodden 'invisibles' - a simple mental act of confidence in every situation, as many have discovered, may be all that is required. By something more powerful than that 'bloodless decree' which Engels quaintly imagined to have led to the 'world-historical defeat' of women, both sexes may so act as to reduce each inequality to an imparity, each imparity to an imbalance, and then to dissolve the imbalance into a simple, un-marked, difference. The world would then still contain the empty shells of dominance, but that particular game would be truly over. The problem of dominance within human beings as a whole would not disappear, but perhaps it too would be illuminated.

EDWIN ARDENER

THE THIRD STREAM: WEBER, PARSONS, GEERTZ[1]

'All you need to know is Boas and the French.' Thus did Professor Clyde Kluckhohn advise a group of graduate students in Anthropology at Harvard University during the spring of 1960. By that remark, Kluckhohn presumably meant that socio-cultural anthropology boasts only two significant streams - the American, beginning with Boas and continuing through Kroeber, Lowie, and their successors; and the French, beginning with Durkheim and continuing through British social anthropology to Lévi-Strauss.

Only weeks later, Kluckhohn, still in his early fifties, died. Not long after, Alfred Kroeber, then in his mid-eighties, died also. These events were among the signs of the end of the grand tradition in American anthropology. But in the year of Kluckhohn's death, Clifford Geertz published his first book: *The Religion of Java*.[2] Following a 'the King is dead, long live the King' convention of historical interpretation, one could take Geertz's debut as a sign of a revitalization of the American tradition - a revitalization stimulated through the injection of a third stream, the Weberian.

Regardless of one's view of Geertz's scholarly work, one must accept that he occupies a critical place in the discipline. He is of strategic importance in the rebirth of an American cultural anthropology which by the death of Kluckhohn and Kroeber had already entered a dark age symptomized by excessive devotion

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[1] This paper summarizes remarks made to an Oxford seminar in the history of anthropological theory directed by Dr. Godfrey Lienhardt during Trinity term 1981. I am grateful to Dr. Lienhardt and members of the seminar for comments made during discussion.

[2] Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press 1960.

to certain narrowly technical pursuits and a failure of nerve among those heirs of Boas who aspired to sustain the endeavour of a holistic and humanistic perspective. Without Geertz - or someone like him - the birthright of Boas, Kroeber, and others in the American tradition seemingly would have been sold for thin porridge.

This is the first point. The second is that in reconstructing the American cultural anthropological tradition, Geertz inserted a new element: to Boas and the French he added Max Weber.

Two objections to this assertion come immediately to mind. First, Geertz is not the only anthropologist influenced by Weber. Secondly, Geertz cannot be reduced to the label 'Weberian'.

In response to the first objection, one may simply note that although Geertz is not the only Weberian anthropologist he is perhaps the most influential. Response to the second can follow two lines: the tracing of historical relations between Weber and Geertz and the demarcation of conceptual parallels between the two. The latter is the focus of this essay, but the former can be briefly addressed.

In the dedication of his latest book, *Negara*,[3] Geertz acknowledges the influence of the Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons, who is perhaps the most important English-language translator and interpreter of Weber. Geertz studied with Parsons, and one may surmise that Parsons was an important vehicle in transmitting the Weberian perspective to Geertz. It should be illuminating to compare the perspective of Parsons with that of Weber and Geertz, since Parsons apparently mediated between the two. While such a comparison is of course not sufficient to demonstrate a stream of historical influence from Weber to Parsons to Geertz, still it may help to locate Geertz in an intellectual tradition.

We turn, then, to the comparison, which can be outlined as follows:

WEBER	PARSONS	GEERTZ
Action	*Action*	*Action*
Meaning	*Meaning*	*Meaning*
Geist	*Culture as System*	*Culture as Text*
Society subordinate	*Society subordinate*	*Society subordinate*
Verstehen	---	*Thick Description*
Ideal Type	*Pattern variables and Functional Requisites*	*Ethnographic Type*

[3] Clifford Geertz, *Negara*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1980.

Weber[4]

'Action' (*Handeln*) is, in Weber's conception, not simply an act but a pattern of meaningful acts, and action is the basic unit of analysis. The analyst's first task is to comprehend action in terms of its meaning (*Sinn*) to the actor. Such comprehension entails relating action to a configuration of ideals, attitudes, and values - a spirit or *Geist* - in which action is grounded. The mode of analysis is termed *Verstehen*, which translates simply as 'understanding' but for Weber entails grasping the actor's viewpoint empathetically and analytically, then constructing the logic through which his actions follow from his premises.

When Weber moves from analysis of particular actions to generalization about patterns of action, he does so by means of ideal types. Here Weber proposed a kind of generalization different from the plotting of statistical regularities and the formulation of deterministic laws after the fashion of a kind of social physics. Instead, one abstracts the premises that underlie a pattern of action, then depicts that pattern in a form more idealized or pure than can exist in empirical reality. The point of this is to depict sharply the implication of the logic which underlies the action. Perhaps the best known of Weber's ideal types is the Calvinist-Capitalist, that monster of rationality who expressed the Protestant Ethic by turning 'tallow into candles and money into men into money' in order to prove that he was of the Elect. Weber portrayed such a type in broad strokes in order to exemplify its logic - a point missed by those who nit-pick about his statistics and history. Other well-known Weberian ideal types include the types of authority (bureaucratic, charismatic, and traditional) and the types of rationality (*Zweckrationalität* and *Wertrationalität*). Weber saw the ideal type as ultimately aimed at illuminating the particularities of culture and history. Juxtaposing case and type, one illuminated the concrete by the searing beam of purified abstraction.

Weber resembled the German philosophers (and differed from the French sociologists) in awarding to the spirit - in a word, culture, with a capital K - autonomy from society. He argued, for example, that the Protestant Ethic developed not as a response to social and economic forces but as an independent theological solution which for a while took control over social and economic forces. Society is subordinate to culture.

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[4] The concepts summarized here are discussed in Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1925, Pt. 1 (trans. T. Parsons, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, London and New York 1947).

Parsons[5]

Parsons followed Weber in regarding 'action' as the basic unit of analysis. Like Weber, Parsons based analysis on the premises of the actor, the relation of these premises to action, and their grounding in a system of meanings which Parsons termed the cultural system. Parsons conceived of the cultural, social, and personality systems as forming a 'hierarchy of control' - after the cybernetic model in which information systems control resource systems. The cultural system, defined as a configuration of values, symbols, and beliefs, directs and controls the social system, defined as a network of roles and groups guided by norms. The social system in turn controls the personality system, which is a configuration of id, ego, and super-ego grounded in an 'identity' which links person to role. The three levels are 'analytical', i.e. perspectives employed by the analyst, but they are also considered empirical, i.e. to denote patterns which exist in reality. The three levels are aspects of a single phenomenon - as Parsons put it they 'interpenetrate' - but each is also functionally somewhat independent of the others. Thus, the cultural system solves such problems as defining meaning and morality, while the social system must solve the rather separate problem of avoiding a war of all against all. Because cultural and social problems differ, the patterns of the two systems differ as well, hence advantage is gained by treating the two as distinct before delineating how they interpenetrate.

While conforming to the Weberian 'action' perspective, Parsons placed more emphasis on the 'system', whether cultural, social, or personal. This emphasis led Parsons toward a mode of generalization that differed from Weber's ideal type. The ideal type defined a pattern of action which could conceivably be pursued by the individual (e.g. rational action, ascetic action, this-worldly or other-wordly action), and Parsons criticized such types because they were difficult to integrate into a conception of the total social system. Parsons therefore sought to abstract a set of analytical variables which could be combined in such a way as to define social systems. He formulated essentially two sets of such variables, the first figuring prominently in his work prior to 1960 and the second after 1960.[6] The first were the 'pattern variables', which were defined from the viewpoint of the actor, and the second were the 'functional requisites', which were defined from the standpoint of the system. Pattern variables

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[5] The concepts discussed in this section were set forth in Talcott Parsons' *Structure of Social Action*, New York: McGraw Hill 1937 and elaborated in his later works.

[6] Parsons explains this transition in 'Pattern Variables Revisited: A Response to Professor Dubin's Stimulus', *American Sociological Review* (1960).

(which included such oppositions as particularism/universalism and achievement/ascription) defined the ways an actor could orient toward an object. Functional requisites (adaptation, goal-attainment, integration, and pattern-maintenance) defined all the problems that a system might face.

Verstehen as a mode of empirical investigation does not receive much attention from Parsons, for he did not attempt to formulate a methodology of empirical research. He did more or less follow that approach, however, in his own suggestive empirical analyses.

Geertz

Unlike Weber and Parsons, Geertz has not set down a complete theoretical schema. Instead, he has expounded his perspective ethnographically, especially in his work on Java and Bali, and in essays which have a form more literary than Weber's definitional encyclopedias or Parsons' system diagrams. Still, one may abstract from Geertz an underlying frame of reference.

Geertz would seem to resemble Parsons and Weber in taking 'action' as his basic unit. Thus, he begins his exposition of a programme for ethnographic analysis by comparing the 'twitch' and the 'wink' in a way Weber would compare behaviour and action; a twitch is merely behaviour, while a wink is meaningful behaviour, and as such is the stuff of ethnography.[7] One begins with such actions (or forms) then constructs the layers of culture in which they are grounded and which render them meaningful. Such an approach, which Geertz terms 'thick description', is similar to *Verstehen*, but for Geertz is applied to ethnographic materials drawn from fieldwork as well as to historical materials drawn from documents (whereas Weber dealt primarily with the latter) and with a more explicit reference to culture than in the case of Weber.

'Culture' was defined by Geertz initially in the fashion of Parsons, as a system of logically and meaningfully integrated values, beliefs, and symbols. Later he shifted to the analogy of a literary text - culture as a text to be read over the native's shoulder by the ethnographer - and emphasized an aesthetic as well as a logical mode of integration. The transition is exemplified by comparing his analysis of the Javanese funeral with that of the Balinese cockfight a decade or so later.[8]

Like Weber, Geertz accords the system of meaning a certain autonomy from the social system - an emphasis that British social anthropology, which stems from Durkheimian sociology rather than German idealism, has sometimes questioned.

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[7] This distinction, drawn from Ryle, is explicated in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books 1973, pp. 6-7.

[8] *Ibid.*, chapters 6 and 15.

Like Weber, Geertz proposes a kind of ideal typical mode of generalizing. In his programmatic statement concerning 'thick description', Geertz rejects the search for laws or statistically-grounded statements of regularity, and he proposes instead that cultural anthropology seek to elucidate generalized principles through delicately crafted description which embodies the universal through the particular.[9] What he here proposes resembles Weber's ideal type, now construed to serve ethnography. It also resembles, of course, what much of the more memorable ethnography has achieved, from Evans-Pritchard's Nuer to Geertz's Balinese and Javanese: the way of life summarized and monumentalized through a portrayal that reveals fundamental principles by concrete description.

Where Parsons took Weber toward greater abstraction in accord with the aspirations of sociology, Geertz has elaborated the Weberian viewpoint in accord with the more particularistic strengths of anthropology. Certainly Geertz's contributions are not confined to this elaboration of Weber, but certain core themes in Geertz's viewpoint do match those of Weber. Like Weber, Geertz focuses on the construction of the meaning of action through a kind of interpretative methodology which elucidates the relation of action to culture. Like Weber, Geertz awards culture a transcendent status in relation to social forces. Like Weber, Geertz proposes generalization through the ideal type. Where Geertz elaborates Weber, he carries forward Webrian implications for ethnography. *Geist* becomes cultural text, *Verstehen* thick description, and the ideal type the richly textured ethnographic slice of life, subtly depicted to address universal questions.

Implications

What does Geertz add to Boas and the French? Put more abstractly, what does the Weberian stream add to cultural and social anthropology as these reflect the American and British traditions, respectively?

Social anthropology of the orthodox era in Britain can be exemplified by Evans-Pritchard's laconic explanation of culture. Comparing Muslims and Christians at prayer, Evans-Pritchard observed that the Muslim removed his shoes while retaining his hat, while the Christian removed his hat while keeping on his shoes. The difference is trivial, and it is cultural, said Evans-Pritchard, while the significant pattern which the two hold in common has to do with social structure: a relationship to God.[10] This view of culture as the content of social relationships can be found among other influential British social

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[10] Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology*, London: Cohen & West 1951, pp. 16-17.

anthropologists of the period[11] and, in fact, was adopted by at least one standard Oxford-inspired textbook.[12]

In what might be termed the structuralist or post-structuralist era, British social anthropology became more like American cultural anthropology in the sense that culture in itself came to be regarded - at least by some - as a legitimate object of inquiry. No longer merely a medium of social relationships, culture is now viewed as a structure of categories the logic of which deserves elucidation aside from any implications such categories may have for social function. In this regard, compare Leach's 1954 definition of culture noted above with that implied by the title of his 1976 book: *Culture and Communication, the Logic by Which Symbols are Connected.*[13] This image of culture is similar to that of Weber, Parsons and Geertz, but with a difference. For the structuralist, culture is viewed more as an inert structure, elucidated more in the abstract than in dynamic relationship to actions on which it bestows meaning; it is the latter relationship that is of special concern to the Weberian.

The image of culture projected by the American tradition is difficult to summarize, as Kluckhohn and Kroeber have explained at length.[14] 'Culture' became for the American anthropologists a comprehensive and rather vague label for all that is entailed in human life which cannot be deemed biological or environmental. When Kroeber wrote of 'configurations of culture growth' or Benedict on 'patterns of culture', they portrayed total ways of life, diachronically and synchronically. Weberian theory, carried over into anthropology by Geertz and others, refines this inchoate though fertile conception, distilling from it the ideational component, which it terms 'culture', and distinguishing that from the action component. The distinction then permits a more precise analysis of the relationship between ideas and action.

In sum, a primary contribution to both social and cultural anthropology that derives from the Weberian perspective is a richer conception of the relationship between meaning and action: the character of cultural meaning, the way in which meaning frames action, and the methodology of portraying this relationship through the ethnographic variant of the ideal type. Especially in studies of the complex processes of change in major cultures of the Third World and in the joining of ethnography and history,

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[11] See for example Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1954, p. 16.

[12] Paul James Bohannon, *Social Anthropology* (New York 1963).

[13] Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication, the Logic by which Symbols are Connected: An Introduction to the Use of Structuralist Analysis in Social Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1976.

[14] Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts*, Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology, Vol. XLVII (1952).

as in Geertz's studies of Islam, of Balinese states, of great syncretic civilizations such as that of Java, does the utility of such a perspective become apparent. Stated abstractly, the contribution may seem trivial. Viewed concretely, as embodied in the works, it is significant.

JAMES L. PEACOCK

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OXFORD UNIVERSITY ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The O.U.A.S., founded in 1909, continues to promote interest in all aspects of anthropology. Generally four meetings are held each term to which visiting speakers are invited. For Michaelmas Term 1981 these will be Brian Murdoch, Tsehai Berhane Selassie, Peter Ucko and Brian Street. Meetings for the 1981-82 academic year will be held on alternate Tuesday evenings at 8 o'clock in The Buttery, Wolfson College. Further information is available from the Secretary, O.U.A.S., c/o The Institute of Social Anthropology, 51 Banbury Rd., Oxford.

Officers for 1981-82 are: President, Godfrey Lienhardt, Treasurer, Vernon Reynolds and Secretary, Alaric Pugh.

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STILL FURTHER NOTES ON 'MAASINA RULE'

In a paper recently published in *JASO* Brian Murdoch has usefully expanded on the possibility, raised by Kennedy and noted in a paper of my own, that the ultimate origin of the term that was rendered as 'Marching Rule' in the post-war Solomon Islands was 'Marchant's Rule'.[1] The account of the Marchant/Kennedy period on Gela which Murdoch has reconstructed renders somewhat more likely the possibility that 'Rulu Blong Maasini',[2] as news of it spread from Gela, provided a label 'Are'are leaders could borrow, reanalyse and adapt when they were formulating the ideology of a movement that needed a name.

If that indeed was the ultimate origin of the term, what surely matters more was what the leaders of the movement intended in using the label, and what they told adherents it meant. Virtually all the evidence (including the testimony of Aliki Nono'ohimae, one of the two 'Are'are leaders most centrally involved in creating the movement, to Dr. Daniel de Coppet and to myself, as well as to Allan many years earlier) indicates that they called their movement 'Maasina Rule' to underline the fraternal solidarity central in its ideology. They clearly meant 'maasina' rather than 'Marchant'.

Could the 'Are'are leaders have picked up a term they had heard from Gela, reanalysed it into 'the rule of Brotherhood' on the basis of the similarity of 'Marchant' as rendered in Solomons Pidgin to their own word *maasina*, and used it to label their political movement? And would speakers of other Malaita languages, or other Solomon Islanders, have accepted a word from 'Are'are in place of their own? Murdoch doubts it.

On the latter point, the answer is clearly 'yes': adherents of Maasina Rule accepted a kind of 'Are'are ideological hegemony in matters of custom and language, at least in the early years of the movement. Thus in 1947 the Maasina Rule chiefs presented to the British administration an 'Are'are codification of 'Malaita Custom', based on *araha* and *araha 'ou'ou* ('chiefs' in the hierarchical 'Are'are political organisation, quite atypical of the region), as though it represented the custom and political organisation of all Malaita. On the former point, we need to look at some linguistic evidence.

First, speakers of 'Are'are are apparently given to secondary etymologies, based on what is almost word-play; and they elaborate symbolic equivalences based on homonymy. I have illustrated the 'Are'are permutation of English 'government' into *Kahe-manu*, 'the wings of a bird'.[3] What historically are Proto-

North Malaita forms, **namo*, 'pool' and **ramo*, 'warrior', have phonologically coalesced in 'Are'are as homonyms. 'Are'are symbolism apparently elaborates on their equivalence, as it does with the homonyms *siwa*, 'nine' and *siwa*, 'blood bounty'. The reanalysis of '*rulu blong Maasini*' into '*Maasina rulu*', 'rule of brotherhood', still seems to me to require a considerable leap of the imagination. But it is certainly possible, particularly inasmuch as we have no other suggestions as to why 'Are 'are leaders would have created a label out of a vernacular term, permuted in meaning, and conjoined with an English term. Unfortunately Nori, who would probably have been able to tell us had we probed carefully enough, is dead.

On this point it is worth quoting verbatim a short excerpt from an account I recorded (29 March 1964) from Jonathan Fifi'i. Fifi'i became a close friend of Nori when they served together in the S.I. Labour Corps, and they jointly held discussions with American military personnel. Fifi'i returned to Guadalcanal and was there when Nori and Aliki actually organised the movement. Fifi'i returned to his home in Kwaio when he heard news of the movement, and took part in a crucial meeting with Nori at Sinalagu, where the ideology of the movement was explained to him and to leaders from the Kwaio interior. Fifi'i later became Head Chief for Kwaio, and was imprisoned with Nori. Fifi'i's account, in Solomons Pidgin and here presented with my translation, is as follows:

> Mi hirim nao - nius wē Nori hemi statem waka - disfala sāmting. Nori hemi statem, hemi nemem disfala sāmting 'Maasina Rulu'. Disfala 'maasina', mining long hem long languisi blong 'Are'are, 'barāta'. Oraet, mifala long hia long Kwaio, long toktok blong mifala, 'waasina'. Nao, hemi sei 'Maasina' mini fō everiwane raon long Malaita, mekem mifala olsemu wan barāta. Dei kani kerem nara sāmting fō 'rulu' long languisi blong mifala, an blong 'Are'are. Hemi tanem moa hemi takem wān wate insaet long English, kolem 'rulu'. Nao i minim, mifala everiwane fō Maasina, an mifala rulim mifala fō duem gut sāmting an fō mekem wān maen, fō duem wan sāmting.
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> I heard about it then - the news that Nori had started this work. Nori started it; he named this thing 'Maasina Rule'. The meaning of this 'maasina' in the 'Are'are language is 'brother'. For us here in Kwaio, in our language it is 'waasina'. Now, he said that what 'Maasina' meant was that all the people around Malaita were to be like brothers to one another. There is no way of saying 'rule' in our language or in 'Are'are. So he turned it a different way and used an English word 'rule'. Now what he

> meant was that all of us were to be as brothers, and were to 'rule' ourselves in order to accomplish good work and in order to be of one mind, to work as one.

Maasina itself is straightforward enough. This is the 'Are-'are reflex of a dyadic or reciprocal kin term labelling the relationship between siblings. (Thus, Kwaio ***rua waasina***, 'a pair of siblings', ***rua waiamana***, 'a father and child'.) In this construction ***ma-*** is a reciprocal prefix (Proto-Malaitan ****ng^{w}a-/ng^{w}ai-***); ***asi*** is the reflex of an ancient Oceanic term for 'younger sibling' (Proto-Oceanic ****tansi***); and ***-na*** is a grammatical particle indicating the reciprocal relationship, and similarly ancient in Oceanic. Cognate and very similar terms occur among almost all languages of the Cristobal-Malaita subgroup of Oceanic Austronesian: the languages of Malaita, San Cristobal, and the northest coast of Guadalcanal.[4] Such dyadic kin terms go back at least to Proto-Oceanic, probably to Proto-Austronesian.[5] Most peoples of this area would have recognized that ***ma-asi-na*** is cognate with their own equivalents, and would have understood its reference to fraternal solidarity, once explicated. To others in the central Solomons not speaking Cristobal-Malaita languages, ***ma-asi-na*** would probably have been opaque - and hence unintelligible or open to reanalysis. If Murdoch is correct that the term was an 'Are'are reanalysis of 'Marchant' in 'Rulu blong Maasini', people of Gela and the adjacent Guadalcanal coast might well have interpreted it in the 'original' way when the doctrine arrived from Malaita, as referring to the pre-war scheme of local government.

As I have recently noted, the sources of the ideas that temporarily crystallized in Maasina Rule were diverse.[6] Some apparently came by way of Gela well before Kennedy's and Marchant's venture in administrative reform there. I have published a text in which the Kwaio Maasina Rule leader Anifelo (son of Bell's assassin Basiana) describes meetings held in Gela by the Anglican missionary Richard Fallowes at least as early as 1939. Fallowes urged that Solomon Islanders confront the Protectorate Government tc demand greater local representation and a loosening of the bonds of colonial rule.[7]

In my 1978 paper on this subject I alluded to the formative influence of a government scheme in the 'Are'are District prior to World War II (and contemporaneous with the Marchant/Kennedy scheme) to counter *anomie* and depopulation. I was privileged to share in a conversation in July 1978 in which the co-founder of Maasina Rule, Aliki Nono'ohimae, and a former District Officer, Martin Clemens (who with his colleague Bengough planned and administered this scheme), reminisced about the work of laying out meeting areas, building 'roads', and engaging in collective meetings and civic projects. The formative influence of this scheme on the programme and style of Maasina Rule is unmistakable.

All this is to say that the multiple strands woven into Maasina Rule ideology came from diverse sources, including

earlier cultism, British administrative schemes, Christianity, Fallowes' ideas, and American influence. The ultimate origin of the label 'Maasina Rule', and of other elements, seems less interesting and important to me than the creation from them by Solomon Islanders of an ideology and political framework that were remarkably powerful and impressively successful in the face of repression. Doubtless, just as the 'Are'are founders of this ideology and political order reinterpreted and reanalysed exogenous ideas (as they may have done with 'Marchant's Rule'), so local communities in Gela, Guadalcanal and other islands doubtless reanalysed and placed new constructions on ideas emanating from Malaita.

There is no doubt that, as with the ferment stirred by Rev. Fallowes on Ysabel and Gela in the 1930s and Noto'i's 1939 cult movement in Kwaio, there was widespread local disaffection with the pre-war style of colonial administration in the Solomons well before Maasina Rule. But I have not as yet uncovered or seen in the work of my colleagues, any convincing evidence that when communities on Guadalcanal, Gela, San Cristobal and other islands in the central and southeastern Solomons proclaimed their adherence to Maasina Rule, they saw it as other than a Malaita-based movement whose central leaders were Nori, Aliki, Nono'ohimae and Timothy George. The Guadalcanal Maasina Rule Chief Jacob Vuza, a decorated World War II hero who was exiled to Fiji for his role in the movement (and later knighted) indicated in interviews (which I taped in 1970) that he saw himself as a local leader of a Malaita-based movement, and was closely in touch with his 'Are'are counterparts. The 'unity' of Maasina Rule which Murdoch questions is no anthropologically-created myth; and it is this very unity which makes the movement so interesting.

However, the people on Gela - under sway of the Anglican Melanesian Mission for decades, and with a rather different history of colonial experience because of the proximity of Tulagi - may well have adopted Maasina Rule for their own ends; and they may in fact have used the general climate of disaffection to reassert their commitment to 'Marchant's Rule'. Research on Guadalcanal, San Cristobal, Gela, and other islands in the Solomons is needed to redress imbalances in a Malaita-centred view. I would of course be delighted if Murdoch or others could gather direct oral historical and documentary evidence from such areas. It will have to be done soon, since the number of key participants is dwindling with the passing years.

'Sir Charles Allen', referred to on several occasions by Murdoch, is in fact Sir Colin Allan, able scholar and last British Governor of the B.S.I.P.

ROGER M. KEESING

NOTES

[1]See Brian Murdoch, 'On Calling Other People Names: A Historical Note on "Marching Rule" in the Solomon Islands', ***JASO***, Vol. XI no. 3 (1980), pp. 189-96; D.G. Kennedy, 'Marching Rule in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: A Memorandum on the Origin of the Term', MS. (Rhodes House Library, Oxford), n.d.; R.M. Keesing, 'Politico-Religious Movements and Anti-Colonialism on Malaita: Maasina Rule in Historical Perspective', ***Oceania***, Vols. XLVIII and XLIX (1978).

[2]I write Murdoch's 'Masini' (as a Pidgin rendering of 'Marchant') as 'Maasini' to represent the lengthening of the initial vowel. Unless it had been so lengthened, stress would have been on the penultimate vowel, and pronunciation would not have approached the British pronunciation of 'Marchant'.

[3]Keesing, 'Politico-Religious Movements', footnote 49.

[4]See C. Cashmore, 'Some Proto-Eastern Oceanic Reconstructions with Reflexes in Southest Solomon Island Languages', ***Oceanic Linguistics***, Vol. VIII (1969); A. Pawley, 'On the Internal Relationships of Eastern Oceanic Languages', in R.C. Green and M. Kelly (eds.), ***Pacific Anthropological Records***, No. 12 (1972), [Honolulu: Department of Anthropology, Bishop Museum]; and D. Tryon, 'Towards a Classification of Solomon Islands Languages', Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics, Denpasar, Bali, January 1981.

[5]See R.M. Blust, 'Early Austronesian Social Organization', ***Current Anthropology***, Vol. XXI, no. 2 (1980).

[6]R.M. Keesing, 'Antecedents of Maasina Rule: Some Further Notes', ***Journal of Pacific History***, Vol. XV, no. 2 (1980).

[7]See ***ibid.*** 'That's what we heard from Mr. Fallowes', said Anifelo. 'After that we went back and did the work of Maasina Rule'; he noted that the 'Are'are leaders Hoasihau and Aliki Nono'ohimae were at these meetings called by Fallowes.

BOOK REVIEWS

SANDRA OTT, ***The Circle of Mountains: A Basque Shepherding Community,*** Oxford: Clarendon Press 1981. xv, 220 pp., Bibliography, Index, Ills. £17.50.

The author has used for the title of this book a phrase with which the villagers of her community describe the Pyrenean valley in which they live. In this 'circle of mountains' lies the shepherding commune of Sainte-Engrâce, in the Souletine province of the French Basque country; and the circle, in the villagers' way of thinking, not only defines their locality, but is a principle of fundamental importance which orders several of their systems of social relationships. In taking the circle as her theme the author indicates that the organisation of the book is around one of the people's own concepts and that rather than giving a full ethnographic account of the culture, she has chosen to concentrate on certain selected relationships to which this ordering principle, and cognate conceptions, are basic.

This close analytic focus on a cluster of selected themes thus involves treating only tangentially many of the institutions which are normally given prominence in a full ethnography, but innovations of this kind are to be welcomed when, as in this book, the results are of great interest. The chief institutions covered by the author, as being ordered by the principle of the circle (*üngürü*) and its related conception of serial replacement (*aldikatzia*), are relationships between neighbours and those between members of shepherding and cheese-making syndicates; but in addition there are correspondences between practices in the shepherding syndicate and in the household which are interestingly explored, and which involve the allocation of male and female roles among the shepherds and their participation in a process of conception through the 'cheese' analogy which goes back to Aristotle.

In a shepherding community the concentration on shepherding syndicates is obviously self-justifying, and while the concentration on neighbour relationships at the expense of kinship may strike some as odd, it is clear that neighbour obligations play an unusually important part in the Basque country. Families are known by the names of their houses, and the spatial distribution of the houses prescribes a fixed order of relationships between each individual house and three of its neighbours. Thus each house in Sainte-Engrâce has three 'first neighbours', the house which is conceptually to the right being the first and most important of these, the other two being conceptually to the left. The relationships which exist between each house and any one of its neighbours are governed by accepted norms, and these create, according to each situation, a series of symmetric and asymmetric

relationships which go right round the community. Each house will call on any or all of its three 'first neighbours' for assistance in the maize harvest, pig killing, fern cutting and hay making, as well as in a variety of smaller tasks. However, since the third 'first neighbour' of any one house must respond to 'first neighbour' claims from that house, while not itself having any 'first neighbour' claims on it, the relationship is in this sense asymmetric; and in particular the first 'first neighbour' relationship is asymmetric in respect of two interesting customs, that of giving blessed bread, now obsolete, and that of first 'first neighbour' mortuary obligations, which is still observed. The author deals with these customs in some detail, and I return to them later.

Using this selective focus Dr. Ott has documented a phenomenon of particular interest in the European context, where such asymmetric orderings of obligations are increasingly coming to light. The existence of such patterns in Europe was demonstrated in 1968 by Hammel, and Dr. Ott has added a meticulous and well-observed study which interestingly develops this tradition. Perhaps most important of all, though, she has shown that the cyclic turn-taking systems which have been observed in Iberia and elsewhere can have a symbolic dimension concerned with themes of life and death, and though she is suitably cautious about the narrow range of the symbolic connections which are as yet apparent in the Basque case, her evidence provides a stimulus towards the fresh examination of these systems in Europe. It should however also be said that while these re-examinations may well prove fruitful, they do not entirely cover the question, for the relationship between cyclic symbolism and certain forms of co-operation is not, in my view, constant, and either one of these features is able to occur, according to the cultural context, without the other. Thus it would be good to see also further explorations by Dr. Ott of the Basque symbolism as a theme in itself, for it seems possible that there may be further connections to be brought out here.

The book has, then, explored a specific theme to good effect and a close and somewhat exclusive concentration on the subject has been a necessary feature of the analysis. There are, however, difficulties as well as advantages in this approach, and if I have a reservation about the author's limitation of focus, it is that in her concern with the formal ordering principles of the society she has ignored to quite a large extent the complexities and realities of day-to-day interaction between the people. Thus while we are given a sharp picture of the basic values of the community, we are not shown much of the way in which they actually work in practice. It seems fair to ask, for instance, such a question as whether there is any difference between the quality of help given by a third 'first neighbour' (who cannot claim back any services) and a second 'first neighbour' (who can), and to require in general more detailed evidence for the assertion that 'the expectations and obligations contained within the first neighbour relationship ... are not concerned with

issues from which conflict is likely to arise'.

This problem of conflict is in fact particularly relevant to the author's theme if she wishes to claim, as she does in the conclusion, not only that co-operation is highly valued by the people of Sainte-Engrâce, but also that it is realised in the institutions studied. She does indeed present convincing evidence for such a value playing a prominent role in the society, but the question of the degree to which it is actually realised in everyday practice is not clear in certain crucial respects. Perhaps most strikingly the fact that kinship relations are not studied in detail means that the interplay between kinship and first neighbour obligations is hardly investigated at all, while what is said about conflict in general is rather meagre and difficult to interpret. And while this might in theory be because there is no conflict to comment upon, in fact several incidental references indicate notable instances of tension where co-operative ideals have been infringed. Thus, in the context of the author's claims about co-operation, I would have welcomed a more organised account of quarrels and the management of conflict, even though I recognise that this would have involved her in a wider view of the cross-cutting relationships of the community.

In general, though, the most detailed comments which I have to make open up an area less of criticism than of debate, for these concern a proposition about which there is something to be said on both sides - the author's claim that she has discovered 'the first reported European example of two unilateral systems of exchange defined by asymmetry and moving in opposite directions'.

That she has found one such system, chiefly embodied in the circulation of blessed bread right-handed (or clock-wise) through the community, as each household in turn provided the bread and took it to the first 'first neighbour' on the right, is amply documented. The second and opposite system, she argues, is the fulfilment, by the first 'first neighbour', of mortuary obligations to the bread-giving household, which the people say is in return for the first 'first neighbour' having received the blessed bread. The fulfilment of these mortuary obligations may thus be taken to constitute, according to Dr. Ott, a left-handed circulation of services, although she states quite clearly and honestly that this is something which the people 'consistently and adamantly deny', saying that 'only evil things go to the left'. Despite this denial, however, she continues to affirm the existence of this left-handed circle 'considered abstractly'.

There is indeed a sense in which, considered according to a Western exchange model, it could be supposed that the supply of blessed bread is traded for the distinctive element of first 'first neighbour' mortuary services, causing two opposing cycles of 'goods' to be set up. However, this distinctive element is limited primarily to ritual actions, for all 'first neighbours' offer practical services at death on a symmetrical basis of exchange; and since the fundamental meaning of these first 'first neighbour' ritual services is symbolic rather than economic, it

is arguable how far it is fruitful to treat them merely as part of a system of exchange - this being particularly so if their being treated in this way leads to a direct clash between the categories being used by the people and those being used by the anthropologist. There is thus an important principle of interpretation involved here, which concerns the status of the people's own concepts.

There are, of course, cases in which anthropologists can point out things which the people do not know that, or at any rate do not explicitly state that, they are doing. But in these cases the anthropologist's conception is usually consistent with lower-order native concepts, and where it is not, a special and convincing type of evidence is required to support the anthropologist's against the people's version. However, in this case we are dealing with the definition of symbolic values, and it is hard to see how evidence of a symbolic value can be obtained which is contrary to the people's own definitions, in those cases where these popular definitions occur at the same level of generality. Dr. Ott argues that her left-handed circle is not wholly contrary to the people's definitions, since there is such a thing as 'backwards rotation' (*arra-üngürü*) in the wheat harvest, i.e. reversing the order of turns. But in fact everybody also agrees that *arra-üngürü* does not go 'to the left' - that is to say it is not considered to be a symbolic movement to the left, but only a practical arrangement.

Thus it seems to me that the people's own version - that all ritually enacted movements should go to the right - should in this case be the basis of analysis; and in considering this approach it is not impossible to find an alternative account which Dr. Ott's evidence does not rule out. For instance, an alternative interpretation which fits, I think, with the facts presented, is that the neighbour on the right, in fulfilling her ritual obligations at death in return for the blessed bread she has received, carries out a corresponding act at death by receiving the soul. In both life and death, then, the first 'first neighbour' would act as the medium by which life is passed on, in the one case the bread of life which is passed round the community, and in the other case the soul which is helped on its way to God. And in this context there is a suggestive incident quoted by Douglass in ***Death in Murelaga***, where, because of deep snow, a body was not escorted from the house by (in this case) the priest, and the soul, in consequence, was said to remain 'walking about' the area of its former dwelling. It thus appears possible that the first 'first neighbour' in Sainte-Engrâce could be escorting and reaffirming a right-handed onward movement of the soul, even while she has to go physically to the house on her left to do so, and even while this is considered to be entailed by her having received the blessed bread. This at any rate is a sketch of an alternative interpretation (and there may be others) which makes it unnecessary to posit a second left-handed principle of symbolic transmission which is actively denied by the people themselves.

I have discussed this point as some length because I believe it to be important not only for itself but also for the principles of interpretation which it raises. But this is in itself a tribute to the interest of the issues which are raised here, and although in this instance I would argue in favour of looking for a different interpretation from that put forward in the book, it must be said that it has only been possible to consider the matter in this way because of the author's detailed and honest exposition of the evidence.

All in all this is a book centred on a fascinating topic which, notwithstanding certain limitations in its focus and a somewhat abstract quality in the analysis, is full of good material, sharply observed, clearly organised and pleasantly written. Dr. Ott shows in general a capacity for fresh description and simple presentation of a considerable amount of detail which makes the book both easy to refer to and stimulating to read; and her description of the symbolic pattern of co-operation found in the Basque country undoubtedly provides an important document in the development of this European theme.

JULIET DU BOULAY

J.L. DURAND-DROUHIN, L.M. SZWENGRUB and I. MIHAILESCU (eds.), *Rural Community Studies in Europe: Trends, Selected and Annotated Bibliographies, Analyses, Volume 1* [European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences, Vol.1]. Oxford: Pergamon Press 1981. xi, 332 pp., Maps, Tables. £30.00.

It is a current myth that social anthropologists have devoted their attention to the complex societies of 'the West' only recently. In fact, throughout this century anthropologists and other social scientists have conducted ethnographic and socio-economic investigations in both urban and rural communities. Certainly European communities - especially rural villages - have occupied various sorts of social investigators for over one hundred years. Rev. J.C. Atkinson's *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish*, published in the 1840s, is but one example of the thoroughness of some Victorian amateur ethnographers. Until recently, however, the intellectual history of rural community studies in Western and Eastern Europe has remained largely unexplored. *Rural Community Studies in Europe* brings together, for the first time, the elements of such a history.

This work is the first fruit of a project which was commissioned in 1970 by the European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in the Social Sciences. The project aimed at investigating 'the future of rural communities in industrialised societies'. However, as Galeski and Mendras explain in their 'Foreword':

> it seemed wise, in the first stage of the project, to present what is known about village societies of the different regions of Europe and the importance they have had and continue to have in the economic and social life of the nations of today.

Appropriately, therefore, this book presents a thorough and detailed analysis of 'the state of the art' of rural community studies. It is a compendium of many aspects of research in rural sociology and ethnography which can be consulted with profit by specialists in these fields. Furthermore, its extensive bibliographies and summaries will provide reference resources for years to come. This is not a book with any popular appeal. It is intended as a tool of trade.

The book is described as 'Volume 1', and the editors suggest that more material awaits publication. This volume contains reports on seven countries - Great Britain, Ireland, Poland, Turkey, Rumania, France and Spain. Each report follows

a standard quadripartite pattern. First, there is a historical review of the main trends and styles in the rural literature of the country considered, from the 1920s till the present. Various research approaches are distinguished, and paradigm changes are related to social, political and intellectual developments (especially in Eastern Europe since 1945). Second, chronologically-arranged annotated bibliographies list 'the most representative works in the field'. Third, between five and seven 'outstanding studies' are summarised in detail, according to eleven themes, in an attempt to facilitate comparisons. Fourth, a location map indicates where studies have been made.

All the chapters follow this agreed structure, but their quality varies greatly. As is so often the case with works of this sort, no fully adequate summary or characterisation is possible for the eight contributions, including the 'Introduction'. Ultimately Durand-Drouhin's 'Introduction' is helpful, despite its plethora of glaring proof-reading errors. It distinguishes the two broad social and historical contexts in which rural community studies were conducted during the twentieth century. Before the first world war these studies examined the village social system, as a microcosm of the wider society. In all European countries, except Great Britain, agriculture represented a fundamental activity, and the peasantry still formed a predominant part of society. The village was seen, therefore, as the reduced model of the national community. After the second world war, studies concentrated more upon the social, psychological and economic consequences of technical innovations in the countryside, and on the social, cultural, and political implications of the strengthening relationships between town and countryside.

Durand-Drouhin also poses questions of the first importance about the future of rural communities in industrial settings. He asks what effect immigrants of urban origin will have on local rural culture. He notes how the transformation of agricultural work itself coincides with this demographic trend, as farm work becomes similar to urban-industrial work. Artisan agriculturists - 'the gardeners of nature' - are fast becoming mechanical technicians who are conversant with the economic mechanisms of the Common Market. Another question concerns the impact of the mass media, especially television, on local communities. Television, he claims, has broken local value systems and compelled behaviours. It has introduced a diversity of information which has given local life a national and international dimension. These and other questions raise interesting problems for future research. Each of the reports indicates how these problems have been approached in specific contries.

Some final comments must be made about the editing and production of this volume. The present reviewer tired of noting repetitions, punctuation errors, spelling mistakes and apparently missing lines. Sadly, a helpful book has been marred by sloppy proofreading. One hopes the forthcoming volumes will be edited with greater attention to style. As far as production is con-

concerned, this book is well-bound but the type-face which is too small and bunched up left much to be desired and made this a difficult book to read. Considering that this book retails for £30, the reader could expect a better product than presently he is being offered.

SCOTT K. PHILLIPS

GEORGES DUMÉZIL, *Camillus; A Study of Indo-European Religion as Roman History* (edited by Udo Strutynski; translations by Annette Aronowicz and Josette Bryson), Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1980. xii, 269 pp. £10.20.

Place the second part of *Mythe et Épopée* vol. III together with two appendices from that volume; add two more appendices extracted from *Fêtes Romaines d'Été et d'Automne*; allow four different translators to work this material into English; sandwich this between a long introduction and a bibliographical note, both by Udo Strutynski; index the whole *mélange* and there you have *Camillus*. The result is somewhat offputting at first, especially when one considers the way in which Dumézil's *oeuvre* is being fragmentarily transposed into English. Why hasn't the whole of *Mythe et Épopée* been systematically translated? Or how about *Les Dieux Souverains des Indo-Européens*, or even *Loki?*

The editor informs us that Professor Dumézil himself has had a hand in the selection. It seems that he has exercised this option calculatingly. *Camillus* is practically a new book, one in which a dossier of material dealing with the early Roman dictator and general Camillus is placed before the public. More importantly, the book promulgates a certain type of analysis, one slightly divergent from what we have come to expect from the author. I shall return to the significance of this publishing gambit.

It has been Dumézil's life project to demonstrate the extent to which the linguistically related Indo-European (IE) peoples share a common ideology. In his own words, '...la communauté de langue chez les Indo-Européens impliquait une mesure substantielle d'idéologie commune à laquelle il doit être possible d'accéder par un variété adéquate de méthode comparative' (cited in P. Smith and D. Sperber, 'Mythologiques de Georges Dumézil's *Annales*, Vol. XXVI (1971), p. 560). Much hangs on Dumézil's understanding and use of the term 'ideology'. Writing in 1968 he attempted to clarify the matter:

> I recognized toward 1950 that the 'tripartite ideology' was not necessarily accompanied by a *real* tripartite division of

> that society according to the Indian mode; on the contrary, I recognized that wherever one can establish its presence, the tripartite ideology is nothing (or is no longer, or perhaps never was) but an ideal and at the same time a method of analysis [*moyen d'analyser*], a method of interpreting the forces which assure the course of the world and the lives of men.

This statement amended Dumézil's earlier position which was coloured by his studies of Indian and Persian societies where the hierarchical division of the society according to the three functions of sovereignty (priests), force (warriors) and fecundity (peasants) was real. The western IE branches also evinced tripartition but it was not as firmly grounded in the social structure. In Scandinavia and in Rome for example, the evidence was to be found in the distinct domain of the gods. Odin and Jupiter fulfilled the function of sovereignty, Thor and Mars, force and Freyr and Quirinus represented fecundity.

Dumezil's 1968 reformulation allowed him to slip out of the Durkheimian bind of presuming that social tripartition was anterior to instances of tripartition in religion, literature, geography and other spheres. Although there may have been some feedback and reinforcing which occurred between social structure and other spheres, all cases of tripartition were potentially the direct projections of this ideology onto reality.

Now Dumézil's revised position is not without its dilemmas and repercussions. Whereas in the old scheme tripartite classification was practically a conscious, historical remembrance of the days of IE unity, I doubt if Dumézil would now argue that tripartition was necessarily a conscious mode of classifying. The idealism present in this stance, particularly the way in which a common ideology is suggested by linguistic filiation, remind one of Max Müller's work (especially as seen by M. Crick in his *Explorations in Language and Meaning*, London 1976, pp.19ff.). Not that this is bad; it is just ironic that 'the new comparative mythology' should so resemble the decidedly 'old' comparative mythology.

The substance of *Camillus* is an exploration of the ways in which IE religion (we could say 'ideas') was transformed into Roman history. The central and most convincing example revolves around what Dumézil reconstructs from Ossetic and Indic evidence to be a proto-IE conception (myth) of sunrise. According to this myth the animate forces Light and Darkness were thought to oppose each other constantly. Every morning Dawn expelled the evil Darkness from the sky. Yet night was divided into two (in fact we still divide the night into two - our day technically begins at midnight). The second period of darkness, that proceding sunrise, was thought to be the benevolent sister of Dawn. This Darkness was also the mother of the Sun, and the period just before sunrise was one of gestation during which the Sun matured in her womb. At sunrise the Sun was born and passed into the

care of his aunt, Dawn.

Dumézil shows this myth to be homologous with a certain episode in the career of the general Camillus. During a campaign, he and the Roman army were laying siege to the city of Falerii. A traitorous Faliscan schoolmaster delivered his children to the Roman camp to be used as hostages. Camillus, however, was disgusted by such treachery and had the schoolmaster bound and turned over to the children to be driven back to the city. This act of compassion was appreciated and the Romans and Faliscans became allies. The children saved by Camillus named him father and god.

Additionally, Dumézil observes that a particular ritual of the Roman dawn goddess, Mater Matuta, reflected this same IE structure. In this rite, celebrated on June 11th shortly before the summer solstice, Roman women in their first marriage (*univirae*) took a servant-maid into the secret part of the temple of Matuta and then drove her out again with blows (entrance to the temple was normally prohibited to any slave). The women also embraced their sisters' children in place of their own.

In each case two elements are opposed to each other: light and darkness; Roman camp and Falerii; and the temple of Mater Matuta and slaves. They are forcibly kept separate by the expulsion of any trespasser. But just as the young Sun is cared for by his mother's sister, so Camillus protects the children of others and the Roman ladies do the same.

Camillus was both directly and implicitly linked to Mater Matuta. There are numerous indications that Camillus was under her protection. On being appointed dictator his first act was to promise to devote a temple to the goddess. As long as he attacked at daybreak he and his army were invincible. In one of these battles he is described as being 'clothed in brilliant armor' (*ōplismenos lampros*, Plutarch), language which recalls the shining of the sun. In another place, after a victory, Camillus rode into Rome on a chariot drawn by four white horses. Livy was explicit as to what this act meant: 'They [the populace] were troubled at the thought that in respect to his steeds the dictator was made equal to Jupiter and the sun-god....' A close study of Camillus yields practically as much information on the theology of Mater Matuta as it does about Roman history.

This enquiry into the character of Camillus effectively demonstrates that early Roman history was in part 'constructed' by the annalists. This constructing was informed by inherited IE conceptions. Dumézil does not altogether deny that a Camillus may have lived between 445-365 B.C. nor that many of the acts ascribed to him are separately verifiable through archaeology (i.e. the conquest of Vei). However, a historian such as Livy writing centuries afterwards would have had to depend largely on either folk tradition or his own imagination. Livy says as much himself:

> These events are obscure, not only because of their antiquity, which makes them escape attention because of the great distance from which they are viewed,

> but also because of the meager use of writing, which is still the only means of saving the past from oblivion. But beyond that, a great part of what was preserved in pontificial books, in the state archives, or in individual memoirs perished in the fire which consumed the city. (cited pp.45-6)

Demézil's study of Camillus, if it can be summed up, debunks the idea of history as being only a collection of 'facts'. This is of course annoying to scholars who are interested in 'the complex stratifications of Latin chronicles'. Dumézil rests his case with the words, 'everything written by an established historian partakes in the honors, privileges and franchises of history'.

Camillus interestingly enough does not include that part of *Mythe et Épopée* vol. III entitled 'La geste de Camille' in which Camillus is linked with the three functions. In fact Dumézil's text nowhere includes any reference to tripartition or tripartite ideology. It would seem that his English-speaking audience is being directed back to the roots of his project - an examination of the ways in which common IE ideology unfolds itself in the various inheriting traditions. To my mind - and I don't know if Dumézil would share this - tripartition is only *one example* of the common IE ideology. It is a very rich sub-set or component of that ideology. As *Camillus* shows, there are other isolated myths, traditions and principles which have nothing to do with tripartition and yet which influence the perception of life and of the world in IE cultures. The further study of IE ideology as reducible *solely* to tripartition is an unnecessary handicap or restriction both to our minds and to the richness of IE thought. I would like to think that *Camillus* both provides an example and encourages further exploration of these 'other' principles.

CHARLES STEWART

ELIZABETH EDWARDS and LYNNE WILLIAMSON, ***World on a Glass Plate: Early Anthropological Photographs from the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford,*** Oxford: Pitt Rivers Museum 1981. v, 39 Plates, Bibliography, Map. £2.25.

This booklet contains a selection of 43 photographs from the collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. The collection was started in the last century by Henry Balfour, the Museum's first Curator, and is still growing. For example, two of the photographs we see here were donated to the Museum in 1975 though they were taken *circa* 1895.

The photographs are from America, Europe, Asia, Oceania and Australia (a map locates the people concerned), each with details of the people and aspects of their culture and environment relevant to what is portrayed. It is impressive to see what the compilers can compress into two or three short paragraphs.

There is a Foreword introducing the collection, the techniques of 'wet plate' and 'dry plate' photography, and some of the possibilities and problems facing the anthropologist trying to make use of early photographs. Though there are obviously immense difficulties with regard to making inferences about a people's system of social relationships and beliefs from a photographic record, even with intensive field experience in the area, such records should be preserved just in case they can be of use, even if only illustratively. And we should be grateful to the Pitt Rivers Museum for maintaining their collection and allowing us this glimpse of some of it.

Apart from their possible anthropological use these photographs, and presumably others in the collection, are worth preserving as photographs, both with regard to an appreciation of the history of photography and its practicians, and to be enjoyed in themselves. To pick a favourite, Plate 30 of the gallery of a Kayan long house in Baram River, Sarawak in 1895, though not as clear as one might hope for, is a fascinating mix of light and shade and distance, with features catching one's eye right down the gallery.

Can we now hope for an exhibition, perhaps travelling, of the Pitt Rivers Museum collection of early anthropological photographs and the publication of more of them?

JEREMY COOTE.

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JASO

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CONTENTS

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*The Editors of *JASO* are pleased to publish the following article on Durkheim by the late Professor of Social Anthropology in the University of Oxford. This is the tenth article written by E-P that has appeared in *JASO*, six of which - including the article on Durkheim below - have now been printed together with other essays in a new collection published by Faber and Faber. We are grateful to Faber and Faber for their permission to print the article on Durkheim in this form, which has been compiled by André Singer, E-P's research assistant at the time of his death. It is printed here exactly as received from Dr. Singer.

EVANS-PRITCHARD ON DURKHEIM

Professor Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard was in the course of writing A History of Anthropological Thought *when he died in September 1973. This work was based on the lectures he had given in Oxford on those thinkers who most greatly influenced the development of British social anthropology. He was anxious that his work survive him, and it was his request that, in the event of his death, I complete it for publication.*

This article on Durkheim is based on a paper that Evans-Pritchard gave to a seminar organized by Steven Lukes at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1971. It remains Evans-Pritchard's last unpublished serious essay and it goes considerably further in its ethnological criticism than anything he wrote earlier. During the editing of this essay for the volume A History of Anthropological Thought *(just published - in September 1981 - by Faber and Faber) I have incorporated some of Evans-Pritchard's notes from his lectures and some comments from his* Theories of Primitive Religion *in order to round off an incomplete paper. The final result is not what Evans-Pritchard would have written, particularly in the light of Lukes' own work on Durkheim* (Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work, 1913), *but despite its inadequacies it is with some satisfaction that it now appears in* JASO *in the same manner that Evans-Pritchard was following with the other articles that have made up* A History of Anthropological Thought.

André Singer

DURKHEIM (1858-1917)

Certainly among the most potent influences on British anthropological thought were the writings of Emile Durkheim, professor of social science at Bordeaux and later professor of sociology and education in Paris. Apart from the French heritage he received from Montesquieu and Comte, the philosophers Boutroux and Renouvier, and the historian Fustel de Coulanges, he was profoundly influenced in his earlier writings, as is especially evident in his *De la Division*, by Herbert Spencer. We must always remember too that Durkheim, like all of us, was a child of his time - a Frenchman of the Third Republic. France had passed through many vicissitudes, and patriotic Frenchmen keenly felt the need for national moral regeneration. Democracy (including a strong trend towards socialism), secularism, and positive science were the key ideas and ideals of the period. We have also to bear in mind Durkheim's rabbinical background. He played a big part in public life and was a notable propagandist in the 1914-18 war.

In this chapter I am concerned with Durkheim's theory of the origin of religion as presented in *Elementary Forms* in order to draw attention to the very serious inadequacies, from the ethnological point of view, in Durkheim's work.

Durkheim wished to discover the origin of religion; he was not prepared to accept that it was just an illusion as Tylor would have it in his animistic theory, and he found equally unacceptable the naturalistic theory of Müller and others. Religious beliefs correspond to something real; not, it is true, to what the believers think is real - gods, spirits, ghosts, souls; but to society itself or its segments or its individual members symbolized by such concepts. According to Durkheim, the Central Australian aboriginals, being the most primitive people known to us, demonstrate for us religion in its most elementary form, totemism. But though the totemic creatures are sacred, their sacredness is secondary to certain stylized emblematic designs representing them, carved on oblong pieces of wood or polished stone, called *churinga*. It is these objects which represent in symbolic form the sentiment of clan solidarity, and which give to each member of a clan a sense of dependence on that collectivity. They are a sort of clan flag. And these designs, according to Durkheim, are symbols in particular concrete representations of an impersonal force, an essence or vital principle, what he calls the totemic principle; a force which to us would be abstract but for the Australian is concrete. So religion arises out of social life itself, and we see how in Australia it is generated by periodic ceremonies in which members of a clan work themselves into hallucinatory states in which their faith is renewed in the reality of what are in fact only symbolic representations of their own social cohesion.

When Durkheim came to write the *Elementary Forms*, he was already totally committed by his earlier writings to a theory of the origin of religion. What makes one raise one's eyebrows is the fact that though in his essays on totemism and related subjects he shows that he was well conversant with much of the ethnological data on

Australian aboriginals, there is no hint in them of the conclusions reached in the *Elementary Forms*. Whence came the illumination? Could it have been that the Australian data, because of its poverty, gave Durkheim a suitable illustration of a theory already propounded in his mind? I think so. Anyhow, as Van Gennep (1920, *L'Etat actuel du Problème Totémique*, p. 49) says, Durkheim more or less equates 'religion' with 'social and Malinowski (1913, *Folklore*, p. 425) also complains that for Durkheim 'The distinctive characters of social and religious phenomena practically coincide'. So we must say a few words about his general approach to the study of social phenomena.

Very briefly, and therefore perhaps to Durkheim's disadvantage, it is as follows. Man is born an animal organism and his intellectual and moral qualities are not only the creation of society but *are* society in him; and they are traditional (transmissible), general (to all members of his community), and above all obligatory. Religion has these features and is therefore simply another aspect of society. Had Durkheim had any other theory of religion than that which he put forward in his book he would have had to go back on his whole sociological position. It follows that not only are religion and society the same but also the mental categories and society. On this point Goldenweiser (1915, p. 732) complains that in Durkheim's view these categories 'are not merely instituted by society, but they are, in their origin, but different aspects of society. The category of "genus" finds its beginning in the concept of the human group; the rhythm of social life is at the basis of the category of "time"; the space occupied by society is the source of the category of "space"; the first efficient "force" is the collective force of society, bringing in its wake the category of "causality". The category of "totality", finally, can only be of social origin. Society alone completely transcends the individual, rising above all particulars. The concept of totality is but the abstract form of the concept of society: society is the whole which comprises all things, the ultimate class which embraces all other classes.' It has often been said, and with some justification, that Durkheim reified society; so Malinowski (1913, p. 528) in his review of *Elementary Forms* remarks that society is written about by Durkheim as a being endowed with will, aims and desires: 'an entirely metaphysical conception'.

Durkheim claims that totemism is a religion on the grounds, in the first place, that it is sacred, which is for him anything protected and isolated by interdictions, and in the second place that it is a set of beliefs and practices of a social group, a collectivity, what he calls a church. Now, Durkheim can, obviously, define religion by what criteria he pleases - it is then religion to him; and he can start from premises which give him his already formulated conclusions about it, since they are already contained in the definition. But what if others do not accept his criteria? Frazer, for example, at least in his later writings, put totemism in the category of magic and not of religion. Schmidt (1931, p. 115) observes of *Elementary Forms*: 'The question was asked how it was possible not merely to defend the religious character of

totemism, as this book does, but actually to exalt it to the position of the source of all religion, at a time when all other researchers were more and more definitely denying any connection between totemism and religion whatsoever.' And this is what Goldenweiser (1915, p. 725) has to say on the matter: 'Having satisfied himself that all the elements which, according to his conception of religion, constitute a true religion, are present in totemism. Durkheim declares totemism to represent the earliest form of a religion which, while primitive, lacks none of those aspects which a true religion must have. Thus is reached the culminating point of a series of misconceptions of which the first is Durkheim's initial view and definition of religion. For had he given proper weight to the emotional and individual aspects in religion, the aspect which unites religious experiences of all times and places into one psychological continuum, he could never have committed the patent blunder of "discovering" the root of religion in an institution which is relatively limited in its distribution and is, moreover, distinguished by the relatively slight intensity of the religious values comprised in it. In this latter respect totemism cannot compare with either animal worship or ancestor worship, or idolatry, or fetishism, or any of the multifarious forms of worship of nature, spirit, ghost, and god. Several of these forms of religious belief are also more widely diffused than totemism and must be regarded as more primitive, differing from totemism in their independence from any definite form of social organization.'

As is of course well known, neither Durkheim nor his colleagues and pupils had any first-hand knowledge of the primitive peoples they wrote so much about. Unfortunately in this book he was led astray in essential particulars by Robertson Smith: that religion is a clan cult; that the cult is totemic; that the god of the clan is the clan itself divinized; and that totemism is the most primitive form of religion known to us. On all these points, as has been seen, Robertson Smith's assertions could hardly be substantiated by the ethnological facts, either wholly or even in part, and, strangely enough, least of all in the Semitic field in which he was so eminent a scholar.

One of the most serious initial confusions in Durkheim's book is his ambiguous use of the word 'primitive'. In what sense the Central Australians can be called 'primitive' will be touched on later. Here I want to suggest that Durkheim, who was too clever to fall blindly into the trap, tried to safeguard himself by saying that he did not use 'primitive' in a chronological sense but only in a structural sense; this was just a trick, for he was too much under the influence of Herbert Spencer not to equate in his thought the two senses and to seek in what he regarded as the structually most primitive the most primitive in time. But to regard the Central Australians as being more primitive in time than anybody else is meaningless. And to seek in their religion - if it can be so regarded - the origin of religion, a sort of primordium, was a pointless endeavour. In any case the origin of an institution does not explain it, especially when the origin cannot be known! And

what is the evidence that religion originated in totemism, or for that matter in any one particular way rather than in many ways? Durkheim was certainly a sociologistic monist.

I think it is significant that Durkheim was a militant atheist, not just an unbeliever but a propagandist for unbelief. Religion therefore presented a challenge to him. He had to find some sort of explanation of what is a universal phenomenon in both time and space, and could only do so in terms of the sociological metaphysic to which he had irretrievably committed himself. In the light of his standpoint animistic and naturistic explanations of religion could not be accepted, both accounting for religion as one or other form of illusion (though it is difficult to see how society is any more or less objective than a dream or conceptions of the heavenly bodies).

What is totemism? This is a problem Durkheim never faces. It is usual to suppose that it is the association of an animal or plant species, occasionally a class of inanimate objects, with a social group, and typically with an exogamic group or clan. But this is a matter of definition. According to Radcliffe-Brown, totemism is a special form of a phenomenon universal in human society; it arises out of the dependence of hunting and collecting peoples on what they hunt and collect. Being a pseudo-historian, he believed that clan totemism arose from some such general attitude when social segmentation took place. All this is of course speculative nonsense. Then, certainly the totem of the North American Indians, from whom, after all, the word 'totem' is derived, is something very different from what Durkheim is talking about with regard to the Arunta of Central Australia. The African data - Durkheim just ignores what does not fit into his picture - are phenomena so different from what has been recorded about the Arunta that it is difficult to say more than that the same sort of label has got attached to what might appear to be the same but are in important respects quite different. The whole matter is what Van Gennep calls a bit *'touffu'*. Van Gennep lists dozens of theories supposedly explaining totemism (1920, p. 341), including Durkheim's *'Emblématique-Collectiviste (sociologique)'* - he puts him (1920, p. 4) in the broad *'Nominaliste'* class with Herbert Spencer, Andrew Lang and Max Müller.

Goldenweiser (1915, p. 725): 'Nor does Durkheim's discussion of the relative priority of clan totemism carry conviction. Here his facts are strangely inaccurate, for far from it being the case that "individual totemism" never occurs unaccompanied by clan totemism, the facts in North America, the happy hunting-ground of the guardian spirit, bespeak the contrary. Whereas that belief must be regarded as an all but universal aspect of the religion of the American Indian, it has nowhere developed more prolifically than among the tribes of the Plateau area who worship not at the totemic shrine. To regard the belief in guardian spirits, "individual totemism", as an outgrowth of clan totemism is, therefore, an altogether gratuitous hypothesis!'

Durkheim held that one well-controlled experiment is sufficent to establish a law. This is a very dubious assertion with regard

to the natural sciences; with regard to the human sciences it cannot be sustained. Malinowski (1913, p. 530) correctly observes: 'Theories concerning one of the most fundamental aspects of religion cannot be safely based on an analysis of a single tribe, as described in practically a single ethnographical work.' Again (1913, p. 526): 'Nevertheless, to base most far-reaching conclusions upon practically a single instance (the Arunta) seems open to very serious objections.' Goldenweiser (1915, pp. 734-5) likewise comments: 'The selection of Australia as the practically exclusive source of information must be regarded as unfortunate in view of the imperfection of the data. The charge is aggravated through the circumstance that the author regards the case of Australia as typical and tends to generalize from it.' Again (Goldenweiser, 1915, p. 723): 'While the author's rejection of the comparative method deserves hearty endorsement, the motivation of his resolve to present an intensive study of one culture arouses misgivings. For thus, he says, he might discover a law. Applicable as this concept may be in the physical sciences, the hope itself of discovering a law in the study no matter how intensive of *one* historical complex, must be regarded as hazardous.'

In any case, was the experiment well controlled when the ethnographical evidences were so muddled and inadequate as to range between doubtful and unacceptable? Goldenweiser (1915, p. 723) justly says: 'Also from the point of view of the available data must the selection of Australia be regarded as unfortunate, for, in point of ethnography Australia shares with South America the distinction of being our dark continent. A more instructive study in ethnographic method could be written based on the errors committed by Howitt and Spencer and Gillen, as well as Strehlow, our only modern authorities on the tribes from which Durkheim derives all his data.' Durkheim relied almost entirely on what Spencer and Gillen wrote about the Arunta, and as the matters he was discussing largely involved linguistic issues it is pertinent to remark that I can discover no evidence that either of these men were able to speak the native language of the people they wrote about. And here I must quote a statement by Mr. Strehlow the younger (1947, p. xvi), whose knowledge of the Aranda (Arunta) language is unquestionable. He wrote: 'I have sometimes felt that the anthropologists of the past tended to overemphasize the differences between the Australian natives and ourselves; and this, I venture to suggest, has been due largely to the language barrier between them and their informants. Too often traditions and customs were noted down in their barest outlines; and the details were later filled in by the scientists themselves according to their own conception of what the natives' ideas ought to have been on certain subjects. In other words, the parched skeletons brought back from necessarily brief field excursions were often covered with flesh and skin in the private studies of the anthropologists, and then presented to the public as living representatives of Australian natives, voicing suitably primitive sentiments. This earlier "primitivist" attitude of scientists may be illustrated by a condensed paragraph from the introduction

to the account of the well-known Horn Expedition to Central Australia in 1894. Here the scientific attitude to the aboriginals is summed up over Horn's own signature as follows: "The Central Australian aborigine is the living representative of a stone age who still fashions his spear-heads and knives from flint and sandstone and performs the most daring surgical operations with them. His origin and history are lost in the gloomy mists of the past. He has no written records and few oral traditions. In appearance he is a naked hirsute savage, with a type of features occasionally pronouncedly Jewish. He is by nature light-hearted, merry and prone to laughter, a splendid mimic, supple-jointed, with an unerring hand that works in perfect unison with his eye, which is as keen as that of an eagle. He has never been known to wash. He has no private ownership of land, except as regards that which is not over carefully concealed about his person.... Religious belief he has none, but is excessively superstitious, living in constant dread of an Evil Spirit which is supposed to lurk round his camp at night. He has no gratitude except that of the anticipatory order, and is as treacherous as Judas. He has no traditions, and yet continues to practise with scrupulous exactness a number of hideous customs and ceremonies which have been handed from his fathers, and of the origin or reason of which he knows nothing.... After an experience of many years I say without hesitation that he is absolutely untamable.... Verily his moods are as eccentric as the flight of his own boomerang. Thanks to the untiring efforts of the missionary and the stockman, he is being rapidly "civilized" off the face of the earth, and in another hundred years the remaining evidence of his existence will be the fragments of flint which he has fashioned so rudely."'

I have made it clear (Evans-Pritchard, 1965, pp. 64-5) why I think the dichotomy between the 'sacred' and the 'profane' is a false one, and that I have never found it of the slightest value in my field research. Obviously, for dialectical purposes, Durkheim had to make a rigid opposition between the two categories, for if there is to be a 'sacred' there must be a 'profane'; but this is a conceptual, not empirical, antithesis. And are the concepts ours or those of the Australian aboriginals? Malinowski (1913, p. 526) very correctly asks a question: 'A sharp division into things sacred and profane may hold for the Central Australians. But is it universal? I feel by no means persuaded. In reading the detailed monograph by Dr. and Mrs. Seligmann about the Veddas, no such division is suggested as existing among that extremely primitive people. Again, it would be difficult to maintain the existence of such a separation among the Melanesian peoples of whom we have very copious records.' I think that Durkheim was here generalizing from his own Semitic background.

Furthermore, this black and white antithesis does not allow for the grey. This is more or less what Stanner, who claims (1967, p. 225) that Durkheim (1967, p. 229) seriously misunderstood Australian social organization, says about the aboriginals of the north: 'The dichotomy is an over-simplification.' It is 'unusable except at the cost of undue interference with the facts

of observation.' Again (1967, p. 127): 'I have found it impossible to make sense of aboriginal life in terms of Durkheim's well-known dichotomy "the sacred" and "the profane".' Then (p. 109): 'The more closely the category of 'the profane' is studied the less suitable it appears.'

Also, as, according to Durkheim, almost everything among the aboriginals, both people and the natural world in which they live, is sacred in some degree, it is difficult to see what strictly can be called 'profane'. Nor does Durkheim deal adequately with the fact that totems are sacred only to some people and not to others of the same community.

Durkheim was an evolutionary fanatic who wished to explain social phenomena in terms of pseudo-historical origins. Hence arose one of his most serious blunders, a blunder in both logic and method. He held that since the Australian aboriginals were the least technologically developed people in the world, their religion - totemism - must be regarded as the most primitive we have knowledge of. Herein lies a whole string of unsupportable, even stupid, assumptions. In the first place, it cannot be sustained that a simple material culture and bionomic way of life necessarily mean the absence of a highly complex language, mythology, poetry, and so forth. All the evidence is to the contrary. And what then are we to say about peoples just as simple, or even simpler, in their material culture than these Central Australian aboriginals but who are not totemic at all? Why did not totemism blossom from their technologically undeveloped condition? Long ago Van Gennep (1920, p. 49) pointed out that totemism is not found among peoples even lower in the scale of civilization than the Central Australians, e.g., Bushmen, Vedda, Andamanese, the tribes in Central Brazil. I quote Goldenweiser again (1915, p. 723): 'Australia is selected for the primitiveness of its social organization (it is based on the clan!) with which a primitive form of religion may be expected to occur. That at this stage of ethnological knowledge one as competent as Emile Durkheim should regard the mere presence of a clan organization as a sign of primitiveness is strange indeed.'

Durkheim had to accept that beside their totem beliefs the aboriginals about whom he was writing had conceptions of the individual soul and of gods, and he tried to explain them in terms of his general theory. The idea of the soul is nothing more than the totem principle incarnate in each individual, society individualized. There follows a splendid passage by Durkheim; but it must be soberly asked whether, even if we grant some meaning to 'totemic principle', it is possible to establish any general connection between totemism and the idea of the soul. There may indeed often be some such conceptual association among peoples who have totems, but what about the peoples who do not have totems? Since according to Durkheim the *'principe totêmique'* is the sole basis of all religion there is justification in Sidney Hartland's remark that since the idea of the soul is universal the idea of the totem must be too. But totemism is not universal.

As for the gods, or spiritual beings, Durkheim thought that

they must have been totems at one time; and he explained them as idealized representations of the totality of clan totems within a tribe, a totemic synthesis corresponding to the synthesis of clans within a tribe. Durkheim adduces no evidence at all that the gods were once totems; and his structural explanation may indeed be neat, but it is little more than that. P.W. Schmidt (1935, p. 117) was right to observe that the South East Australians, whom he regarded as having an older culture than the Arunta, 'have either no totemism at all to show or only fragments of it, acquired at a later date; what we do find among them is the figure of the Supreme Being, clear, definite, and quite independent of totemism.' And what, we may add, about the many primitive peoples who believe in gods and have no totems?

On this matter I cite a pertinent passage from Lowie (*Primitive Religion*, 1936): 'We shall content ourselves with putting the axe to the root of the theory. It is ethnographically unwarranted to deduce primeval conceptions from Australian conditions. The Australians are not so primitive as, certainly not more primitive in their culture than, the Andaman Islanders, the Semang of the Malay Peninsula, the Paviotso of Nevada. In these sociologically simplest tribes totemism does not occur. Totemism is a widespread but far from universal phenomenon, while the belief in spiritual being is universal; precisely these rudest tribes which have a decisive bearing on the question are non-totemic animists. Hence, the notion of spirit cannot be derived from totemism. Moreover, the totemic ideas of the Australians represent a highly localized product and cannot even be accepted as the earliest form of *totemism*.'

As for the 'totemic principle', this is more or less equated by Durkheim with the mainly Polynesian concept of *mana* and those of *wakan* and *orenda* in North America; and this idea of what was supposed to be some sort of impersonal force analogous to ether or electricity was at the time very fashionable among anthropologists and sociologists (Marett, Hewitt, Vierkandt, Hartland, Preuss, Durkheim himself, and his collaborators Hubert and Mauss). Perhaps in this climate of theory Durkheim could scarcely have avoided some such interpretation but whether this be so or not I think it would be fair to say that all those who have recently concerned themselves with the matter and in the light of what is now known about it would agree that this more or less pseudo-metaphysical interpretation is most misleading; and I would suggest that it is a simple logical deduction which would account for the error of the reporters - namely that any 'virtue' or 'quality' which is found in many persons and things must have an abstract term of reference. Moreover there is a good deal of force in a further objection (Goldenweiser, 1915, p. 727) with regard to Durkheim's identification of the 'totemic principle' with *mana*: 'On reading the pages devoted to this discussion the unprejudiced student soon perceives that the facts supporting Durkheim's contention are altogether wanting. There is no indication that the beliefs underlying totemic religion are generically the same as those

designated by the terms *mana* or *orenda*....' All this, and much more is *aus der Luft gegriffen*.

For Durkheim totemism is a clan religion. Where there are clans there is totemism and where there is totemism there are clans. This is not correct. Van Gennep tells us that in North America we find the Kutchin, the Crow, the Hidatsa, and the Choctaw with exogamic divisions but without totems or totemic names (1920, p. 29). Then Schmidt (1931, p. 113): 'Totemism, with which Freud begins the development of mankind, is not at the beginning. We know a whole series of peoples, ethnologically the oldest, who have neither totemism nor mother-right; the Pygmoids, the Pygmies of Asia and Africa, the South-East Australians, the Ainu, the primitive Eskimos, the Koryaks, the Samoyeds in the extreme north of the globe, the North Central Californians, the primitive Algonkins of North America, the Geztapuya tribes of South America, and the Tierra del Fuegians of the extreme south. Even if Freud's theory were right in itself it would have nothing to do with the origin of religion, morals or society, for the origins of all these lie much further back in pretotemic days, and are utterly different from Freud's phantasies.' We are further informed (Van Gennep, 1920, p. 74) that although the Papuans of New Guinea have clans they are not totemic. As Van Gennep points out there are many other sorts of *unités sociales* which might be expected on Durkheim's reasoning to be totemic but have no totems or emblems or anything corresponding to them.

Apart from the fact that clans and totemism do not necessarily go together, there is the further objection to Durkheim's thesis to which I have alluded in my book (Evans-Pritchard, 1965, pp. 65-6). Among the Australian aboriginals it is the so-called horde, and then the tribe, which are the corporate groups, and not the widely dispersed (again so-called) clans; so if the function of religion is to maintain the solidarity of the groups which most require a sense of unity, then it should be the hordes and (once again, so-called) tribes, and not the clans, that should perform the rites generating effervescence. I am not the first to have raised this objection. It is implied in what Van Gennep has said about *unités sociales*, and it is explicitly stated by Lowie (1936, p. 160): 'In so far as Durkheim does not identify divine society with the crowd, he rather lightly fixes on the sib as the social group that would at the same time loom as the god-like protector and curber. No doubt the individual derives sustenance and protection from his own sib, but that is equally true of his local or tribal group as a whole. Why, then, should the sib alone function as the nascent god? On the other hand, restraint is precisely what one's own sib does not usually exercise, that is left to the other sibs. If by special act of grace we follow Durkheim to his favourite Australian field, special difficulties arise. He insists that the individual acquires his culture from society. But this society from which he acquires it is only in small measure his sib. For example, in a matrilineal Australian tribe a boy belongs indeed to his mother's sib, but his training

in woodcraft is derived from his father, regardless of rules of descent, and his education is completed in the camp that unites all the bachelors, irrespective of kinship. To leap from society as a whole to the individual's own sib seems to be in no way justified by Durkheim's reasoning. We are obliged to conclude that his theory neither explains how the assemblages of the ceremonial season create religious emotion, nor why the sib should be singled out for masked adoration from among all the social units, when it is only one of a series all of which jointly confer on him the blessings of culture and of protection.'

With regard to the emblematic engravings on the *churinga*: the matter is very complicated - it would appear that there is some sort of hierarchy of these relics, some in stone, and some in wood - and I have been unable to find any decisive verdict about their significance in the literature, both old and new. It must suffice therefore by way of comment if I cite Radcliffe-Brown (1929) to the effect that most of the totems are not figured representationally. If this is true, it much weakens Durkheim's contentions.

This brings us to a further query, already indicated in what has gone before: If totemism is the origin of religion, what about those peoples who are not totemic and as far as we know have never been totemic, yet have religious beliefs and practices? Lowie (1936, pp. 157-9) appropriately observes, 'From the ethnological point of view Dr. Goldenweiser pertinently asks whence the nontotemic peoples have derived their religion.' Durkheim proceeds on the assumption, now thoroughly discredited, that the sib (clan) in the typical form of the totemic sib is a universal trait of very rude cultures. As a matter of fact, it has already been shown that the simplest tribes in both the Old World and the New World lack sibs and totems. No such institution occurs among the Andamanese of the Bay of Bengal or the Chukchi of Siberia, nor has it been reported from the Tasmanians, the Congolese Pygmies, or the Bushmen. If it be objected with some plausibility that our knowledge of the three tribes just mentioned is too inadequate to permit negative data to weigh heavily, there is the wholly unobjectionable evidence from the Western Hemisphere, where the sib organization is uniformly absent from all the rudest hunting tribes and in North America is an almost regular accompaniment of horticulture. The Mackenzie River Athabaskans, the Shoshoneans of the Great Basin, the tribes of Washington and Oregon are sibless, while the sedentary Iroquois and Pueblo tribes are organized into sibs with at least totemic names, if not with full-fledged totemism; for, as we cannot resist mentioning incidentally, the sib organization is by no means uniformly linked with totemism. These simple facts had been pointed out by Dr. Swanton some years before the publication of Durkheim's book, but the French sociologist prefers to ignore them and to take for his point of departure a demonstrably false theory of primitive society. In short, then, there are many nontotemic peoples and among them are precisely those of simplest culture. But they all have some sort

of religion! Shall we assume that they only obtained their beliefs and practices by contact with the borrowing from the higher totemic cultures? The assumption is not *a priori* probable, and empirically there is not the slightest proof for it except as respects specific features of religious culture, such as may be borrowed back and forth under favourable conditions. Dr. Ruth Fulton Benedict has recently examined Durkheim's thesis with reference to the North American data, selecting for discussion the relations of totemism to the most persistent of North American religious traits, the guardian-spirit complex. This feature is not only by virtue of its range far older than totemism but also turns out to be highly developed where no traces of totemism have ever been recorded. It is therefore impossible to derive the guardian-spirit belief from totemic conceptions. On the contrary, there is good evidence that in certain regions totemism, which otherwise has a very meagre religious content, 'tends to take its colouring from the guardian-spirit concept, and the high-water marks of a religious attitude towards the totem, which beyond doubt are found on this continent, are intelligible from this fact.' Goldenweiser, attacking Durkheim's whole theory of the origin of categories, says likewise (1915, p. 733): 'The Eskimo, for example, have no clans nor phratries nor a totemic cosmogony (for they have no totems); how then did their mental categories originate, or is the concept of classication foreign to the Eskimo mind?'

Durkheim has himself laid it down that any explanation of a social fact in terms of psychology must be wrong, yet in his theory so majestic and enduring a social phenomenon as religion arises from the emotional effervescence of a crowd. I have certainly not been the first to protest. Malinowski (1913, p. 529) comments: 'We feel a little suspicious of a theory which sees the origins of religion in crowd phenomena.' Again (p. 530): 'In his actual theory he uses throughout individual psychological explanations.' Goldenweiser said (1915): 'Our first objection to the derivation of the sacred from an inner sense of social pressure is a psychological one. That a crowd-psychological situation should have aroused the religious thrill in the constituent individuals, who - *nota bene* - were hitherto unacquainted with religious emotion, does not seem in the least plausible. Neither in primitive nor in modern times do such experiences, *per se*, arouse religious emotions, even though the participating individuals are no longer novices in religion. And, if on occasion such sentiments do arise, they lack the intensity and permanence required to justify Durkheim's hypothesis. If a corroborree differs from an intichiuma, or the social dances of the North American Indians from their religious dances, the difference is not in the social composition but in the presence or absence of pre-existing religious associations. A series of corroborrees does not make an intichiuma; at least, we have no evidence to that effect, and human psychology, as we know it, speaks against it. Durkheim's main error, however, seems to our mind to lie in a misconception of the relation of the individual to the social, as implied in his theory of social control. The theory errs in making the scope of the social on the one hand, too wide, on the other, too narrow. Too wide in so far

as the theory permits individual factors to become altogether obscured, too narrow in so far as the society which figures in the theory is identified with a crowd, and not with a cultural historic group.' Again (Goldenweiser, 1921, p. 371): 'As one reads Durkheim's picturesque description of Australian ceremonies, he realizes that the social setting with which the author deals is one usually designated as crowd-psychological.' And on the same page: 'Notwithstanding the tremendous importance ascribed to it, society for Durkheim is but a sublimated crowd, while the social setting is the crowd-psychological situation. Society as a cultural, historical complex, society as the carrier of tradition, as the legislator judge, as the standard of action, as public opinion; society in all these varied and significant manifestations, which surely are of prime concern to the individual, does not figure in Durkheim's theory.' Then Lowie (1936, p. 160): 'As Goldenweiser trenchantly asks, "Why is it that the gatherings of Indians for secular dances are not transformed into religious occasions if the assembly itself gives rise to sentiments of religion?"' Why indeed! And not only Indian dances but dances anywhere. According to Durkheim the dancing about in Australian ceremonies transforms the individual, but there is no evidence for this. Radcliffe-Brown (*The Andaman Islanders,* 1922, pp. 246 *et seq*) says much the same about Andamanese dancing, but is equally unconvincing.

As we have seen, Durkheim's whole thesis in the *Elementary Forms* has been subjected, and not unfairly, to devastating criticism from several points of view and by those who, for one or other reason, were fully entitled to express an opinion. Van Gennep, Goldenweiser, and Lowie were all widely read in the literature on totemism; and Malinowski was very much at home in the literature on the Australian aboriginals. Time has not come to Durkheim's assistance. In 1920, Van Gennep could write (p. 236): 'If anything can be said with certainty of the belief-systems which have been studied it is that they do *not* symbolize the clan, or any other concrete social entity, or even idealizations of them, although these elements may colour or mediate what is symbolized.' In 1967, Stanner, a recent student of Australian aboriginals (in the north of the continent) concludes (1967, p. 256): 'The sum of evidence sustains three conclusions: (1) If any Australian aborigines lived, as used to be suggested, in a stationary state of society with a static culture, the Murinbata were certainly not among them over any period which it is possible for inquiry to touch. (2) To identify their religion with totemic phenomena would be a mistake. (3) The society was not the real source and object of the religion.' Strehlow (the younger) in his book *Aranda Traditions,* about the people on whose way of life Durkheim based his entire hypothesis, does not even bother to mention him.

We have, I fear, to come down decisively against Durkheim and conclude that he may not in any sense be regarded as a scientist - at the best a philosopher, or I would rather say, a metaphysician. He broke every cardinal rule of critical scholarship, as well as of logic; and in particular in his disregard of

evidence, and especially of those evidences which negated his theory. He only used the comparative method when it suited him. Since he and his colleagues of the *Année* were determined to prove their theories by appeal to what is generally regarded as ethnological data (i.e. writings about primitive peoples) they must be judged accordingly. If you appeal unto Caesar unto Caesar must you go. So, is the final verdict to be Van Gennep's (1920, p. 49), who compares Durkheim's thesis to the best constructions of the Hindu metaphysicians, the Muslim commentators and the Catholic scholastics? Yes. But to it shall be added the silent judgment of an authoritative student of the aboriginals, E. A. Worms, who completely ignores Durkheim in his article on their original religion.

And now we may ask some final questions. We have decided that though he was scornful of others for deriving religion from motor hallucination, that is precisely what he does himself. Then we may ask whether, if the Australians' belief in the existence of spiritual beings and forces is a baseless assumption, may not Durkheim's assumption that these beings do not exist be arbitrary and just as baseless? And, furthermore, I cannot understand why we should applaud Durkheim's mockery of Tylor for deriving religion from an illusion when that is what, to say it again, he does himself. Why are spiritual forms symbolizing social groups any less an illusion than those derived from dreams? We might also ask why these spiritual forms should be assumed to symbolize anything? And that question leads to a final one.

My greatest objection to Durkheim's thesis is that it is highly unscientific. In science one puts forward a hypothesis which, if it is to have any heuristic value, must be experimentally testable, and it must be shown in what way it can be so tested by observation. Now, how do we set about to prove that religious forms are only symbols of social structures, which is what Durkheim is saying? Obviously, this cannot be done for any one society or type of society, which is what Durkheim is trying to do. It can only be done indirectly by use of the comparative method, a method, as I have said before, Durkheim only used when it suited him. If it can be shown that there is some correspondence between types of social structure and types of religious belief and practice, some sort of case might be made for pursuing the inquiry further along the lines of the hypothesis. Radcliffe-Brown, who had a logical, if not an original mind, tried to show this, but his effort was neither scholarly nor convincing (Evans-Pritchard 1965, pp. 73-5). Or one might try to show from historical evidences that when there has been structural change or change in religious faith there has been uniformly some concomitant change in the other. Durkheim did not even attempt to begin to do either.

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FRENCH ETHNOLOGY

AND THE DURKHEIMIAN BREAKTHROUGH

The ever-growing number of critical assessments (and, indeed, often refutations) of Durkheim's social theory[1] - particularly his interpretation of ethnological data relative to archaic law, the prohibition of incest, kinship systems, types of social cohesion, totemism and, more generally, religion - confirms implicitly the challenge it still represents to students of non-industrial societies. These assessments, however justified they may be in discarding some Durkheimian tenets as premature or erroneous problem-solving devices, tend to minimise the historical contribution he made to the reconstruction of social anthropology in France. The purpose of this note is to give a brief account of how it was achieved. After some introductory remarks on the state of contemporary ethnological research, I will discuss the channels through which its issues penetrated Durkheim's thought and came to inform the core of his intellectual project. This will help to survey the strategic practicalities by which the Durkheimian group secured academic respectability and usefulness for an utterly marginal extra-mural pursuit. Finally there will be an attempt to appraise the overall impact of the Durkheimian epistemological revolution upon the future of an essentially empirical discipline that, by its very nature, broke the canons of scholarship established in 19th-century France.

Ethnology, to be sure, was by no means a Durkheimian invention. Intellectual curiosity about the non-Western world had been tapped and canalized since the early 19th century through various institutional initiatives, some not quite ephemeral though always non-academic. Gentlemen scholars under William Edwards organised in Paris a *Société ethnographique* between 1839 and 1847 which served as a model for the London Ethnological Society

(founded in 1842). Another similarly mundane gathering (created by learned *gens du monde* in 1859) survived and later gave birth to a *Société des Américanistes* in 1895. The *Société asiatique*, though only marginally dedicated to ethnology proper, dates back to 1822 and so does the very popular *Société géographique*, a major instance of patronage and publicity for exploration overseas. More importantly the mid-century scientific movement, headed by Broca, Quatrefages, Hamy and Verneau, that rose to international fame as the *Ecole anthropologique* (endowed with a chair in the *Muséum d'histoire naturelle* since 1855 and with a semi-official teaching provision under the aegis of the Paris Faculty of Medicine since 1875), was engaged from its inception in ethnographic theorizing and research. It sponsored the first public lectures (by Letourneau) dedicated to primitive civilisations. It was also instrumental in founding what later became the *Musée de l'Homme* (in 1880). Incidentally some members of the French colonial staff (missionaries, officers, administrators, surgeons) also became involved (mostly through personal interest) in empirical inquiries in what was by the end of the century the second largest colonial empire. In 1898 the colonial government in Hanoi funded the first French overseas research centre, the *Ecole française d'Extrême- Orient*.

None of these initiatives succeeded in ensuring a minimal scholarly standing for a would-be ethnological discipline in France, both for intellectual and institutional reasons. None of them produced a coherent paradigm to account for the available evidence concerning archaic societies. Research in the field remained purely descriptive and usually ignored problems of interpretation, while armchair explorers (Letourneau, though lacking Herbert Spencer's stature, being a notorious case in point) were comfortably feeding their second-hand findings into evolutionary schemes. No corpus of certified knowledge emerged out of these efforts in the form of a consensus on the scope, methods or privileged topics of the speciality which could confer at least a nominal intellectual identity shared by a group of practitioners. Had it been necessary, such scholarly weaknesses would have militated against academic integration. In fact this proved to be a largely foregone conclusion given the extraordinary functional rigidity (limited to teacher training) and thematic narrowness (reserved for classical studies) of the post-Napoleonic university system.[2] Thus the conditions for growth and scientific upgrading of French ethnographic research continued to be poor at the turn of the century, resulting in low productivity, a blurred public image and a mediocre visibility at home and abroad. In a representative survey of ethnological literature before the Great War Steinmetz cites only 14% of items in French as against 45% in German and 31% in English.[3] The topical references in the *Encyclopédie française*[4] comprise, as late as 1936, only 28% of French titles as against 41% of English titles. Qualitative backwardness and lack of intellectual organisation of early French ethnography was matched by the paucity of its output.

In these circumstances it is understandable that Durkheim's

attitude to the use of ethnographic data was at best ambiguous when, in the late 1880s, he embarked upon the elaboration of his social theory. Before the first issue of the *Année sociologique* in 1898 none of his individual works tackled specific problems of archaic societies and even less of those societies studied by his fellow-countrymen. Nevertheless he could not fail to recognise major statements about social evolution going back to 'the Primitives' (such as Westermarck's history of marriage)[5] or ignore the very Parisian Group of anthropologists and ethnographers in his report on contemporary French social science.[6] He also had to bring a (rather limited) range of ethnological evidence in line to demonstrate in his doctoral dissertation (1893) the working of 'mechanical solidarity' by contrast with its 'organic' counterpart that allegedly marked the 'organisation of superior societies' to which (as its sub-title suggests) his first major essay was dedicated.

Durkheim's interest in ethnology was at that stage genuine but heavily distrustful. He often expressed suspicion about the technical reliability of ethnographic information and stressed, more significantly, the preference historical data should be granted in sociological comparisons, since only relatively developed (that is 'historical') societies had achieved the measure of 'crystallization' of customs reflected in their legal system that made them 'objectively' comparable.[7] And yet his effort to ground the new social science on thoroughly documented hard-core evidence - as supplied by history, demography and social statistics - proved to be off-set from the start by the very presuppositions underlying his theoretical project. This aimed, above all, at understanding the conditions of *social cohesion* that rested upon historically variable but inter-dependent *social functions* (like collective representations, economy, kinship) and most particularly upon mechanisms of social control or discipline (like morals, law and religion). The method to be used had to be comparative and genetic, as 'complex' or more developed social phenomena could be analysed only by confrontation with their 'simpler' or less developed counterparts.[8] The latter were mostly known through ethnographic evidence. The need for the intensive exploitation of ethnographic data was thus an in-built element of the original Durkheimian project.

Nevertheless the theoretical foundation of this need, though often explicitly stated, remained, if not shaky, utterly ambivalent. On the one hand, apparently, this methodological precept 'points backwards to the pervasive evolutionism of the nineteenth century' which 'Durkheim never really shed... with his talk of "origins", "prototypes" and "stages"',[9] claiming surreptitiously both ontological simplicity and historical anteriority for the 'primitives' (a crucially handy word of double meaning).[10] The identification of simple cultures with early civilisations conformed not only with the idea of unilinear evolution but also with Durkheim's anthropology based on the unitary conception of the human mind. On the other hand, however, the head of the French School of sociology frequently took pains to explain that if

evolution were indeed a useful working hypothesis, it could by no means be regarded - as Comte had done - as unilinear.[11] One should not admit that 'all inferior peoples... represent a definite stage of our historical development. There are certainly some to which particular circumstances gave, at least at some point of their evolution, a direction different from the one we have followed.'[12] This is a recognition of the truly historic character of archaic societies[13] and also potentially attaches a question mark to their 'simplicity'.[14]

Whatever these doubts, uncertainties and reservations may have been, the shift of Durkheim's research focus on the problem of religion in the mid-1890s gave a new lease of life to his involvement with ethnology. Immediately after the completion of his book *Suicide* published in 1897 - which can be considered as the final statement in his 'pre-ethnographic period'[15] - he became absorbed in the study of documents and interpretations of archaic religious phenomena along lines set mostly by contemporary British 'religious anthropologists' (Lang, Marett, Frazer, Müller and above all Robertson Smith). His published work, culminating in the *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), was henceforth dominated by this subject-matter, from which the largest section of his authoritative journal the *Année sociologique* (12 issues between 1898 and 1913) drew its substance. In the meantime some of the best scholars gathering around Durkheim (Mauss, Hubert, Hertz and others) specialised in the criticism of ethnographic knowledge proper, of which the *Année* soon became by far the most powerful vehicle in France.[16]

Some pretended to explain away Durkheim's 'discovery' of the problem of primitive religion purely on the basis of his relevant readings which, in the early years of the century, included the illuminating recent studies on totemism in Australia and in America by Spencer and Gillen, Strehlow, Howitt, Boas, Swanton etc. The availability of detailed information, which for the first time seemed to be of high quality, on what he came to consider the simplest and possibly the earliest form of worship, was obviously a necessary condition. Three sets of less accidental factors appear to be even more decisive. First of all the sociology of religion as such responded to an essential demand in the French ideological market-place of the period marked by the struggle between the Catholic Right and the Republican establishment and leading up to the conclusion of the Dreyfus Affair and the Separation of Church and State. The indirect approach Durkheim attempted when refusing to study the contemporary scene was liable to bring supplementary rewards on that score. It helped him to keep the benefits of a neutral and purely scientific criticism but also to identify religion with a universal and indeed basic social 'function' which, necessary as it proved to be, could and did sometimes take a contingent or even 'monstrous' historical shape.[17] Finally the study of primitive cults promised an unprecidented epistemological yield in the understanding of how societies preserved their integrity and, more particularly, how the human mind (related to 'collective consciousness') was working. Primitive religion seemed for Durkheim not only simple but also

in a way the common denominator for most of the other 'social functions' - at least on the plane of binding collective representations like law, symbolic culture, morals, cosmology, techniques etc. At one point it was regarded by the Durkheimians as the fundamental principle of social identity as well as the key to the categories of thought (time, space, classifications). Hence recourse to ethnographic evidence became a vital issue for the completion of the work undertaken by the *Année* group, but soon it also became invested with new hopes as to the future progress of social science in general.

Besides its above-mentioned topical efficiency in the sociology of religion, the broadening of ethnological information opened up new vistas in comparative sociology at large. Compared with the rigid and limited supply of historical and contemporary statistical data available on Western-type societies, the lore of archaic civilizations, based on direct observation, appeared to be extensible and renewable at will. Whatever might have been the intrinsic difficulties in interpreting such observations - which Durkheim's contemporaries grossly under-estimated - they offered the illusion of being sufficient if not complete, thus allowing experimental case-studies on small-scale societies which would have been inoperative on modern, complex, large-scale societies.[18] Moreover, paradoxically enough, the study of the 'Primitives' helped to by-pass some of the disciplinary snags - like learned journalism - in which most would-be sociologists of the time got entangled:[19] the cultural distance from the object of study removed some of the obstacles to a scientific posture and its ideological or political irrelevance helped the Durkheimian scholars to arrive at generalisations about the nature of society free from the temptation to be bogged down in issues of contemporary interest only. This 'detour' was all the more welcome in that, by their position within the contemporary ideological field, most Durkheimians belonged to and were active in the Socialist or Radical Left and, more importantly, were lacking the technical tools (e.g. survey methods) and perhaps even the analytical instruments (e.g. concepts of social stratification) to achieve explorations of their immediate social environment with the same degree of theoretical relevance as they did in connection with the 'Primitives'. Lastly, ethnology, an institutionally marginal and intellectually 'weak' discipline, lent itself much more easily to sociological exploitation than the better-established classic specialities - like history or geography - which possessed the means of self-defence in the form of authoritative canons of erudition and powerful organs of publicity. The Durkheimian thrust meant for the former unexpected re-evaluation; for the latter, the menace of a competitive partnership. This is why Durkheimian social theory, even if contested, soon came to dominate French ethnology while it was received with distrust and scepticism in most if not all other spheres of academicism. In this respect, Durkheimian sociology can be considered as the 'theoretical investment' of an unoccupied disciplinary domain - that of the available knowledge concerning archaic societies -

following the principle of least resistance.

Ethnological interest as such did not by itself involve for the *Année* group any specific tie with the French branch of the discipline. On the contrary, references to field-work in the French overseas territories were much rarer, both in the table of contents of the *Année* and in the original essays of its collaborators, than in recent publications by Anglo-Saxon and German anthropologists. Far from feeding nationalist complacency, they tended to stress and deplore the backward state of the art in France.[20] Hardly any field-worker made contributions to the *Année* under Durkheim, probably because few came up to its standards of scholarship. However the Durkheimians' ethnological focus had an immediate impact on the course of development of the discipline. Discussions in the *Année*, on the strength of the specialised competence they displayed, raised at a stroke the scientific status of French ethnology close to the international level, since the Durkheimian cluster became a privileged debating partner of some of the major British, German and Dutch scholars in the field. Inside France matters of ethnological relevance penetrated some of the dominant forums of intellectual exchange. Durkheim exposed his theory of totemism at the *Société de philosophie*, and such prominent figures of contemporary philosophy as Lévy-Bruhl or Bergson became engaged in topical discussions.[21] Manifestly, through the Durkheimian thrust, the problem of archaic societies left the narrow disciplinary ghetto to which it had hitherto been confined. This happened all the more in that, for the first time, some academically well-established scholars (*agrégés*, staff members of the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes*) came close to ethnographic field-work or collaborated with field-workers.[22] Though for compelling institutional reasons no real conjunction of field ethnology and academic scholarship was feasible at that time,[23] the public image of the discipline and the implicit idea about its intellectual profitability underwent a radical change for the better when academics embarked upon the exegesis of its information - as had been done earlier only with regard to the vestiges of classical high culture.

The investment by Durkheim's disciples of the few available positions in French higher education (Mauss, Hubert, Hertz) earmarked for or admitting ethnological scholarship, proved of course the major strategic act in the process of the up-grading and academic legitimation of what had until then been an extra-mural speciality. The deliberate character of the achievement can be demonstrated in Mauss's most unusual career.[24] Important as they were, the new courses at the *Ecole Pratique* did not in themselves usher in a period of real prosperity and growth for French ethnology. Ethnology, for one thing, was not even mentioned in their titles. Viewed more as a consecration of Durkheimian sociology of religion than of an empirical discipline, these courses, though attracting a fairly large audience,[25] remained utterly disconnected from university degrees conducive to intellectual professions. They lacked any backing by specialised research careers in particular and they had no organic link with

empirical scholarly undertakings. But the grass-roots work they accomplished in inculcating in a new, though not professionally motivated, academic clientèle the most advanced knowledge within reach on some aspects of archaic cultures, initiated a cumulative process that appears clearly as the indispensable condition of the institutional establishment of ethnology in the university system that took place after the First World War.

By that time the master of the Sociological School had died (1917), like many of his companions (among them Hertz, Beuchat and Hubert); and the remaining aged members of the *Année* group, exempt from the uncontested intellectual hegemony of Durkheim - the integrating principle of the cluster - were left to the pursuit of their specialised curiosities. This state of affairs implied among other things the chance for some, like Mauss, to loosen the doctrinal ties that attached his work to Durkheimian social theory at its crudest without losing the hallmark of its scientific legitimacy. Not only Mauss's post-war work, crowned by the *Essay on Gift* (1925), drew notably upon or was indeed made possible by this liberated relationship with the founder, his uncle, and its sociological orthodoxy. The ethnological discipline proper found itself set free from an overwhelming theoretical patronage that had tended to hinder its autonomous development by reducing it to an auxiliary role while promoting it powerfully as a major 'special' branch of the integrated social science. A non-exclusive reference to Durkheim and to the demand his work implied for the extension of the knowledge about archaic societies[26] represented the intellectual background leading to the foundation of the *Institut d'ethnographie* of the University of Paris (1925). Though the *Institut*, headed by Mauss, Lévy-Bruhl and Rivet (a physical anthropologist) was by no means a Durkheimian, let alone a formally social anthropological, undertaking,[27] through Mauss's teaching it has in practice become best known as the breeding ground of the new, empirically-biased French ethnological school.

This is not the place to assess the *Institut's* achievement. Still, one might attempt to summarize the overall Durkheimian contribution to what made its success possible as the academic practice of a scholarship and the training of scholars alien to all that had been hitherto regarded as part of the compulsory value-system of French universities. Such recapitulation can be briefly done under three headings - when keeping in mind that ethnology in a French Faculty of Letters represents a more radical innovation than the earlier introduction of sociology, human geography, psychology and educational science which, in one way or another, were all derivations of classical disciplines established in the 19th century.

First of all Durkheimian social theory was instrumental in the reappraisal of the significance, as an object of science, of archaic societies considered as a definitely *low cultural object*, 19th-century scholarship had been resolutely ethno-centric and elitist, concentrating exclusively on 'high' civilisations and in general on objects endowed with a noble cultural status due

to a long historical process of consecration. Scholarship indeed was meant to be part of this process. It was intended to be exploratory and interpretative as well as celebrational, a condition ethnology could by no means satisfy. Secondly, and more importantly, the Durkheimian epistemological revolution helped to reassess the contribution that knowledge about the Primitives could make to the development of history, social philosophy and, obviously, sociology proper. This essential character of auxiliary science was in a way objectified in the organisation of the curriculum at the *Institut d'ethnologie* when the degree granted by the *Institut* became an optional component of the graduate degree in philosophy and later in sociology. The insights such reassessment contained are still currently referred to and made use of in social history, social psychology, historical demography etc. Lastly, the work of Durkheim and his disciples initiated a radical change of attitude to empirical observation of socio-cultural reality - whether first-hand or second-hand - as opposed to the study of written documents. To be sure, none of the Durkheimians did any field study in the narrow sense.[28] Nevertheless Durkheim's and Halbwachs' multi-variate analyses of statistical data banks on suicide, working-class budgets etc., Mauss's brotherly collaboration with Beuchat or Hertz's field trips to gather folkloristic data took a share in the re-evaluation of empiricism that was being staged in the academic scene in common with the new human sciences (especially with regional geography and experimental psychology). Mauss's personal achievement completed the rehabilitation of empirical ethnology. Under his guidance[29] field research became a professional obligation for would-be ethnologists in France, and the new academic discipline shook off the last encumbrances of the humanistic tradition of the 19th century without losing its theoretical scope. Thus various lines of scattered field ethnologists could rejoin a platform for specific problem-solving at the highest level of theoretical relevance where they encountered potential armchair scholars, pushed to the empirical substantiation of their models. In this and other respects the Durkheimian ancestry, mostly openly claimed, or tacitly admitted, adds a distinctive mark even nowadays to French social anthropological practice as it is exemplified in the work of Lévi-Strauss, Dumont or Bourdieu.[30]

VICTOR KARADY

NOTES

1. Detailed inventories of recent studies on Durkheim and his followers can be found in two issues of the *Revue française de sociologie* edited by Philippe Besnard. See vol.XVII no. 2 (1976), ('A propos de Durkheim'), and vol.XX no. 1 (1979), ('les Durkheimiens'). A partial translation of the latter will be published in English by Cambridge University Press (forthcoming).

2. On this point see my essay, 'Le problème de la légitimité dans l'organisation historique de l'ethnologie en France' in *Revue française de sociologie*, vol. XX no. 1 (1982) (forthcoming).

3. Cf.S.R. Steinmetz, *Essai d'une bibliographie systématique de l'ethnologie jusqu'à l'année* 1911.

4. Paris 1936, tome 7, pp. 7. B - 2-6.

5. Review presented in 1895. Cf. E. Durkheim, *Textes*, vol. I, Paris: Editions de Minuit 1975, pp.70-92.

6. Cf. 'Lo stato attuale degli studi sociologici in Francia' (1895), *ibid.*, pp. 76-81.

7. See for example the following passage in the review on Westermarck (1895): 'The insufficiency of informations provided by ethnographers is acknowledged by the author himself. Indeed among peoples which we know only through them law exists only in the form of custom. Now it is particularly difficult to apprehend a collective practice when it has not yet become conscious of itself and found expression in fixed formulas....How to distinguish the legal fact when law has not been consolidated, from the casual fact it rules. Thus one has been induced into transforming isolated anecdotes into legal rules.' (*ibid.*, p. 72)

8. Cf. *Règles de la méthode sociologique* [1893], Paris 1947, p. 137: 'One can explain a social fact of some complexity only on condition of integrally following its development through all social species. Comparative sociology is not a particular branch of sociology, it is sociology proper....First one constitutes the most rudimentary type that has ever existed, in order to follow afterwards step by step the way in which it has progressively gained complexity.'

9. Cf. Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim. His Life and Work. A Historical and Critical Study*, London: Allen Lane 1973, p. 456.

10. Cf. *ibid.*

11. Cf. his inaugural lecture at the Bordeaux Faculty of Letters (in 1888) in E. Durkheim, *La science sociale et l'action*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1970, p. 89. Durkheim stated that Comte was misled, when proposing his Law of the Three Stages of human evolution, by 'the imperfections of the ethnographic sciences of his time....But today it is manifestly impossible to support the idea that there is one human evolution

everywhere identical to itself and that all societies are varieties of one and the same type.... Mankind ... is more like a huge family, the different branches of which - more and more divergent as they are from one another - get detached from the common stock and go on living their own life. Besides, who can prove that this common stock has ever existed?'

12. Cf. 'Ethnographie et sociologie' (1904) in *Textes*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

13. See a more explicit statement on this issue: 'Inferior societies, as humble as they may be, were not born yesterday. All have a history. Some of them had already entered into decadence when they were observed for the first time. How could we know what is primitive and what is not, what is a survival of the past and what is due, on the contrary, to a more or less recent regression?' Cf. *Textes*, vol. III, *op. cit.*, p. 73 (review on Westermarck [1895]).

14. Mauss, who was often entitled to give an authorized and qualified wording of his uncle's views, happened to be at his most ambiguous when dealing with the alleged simplicity of archaic cultures. His inaugural lecture at the Ecole Pratique (in 1902) was a stunning show of theoretical tightrope walking: 'I have just told you that these facts were interesting because "simple and"easy to know". But I must prove it. Religious phenomena, illustrated by the societies about which I have just spoken, are precisely reputed to be neither "simple" nor "easy to know"....Religious phenomena which we observe at present in Australia for example are certainly neither simple nor primitive. Australian and American societies have behind them a long history....But in the same time it is obvious that, in spite of their developed character, these facts bear also the mark of simplicity that can make us suppose that, in certain respects, they represent very early and very rudimentary matters.' Cf. M. Mauss, *Oeuvres*, vol. I, Paris: Editions de Minuit 1968, pp. 489-490. In his uncompleted doctoral thesis on *Prayer* (1909) his formulation of the problem was more outright: 'But when we make derive what is superior from what is inferior, we do not intend by any means to explain complex phenomena by the simple ones. For the most rudimentary forms are to no extent more simple than the most developed forms. Their complexity is only of a different nature. Those elements which in the course of evolution will develop and will be distinguished, are united here in a state of mutual inter-penetration.' (*ibid.*, p. 396)

15. See Steven Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

16. About 25% of all reviews in the *Année* dealt with problems of ethnography and folklore proper, while another 20% were dedicated to studies on ancient classical or oriental civilizations. Thus on the whole the journal was largely centered on topics lying outside the modern Western world.

17. Cf. Durkheim's qualification of the Catholic Church as 'a monster from a sociological viewpoint' on account of its author-

itarian organisation and moral monolithism. See 'Débat sur les conséquences religieuses de la Séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat', in *Textes* vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

18. Mauss's 'Seasonal variations of the Eskimos' can be regarded as a most accomplished example of such case-studies.

19. In particular the direct competitors of the Sociological School, the scholars gathered in the *Institut international de sociologie* under René Worms, the Le Playist cluster or the Catholic sociologists.

20. See Mauss's alarming report 'L'ethnographie en France et à l'étranger' (1913) in *Oeuvres*, vol. III, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-434.

21. Lévy-Bruhl's conversion to ethnology is a most conspicuous case in point. He was already an established full professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne when his research interests, obviously under Durkheimian influence, shifted to problems of 'primitive mentality'. Most of his later work since *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (1910) was dedicated to ethnological theory. He became one of the founding fathers of the *Institut d'ethnologie de l'Université de Paris* (1925).

22. Mauss closely collaborated with the polar explorer Beuchat . Hertz himself accomplished field-work on French folklore.

23. These reasons include, among others, the absence of institutionalised research careers, the scarcity of research funding and the functional exclusivity of the universities, which strongly resisted the admission of new disciplines, especially those that lay outside the classical branches of study also taught in the State *lycées*.

24. Contrary to expectations Mauss did not apply for admission to the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, a normal academic track for lycée graduates of his class. He did not even seek graduation in Paris, in order to follow his uncle to Bordeaux where Durkheim taught 'social science' and philosophy at the Faculty of Letters. After having taken his degree of *agrégé de philosophie* he avoided embarking upon a regular teaching career which might have led him early to a faculty position. Instead he profited from grants to travel and work in Germany, Holland and Britain and pursued an initiation in Oriental studies (Sanscrit under Sylvain Lévy) and in Ethnology. Significantly enough, his first work, published at the age of 23 (in 1896), dealt with religion and the origins of penal law. His early specialisation in problems of primitive religion made him eligible at 28 to the chair of 'Religions of peoples without a civilization' at the 5th Section of the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* (1901). Hubert and Hertz, *Normaliens* and *agrégés*, also responded very early to the Durkheimian call. Thus Hubert became also at 28 the first lecturer on ancient European religions, alongside Mauss at the *Ecole Pratique*.

25. Mauss's attendance ranged from 16 to 38 and that of Hubert from 10 to 29 during the first ten years of their lecturing at

the *Ecole Pratique*.

26. Cf. his criticism of René Worms who made a case of the allegedly diminishing importance of ethnology for social studies. 'M. Durkheim thinks it is his duty to add that the usefulness of these studies [ethnology] does not seem to him to be doomed to decline in the future. So-called inferior societies have a special interest for sociology....' Cf. *Textes*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 258 ('Débat sur les rapports de l'ethnologie et de la sociologie').

27. Only two courses offered at the *Institut* were reserved for ethnology proper (Mauss lecturing on 'Descriptive ethnology' and Labouret on 'African ethnology'), as against four courses dedicated to physical anthropology, two to linguistics, one each to prehistorical geography, 'exotic prehistory', human geography and 'the linguistics and ethnography of Eastern Asia and Oceania'.

28. They argued sometimes for the maintenance of the separateness of empirical observation and of interpretation of the findings. 'There must be sociologists and ethnographers. The first ones explain, the other ones inform.' Cf. Mauss, *Oeuvres*, vol. III, *op. cit.*, p. 389 ('Le manuel d'anthropologie de Kroeber' [1925]).

29. Indeed his 'Instructions sommaires pour les collecteurs d'objets ethnographiques' soon became a much-used guide for field-workers. During Mauss's involvement with the *Institut d'ethnologie* (1925-1940), more than a hundred field trips were sponsored-in Africa (50), Asia (15), the Americas (30), Oceania (6) and Europe (12).

30. The continued preservation of the theoretical ambitions of French ethnology, a clearly Durkheimian heritage, is of course largely due to the high standing of the academic recruitment of many of the best field scholars, a manifest survival of the model set by the Durkheimian cluster. Like some of the most prominent members of the *Année* group, Lévi-Strauss and Bourdieu had taken the highest available degree in philosophy before embarking upon their research career.

MALINOWSKI: EDGAR, DUKE OF NEVERMORE

When Malinowski's diaries, written between 1914 and 1918 in New Guinea and the Trobriand Islands, were discovered among his papers at Yale University, two others were also found. These had been written while he was a student of Natural Sciences and Philosophy at the Jagellonian University of Cracow in 1902-6. The latter two have not, as yet, been translated or published though they would, no doubt, shed valuable light on Malinowski's formative years before he left for England in 1910. This article is an attempt to reconstruct something of Malinowski's early life and background from other sources recently published in Poland.

Listy do Bronisława Malinowskiego (Letters to Bronisław Malinowski) by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz[1] was published in February this year. This collection of letters indicates that a very important relationship existed between Malinowski and Witkiewicz (or 'Witkacy' as he is more commonly known in Poland). Other sources include the mention of Malinowski in the biographies of friends,[2] other correspondence[3] as well as his portrayal as a

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[1]S.I. Witkiewicz, *Listy do Bronisława Malinowskiego*, Warszawa: Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1981. This is a collection of 26 letters written to Malinowski by Witkiewicz during the period 1906-1938 discovered among 'Bronislaw Malinowski's Papers' in Sterling Library, Yale University.

[2]Karol Estreicher, *Leon Chwistek-Biografia Artysty* (Leon Chwistek - A Biography of An Artist), Kraków 1971.

[3]Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Listy do Syna* (Letters to a Son), ed. B. Danek-Wojnowska and A.Micińska, Warszawa 1969. Letters written by Witkacy's father to his son (hereafter *Listy do Syna*).

character in a novel written by Witkacy in 1911-12.[4] I will try to show that an account of Malinowski's adolescence and early twenties - the friendships he formed and the way in which he fitted into the mainstream of cultural life encompassing Polish intellectuals, writers and artists - provides an essential link in understanding Malinowski the man. This type of biographical background is helpful in interpreting his published diaries as well as providing an insight into the environment in which his early ideas and theories were being formed.[5]

At the turn of the century, when Malinowski was fifteen, Poland did not exist as a political entity. He was living in Cracow, which at that time was within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with his mother (his father, who had been Professor of Linguistics at the University, had died in 1898). Cracow was an intellectual centre with the Jagellonian University at its hub. Sixty miles away in Zakopane, a small town in the Tatra Mountains, another intellectual and artistic centre was being formed. Intellectuals and artists from other parts of Poland then occupied by Russia and Austria were settling there. Zakopane was also becoming popular as a health spa resort attracting, besides others, consumptive writers and painters. On the artistic level, a movement called 'Młoda Polska'[6] (Young Poland) held sway.

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[4]S.I. Witkiewicz, *622 Upadki Bunga - Czyli Demoniczna Kobieta* (The 622 Downfalls of Bungo or the Demonic Woman), 1912. This is a novel, autobiographical in content, which deals with the moral and artistic dilemma of Bungo, the main character. It is a period piece describing Witkacy's circle of friends and the philosophical and humanistic discussions they were involved in.

[5]See 'The Polish Background to Malinowski's Work', by Andrzej K. Paluch, *Man*, Vol.16.No. 2, 1981. In this article, Paluch discusses the Polish influences on Malinowski's development of his model of functional anthropology. Malinowski's standpoint in his doctoral thesis entitled 'On the principle of the economy of thought' (1908), rises from and refers to positivism in its late nineteenth-century form. Two highly important questions in his anthropology come from this positivist heritage: an emphasis on functional explanations and a notion of culture as an instrumental whole.

[6]This was basically a philosophical and artistic movement producing new poetic and artistic forms as well as philosophical ideas frequently inspired by contemporary movements in Western Europe. It was motivated by a desire to re-establish a free Poland - reborn not only politically but also culturally. Its main features were symbolism and eroticism, allusions and metaphors.

During this period, Malinowski was close friends with Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz[7] (hereafter referred to as Witkacy), and the above-mentioned publication of letters gives an indication of the intensity and closeness as well as the tempestuousness of this relationship. It shows their emotional and intellectual inclinations and their discussions and disagreements on some basic interpretations of culture. In 1900, Witkacy was living in Zakopane and the two young boys often stayed at each other's house. One of the first indications of their friendship is in a letter written by Witkacy's father to his son (31.7.1900) in which he refers to Malinowski as Lord Douglas.[8] The nickname 'Lord Douglas' given to Malinowski by Witkacy is an allusion to Lord Alfred Douglas, son of the Marquis of Queensbury and a friend of Oscar Wilde. Elements of the Aesthetic Movement promulgated by Wilde had been taken over by 'Młoda Polska'. At this time, the Malinowskis were not particularly well off.

> 'There's poverty at Bronio's.'[9] (Bronio is a diminutive of Bronisław).
>
> 'I was at Bronio's. An orgy of smell and filth.'[10]

But despite material poverty Malinowski's intellectual and emotional life during this period was rich and stimulated by his friendship with Witkacy and Leon Chwistek[11] who later joined them to form an inseparable three-some.

These three young men spent their time together reading plays and poetry or they wrote imaginative treatises. Their literary imagination was awakened, excited and mixed with eroticism. Dreams of success, power and fame were tied in with reveries about love and a particular madness in thinking. All three were to experience the insatiability of their erotic feelings which were not atypical of the artistic mood of the time.[12] Eventually

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[7]Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1886-1939): became a renowned painter, philosopher and dramatist and leader of what is known as 'Trzecie Pokolenie Młodej Polski' (The third stage of the 'Młoda Polska' movement) in which there was a movement towards a more realistic expression in the Arts.

[8]*Lysty do Syna*, p. 39.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 85, letter no. 38 dated 25.4.1903.

[10]Ibid., p. 87, letter no. 40 dated 29.4.1903.

[11]Leon Chwistek (1884-1944): became a famous logician, mathematician, painter and theoretician of Art. He attended primary and grammar-school with Malinowski.

[12]See Estreicher, *op.cit.*, pp. 27-28.

they were to split up. Malinowski, who had a diligent and systematic approach to life and eagerly joined in serious discussions, was on the other hand less eager to disclose his thoughts openly and honestly. He began to get irritated with Chwistek's openness and the way in which he boasted of his talents. Even Witkacy sometimes expressed doubts as to whether his continued association with Malinowski would serve him for the better. At times like this he would revert to seeking advice from his father. In one letter, his father replied as follows:

> In one of your letters you wrote requesting me to say something about the question of Bronio. Strictly speaking, I know him very superficially. I know the outward appearance of his intelligence, easily orientated towards very diverse subjects and in accordance with a very adroit dialectic approach. He gives the impression of being a person who keeps his thoughts and what he says completely independent of outside as well as personal, emotional influences.... This is his outward appearance. Besides this, I know a few cynical letters. This cynicism, in such a person as Bronio, could only be an expression of clear dialectics, which will be a hindrance in his life....[13]

Malinowski's character at this time is depicted much more acutely and colourfully in Witkacy's first major work: *622 Upadki Bunga; Czyli Demoniczna Kobieta* (The 622 Downfalls of Bungo or the Demonic Woman), 1911-12. It is an autobiographical account centering on Bungo's moral, aesthetic and artistic dilemma. Bungo, the main character, is obviously modelled on Witkacy. He is trying to formulate his idea of art and is torn between deciding whether, as an Artist, he should sacrifice his life for his Art or through Art change his life in order to experience its charms - the choice, in other words, between using Art or being used by it. The story unfolds as Bungo gathers experience through discussions with friends and through romantic involvements. Malinowski appears under the pseudonym 'Duke Nevermore' and is portrayed as a decadent and perverse character. Here is a description of him at the beginning of the book:

> Lighting his cigar, Nevermore looked around the room. His head was closely shaved; he insisted that this hairstyle had all the ladies falling for him, particularly those of the south. His green eyes, cold as a reptile's, piercing through seventeen-power glasses, made an uneasy contrast with the childish smile on his huge, red, beautifully painted lips....[14]

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[13] *Lysty do Syna*, pp. 280-282, Letter no.192 dated 17.6.1905.

[14] *622 Upadki*, p. 64.

Nevermore, as in life Malinowski, is a close friend of Bungo's and often enters into discussions about the Artistic Ideal with him. The Duke hopes to become a man accounting for his own losses. He proposes that Bungo should construct a model of life of which the actual act of constructing would be more important than aesthetic or moral aims. Nevermore's character implies that Malinowski had already decided to abandon the notion of individuality which can be separated from the process and reality of a social context. According to him, an individual had to exist among other individuals. For Witkacy, an individual could determine an abstract individuality or 'Pure Form' that would give him self-consciousness, and in this way he could go beyond the boundary determined by ethics and the situation of other individuals and 'the mass'.

As a person skilled in preserving outward appearances and disclosing falsehood, adept at being able to cope in complicated situations and in being able to resolve them, Duke Nevermore had a strong influence on Bungo and almost led him away from the road along which he searched for an aesthetic ideal - led him straight into his arms (and his bed) - hence the name Nevermore.

At the end of the book Bungo, evaluating the advantages of such a selfish ethic as Nevermore's, sarcastically foretold Malinowski's academic future:

> The Duke who, for some unheard-of wrongdoings committed in the environs of Whitechapel in the company of two lords, was deported to New Guinea where he wrote "The Golden Bough of Pleasure", Edgar Duke of Nevermore, Cambridge University Press - a genial account of the perversions of those very primitive people, the Papuans. As a result he returned to England after a few years as a member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Fellow Royal Society [sic]. His later life was set only within the range of wild, incredible triumphs.[15]

When Malinowski left for London in 1910, he kept up correspondence with Witkacy and when he was writing his *Wierzenia Pierwotne I Formy Ustroju Społecznego* (Primitive Religions and Forms of Social Structure) (1914) in Polish, he asked for Witkacy's critical opinion. It is now no wonder that the two differed fundamentally in their views - no less than in how they regarded totemism and religion. The crux of their disagreement was that Malinowski reduced society or culture to psycho-philosophical needs and he identified the source of religion in such feelings as fear, hunger, anger, etc. Society served to satisfy these basic needs. Witkacy, on the other hand, held that it was necessary to recognise basic human needs but that they were the concrete needs of individuals rather than constituting an abstract or 'super-organic' society or culture.

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

It is obvious from their correspondence that the relationship with Witkacy meant a lot to Malinowski. Furthermore, several entries in his published diaries refer to it and I shall come to them below. In 1914, Witkacy's fiancée tragically committed suicide. From London Malinowski, concerned with his friend's own mental health, persuaded him to accompany him to Australia on the British Association trip for the Advancement of Science. They sailed together and in September 1914 reached Australia only to hear of the outbreak of the First World War. The trip to Australia, rather than taking Witkacy's mind off the death of his fiancée, made him feel it all the more. The war meant that he had the opportunity of fighting for a cause and he decided to return to Europe and join the Czar's forces. With this decision came an end to their intimate friendship. He may have asked Malinowski to give up his Austrian citizenship. This would not have been too difficult as it was easy enough to get British citizenship in Australia. Malinowski, however, seemed to think that he could make the most of the opportunity and decided to stay in order to do fieldwork. In an entry in his diary, Malinowski reflects on his broken friendship.

> 29.10.1914. Staś's letter deeply annoyed me .... I see almost no possibility of reconciliation. I also know that however many faults I have committed, he acted very ruthlessly towards me, all the time having gestures and airs of persecuted greatness and moralising in accents of deep, mature objective wisdom.... I am terribly dejected and dispirited by the bankruptcy of my most essential friendship.... The responsibility for the break lies primarily in his unrelenting pride, in his lack of consideration, his inability to forgive others for anything, though he can forgive himself a great deal.[16]

The two men were never to meet again. Correspondence was however resumed after a twenty-year silence in 1936. In his later work Witkacy had often expressed his belief that religion, philosophy and art were living out their last days, yet he found life without them worthless. On September 17, 1939, learning that the Red Army had crossed the Eastern border of Poland, he committed suicide by taking veronal and cutting his wrists.[17] Malinowski died of a heart attack in America two years later.

In the light of the preceding biographical information, Malinowski the man may be reappraised. The publication in 1968 of his

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[16]Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1967.

[17]Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1953.

Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term shocked many people. The diaries were originally written in Polish and lose a certain amount in their English translation, which does not render their true spirit; subtle nuances are lost. As Karol Estreicher, Leon Chwistek's biographer, who read the diaries in the original, recalls:

> Malinowski's journal neither irritates nor amazes us Poles. Read in Polish, it betrays its "Młodapolska" origins.[18]

The diaries are in the same style and concerned with the same inner problems as Chwistek and Witkacy. Erotic feelings and even their insatiability, far from being suppressed, are to be recognised and lived out as, à la 'Młodapolska', they are one type of emotion that makes one conscious of one's self. Malinowski, as Duke Nevermore, was forever attracting the attentions of young women as he did in real life. Heavy editing of the diaries by Valetta Malinowska also meant that the style is cramped and the content has gaps which do not help to make the English reader understand Malinowski's flow of thoughts and feelings.

The value and importance of Malinowski's relationship with Witkacy cannot be underestimated and should be regarded as one of the most important in his life. For about twenty years they were the closest of friends and each acted as a springboard for the formation and development of each other's ideas through constant discussion and, to some extent, rivalry. Suggestions have been made hinting at (indeed there are some insinuations in their letters to this effect) a homosexual liaison between the two. Allusions exist - Malinowski's nickname 'Lord Douglas' as also in *622 Upadki Bunga...*, with the seduction of Bungo by Duke Nevermore. There is no uncertainty about their rivalry in love affairs with women. On several occasions they were both in love with the same woman resulting in difficult and painful 'triangles'. Nonetheless Witkacy was probably the only person in Poland who knew and possessed all Malinowski's main works which were comparatively unknown in his native country until the seventies of this century.

CRYSTYN CĘCH

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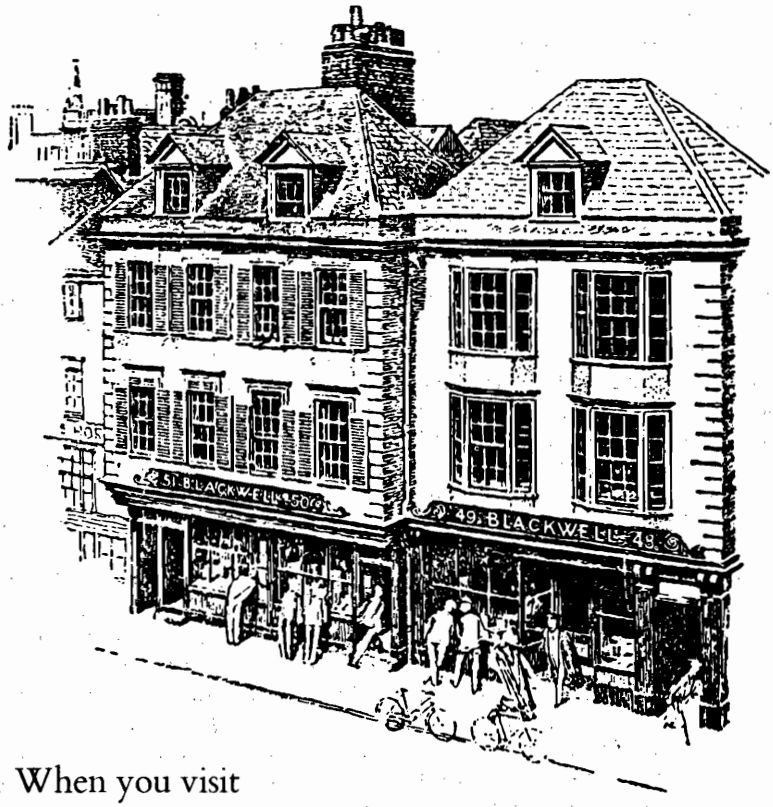
[18]Estreicher, *op. cit.*, p. 27.



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THE SUDAN - ASPECTS OF THE SOUTH
GOVERNMENT AMONG SOME OF THE NILOTIC PEOPLES, 1947-52[1]

Historians writing about Africa were at one time criticized for interesting themselves in little but the history of colonial rule. Social anthropologists on the other hand have been held to interest themselves too little in colonialism, and too much in out-moded habits of thought, antique customs or mere formal constructs. Anthropologists of the Southern Sudan have not, it is true, prefaced their writings with accounts of the superstructure of the Sudan Government, and this short paper is intended to suggest why this was so.

'Colonialism' varied, of course, in its character, pervasiveness and intensity from place to place and time to time. My direct experience in the Sudan was of the years 1947-52, the period of post-war re-evaluations everywhere, and these observations are thus partial and limited. The Sudan Government was then adapting to rapid political developments both within the Sudan and in international relations. Decolonization was the general policy of the British Government at home, if at the urgent demand of national political leaders abroad; the independence of the (Anglo-Egyptian) Sudan was clearly on the way - but when? In 1948 for example, in a good-humoured conversation between a senior northern Sudanese doctor and a British District Commissioner, the doctor was offering the British perhaps ten years more in the Sudan, against the District Commissioner's bid for at least twenty, more probably forty.

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[1] Text of a paper delivered at Trevelyan College, Durham, at the annual conference of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (Sudan Session), 9-11 July 1981.

Sudan Independence Day came eight years later in 1956, and some critics, both British and Sudanese (and Southern Sudanese particularly, who were left with less experience of political bureaucracy than their northern countrymen) have thought that those in power had taken the *status quo ante* for granted for too long, world war or no world war.

Government officers were all candid and hospitable and I was probably thought at first by many people to be a sort of (perhaps eccentric) government officer myself. But among the Dinka, to have no kin is to be a miserable creature indeed, and since I was neither a Dinka nor an Arab, nor a missionary nor a merchant, nor a teacher, nor a technical officer, what other family and category could I belong to but that of British political officers? But I did not concern myself with any overall or official view of the Sudan or of the south. Even now I find it difficult to keep its complex history in mind even in its more general outlines. With two years to learn something about up to a million people as it was supposed, dispersed over perhaps 200,000 square miles, it was enough to try to understand what was constantly and locally before my eyes, the affairs of ordinary daily life. I think it slowly became apparent that I could see and be told whatever people wished without having to take an official line, as government officers eventually must, whatever their private sympathies. At that time many of the senior Dinka who were most often in contact with foreigners were also those most learned in their own traditions, working for and with their own people, over whose freedom of expression they had never had control, and it would not have occurred to them to monitor my enquiries.

The Sudan Government's attitude was clear - administrators were one thing, anthropologists quite another. The Government had sponsored the work of Professor and Mrs. Seligman as early as 1909, and it has been favourably disposed to social anthropology ever since. Many Sudanese nationals are social anthropologists, and still among states in Africa, the Sudan is sympathetic towards foreign scholars. The Sudan Government at that time did not expect anthropological study to be an instrument of government, though it might of course be said in a commonplace way that knowledge is power. I was never asked for any 'operational' report. Some officials, like some anthropologists, may have expected anthropology to be more practically useful than others, but in 1947 anthropology was not thought to be an applied science which could be directed to social engineering. The many ethnographic and historical articles by government officers in the long-lived 'Sudan Notes and Records' show that because of, and beyond, their official duties, many of them were simply and personally interested in Sudanese peoples for their own cultures and qualities; and they talked about them much more than about affairs in the home country, from which indeed they were often delighted to return to the Sudan.

The spirit in which knowledge about the Sudan was gathered is represented in *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from Within*, a volume of essays written 'for the benefit of serving officers' but 'without

official imprimatur' by public servants with experience of various departments of the Sudan Government and published in 1935. There Evans-Pritchard contributes an ethnological survey of the Sudan, conventional for the time (though his statement that 'during the present administration Arabic culture has spread slowly, but surely, [in the South] through the medium of political officers and traders' was less conventional); and a senior administrator, L.F. Nalder, has an essay entitled 'The Two Sudans: Some Aspects of the South'.

For a book with its title, by the standards of today the absence of direct citations from Sudanese themselves is noticeable; and the prefatory quotation from Keats to the first, historical part of the book - 'From chaos and primaeval darkness came Light' - may appear to deny Sudanese any form of pre-colonial illumination; but rather, I think, it reflects a sense of mission, encouraged in serving officers, and their knowledge and love of literature, in English and for many in the classical languages and Arabic. The second part of the book, with Evans-Pritchard's and Nalder's articles and an essay on 'Devolutionary Principles in Native Administration' by J.A. de C. Hamilton among others, is prefaced by a quotation illustrating more prosaically the political theory of many members of the Sudan Political Service: 'Government in the East is less a matter of the making of constitutions than the establishment of personal relationships'. Give or take the question 'between whom?' and the idea corresponded to those of many Sudanese themselves. The years 1947-52, anticipating and following the Marshall Report (1949) on the promotion of local constitutional government in the Sudan (and commissioned by the Sudan Government), were unusual, since in that short time a transition from personal to constitutional principles of government was being negotiated.

In discussing government among the Southern Sudanese Nilotes it is not possible to leave aside the relations between the predominantly Arab North, the black South, and the British. I do not wish to add to the historical, political and sometimes polemical literature about this complex relationship, but the personal nature of British administration in the south has something to do with it. In southern memory, the British were not associated with the miseries caused by earlier exploitation of the south by governments or adventurers coming from the north (though by no means all northern Sudanese), and by this time they had a kind of familiarity with southern Sudanese, and sympathy for their customs and aspirations, from which some northern Sudanese felt they had been excluded by British policy. Here both Nalder's and Hamilton's essays, written before the recriminations of more recent years concerning those relationships, seem to me to shed a different light. The southern Sudan has now been so much in the public eye, and southern Sudanese so well-known abroad, that it is difficult for us to place ourselves in the situation of those administrators for whom Nalder wrote his essay who were assumed to feel that the peoples of the northern Sudan belonged historically and culturally to their own world, but that the peoples of the south were mysterious and alien.

Nalder's way of expressing this is the more interesting in that since his time the tendency has been to blame the British for long neglecting the south, and then at the last moment identifying themselves with its interests, as though their affinities were rather with the southern peoples than with the northern Arabs. Nalder writes:

> A common basis of Arabic race and language, and Islam, with their resulting unity of social and political ideas have fused the northern Sudan into a single whole...the culture of the north is one which is easily comprehensible to ourselves. Islam can claim in some measure to be a development of Christianity and the Koran has borrowed largely from the Old Testament and the New....The broad divisions of Sunni and Shia have their analogy in the two great divisions of Christendom ....The political organization of the tribe and its sections under the Nazir and his subordinate sheikhs is to us a normal and logical one, similar to that under which our ancestors may well have lived. Moreover the Arab mentality is not far removed from our own; we continually find things which surprise us, but seldom things which shock us. His general ideas of right and wrong are broadly similar to our own.

In the south, says Nalder, the British official will no longer find himself in this familiar world:

> ...there is the difference of religious and mental make-up, of attitude to existence, so great that contact becomes difficult...it may not be necessary to postulate for the negro a different type of mentality... but for him our laws of cause and effect have little existence or meaning. He lives...in a tiny portion of a dimly realized earth capriciously interfered with by a spirit world that can be partially controlled by magic. In anything abnormal, anything strange, he realises the workings of that world....Equally difficult of comprehension are his social and political ideas.... It is extraordinarily baffling to us....The African seems to have little political loyalty to anything.

But Nalder also recognized that there was much in the British way of life and rule which the southern Sudanese found equally strange and meaningless, and recommended anthropological studies to officials in the south to help them bridge their differences:

> The more [the official] knows about them the better he will get on with them, and the less likely he will be to give orders which appear unjust and oppressive.

Though the sense of mission of members of the Sudan services is very evident in the book, by 1935 the spirit in which it was to be fulfilled was no longer that of the old imperialism. Hamilton wrote:

> When native races were first administered by the white the latter had no doubt in their own minds as to the justice of their rule and the right by which they governed. Further they held that their own civilization was so immeasurably superior to that of their subjects that they had no scruples about imposing by force if necessary their own customs and creeds....

The price paid for that secure sense of racial and religious superiority was sporadic rebellion and military confrontation with the subject peoples, not only in the Sudan, and there not only between British and Sudanese. Some officials were killed by the Nilotes. Now a more understanding approach was being adopted. Hamilton continues:

> Moreover it had been apparent for some years to many sympathetic administrators, that there was much in native custom and mode of life which was worth supporting and that only by allowing a large measure of freeplay to these could the peoples' natural zest for life be maintained. This new line of thought was greatly fortified by the anthropologists.

But he had no illusions (nor, despite what is sometimes asserted, do most anthropologists) that the cultures of the Sudan should be or could be preserved intact:

> A realization of the interdependence of the modern world, the growth of communications and annihilation of distance, render impracticable any idea of leaving the "native" races [Hamilton's inverted commas there are a sign of the times] to work out their own salvation, uncontaminated by contact with whites.

So it was, I suggest, that the understanding of the Arab peoples of the north, which according to Nalder the British had received from their history and upbringing, was supplied for them, in the south, by anthropological knowledge or by an anthropological approach, starting even in the 1920s. Many Sudan administrators had a good knowledge of the customs and the languages of those in their charge, and their administration became the more peaceful for that. It is almost ironical that shortly before Evans-Pritchard first went to study the Nuer in 1930, the Government had found them so intractable as to send troops to subdue them and punish their lawlessness, while it was a District Commissioner himself trained as a social anthropologist who published in 1954 a monograph entitled *Nuer Law*.

Yet even with some knowledge and goodwill, it was difficult

to see how traditional Nilotic political institutions could be reconciled with minimally effective constitutional local government without the presence of an executive officer who could compel the people to implement the local councils' decisions; but this, as Nalder says, would violate the very principles upon which 'Native Authorities' were founded. The major difficulties were the traditional division of political influence among numerous local leaders, the hostility with which many of the southern peoples regarded any encroachment on their personal freedom of action and recourse to 'self-help', their opposition therefore to the appearance of domination, and the traditional limitations of any chief's judicial powers. Among the Nilotes it was not as though an indigenous autocratic form of government were being replaced by something more representative of the common people. Everyone thought himself his own master. Even a representative local government, if given real executive powers, would seem to deprive the Dinka and others of rights which to their minds had always been unquestionably theirs. As Dr. Deng says more bluntly: 'Until recently a policeman sent to seize a man's cow was likely to get hit on the head with a club'.

So the root of the problem of introducing modern democratic government into the south was to make it appear to be government of the people by the people and for the people when they had always thought they had it. Earlier experiences of foreign would-be overlords had been intolerable, and the Dinka were quick to resent any sign of coercion by their own countrymen also. Thus while enlightened British officials saw their task as gradually nurturing a humane, democratic, constitutional form of local government among them (Dr. A.H. Marshall who wrote the Marshall Report on local government was not 'an old Africa hand' but the city treasurer of Coventry), most southerners who had not received a European-style education, and many who had, retained the image of 'the Government' as a foreign, oppressive organization imposed upon them by force.

The Dinka for example recognize several different kinds of foreigners, *jur*. The most acceptable are their very distant kinsmen the Luo or 'black foreigners', *jur col*; Arab types of people are 'dark brown foreigners', *jur matthiang*, which also means 'foreigners with horses', while European types are 'bright red foreigners', *jur thith*, cf.'rednecks', perhaps. But the commonest word for Europeans and their government was *turek*, 'Turk', harking back to the detested Turco-Egyptian regime of up to a hundred years earlier. And whereas on the principles of indirect rule the British wished to administer as far as possible through traditionally established chiefs according to local custom, the Dinka commonly spoke of those very chiefs as foreigners, *jur*, or as 'black Turks', *turung col* when they tried to assign tasks which were resented, such as laborious unpaid work to keep the roads open.

Government itself then, (*Hakuma*, from the Arabic) for these Nilotes, was some sort of mainly incomprehensible abstract entity really located in some distant place (where were Khartoum or

London?) which occasionally interfered in their lives with instructions brought in the person of some foreign official with a few servants and policemen. Yet District Commissioners and other officials in Dinkaland, if they stayed long enough, were given individual praise-names like those of the Dinka themselves, in imagery derived from the colours of oxen, and I am sure that District Commissioners known familiarly as 'Great Black Ant', or 'Black Eyes', or 'Shade of the Tree' and so on did not incur the opprobrium attached to 'the Government' as an abstract force.

Nevertheless there is a marked difference between the associations of the Dinka words for their traditional form of political order, and those used for the order imposed by the Sudan Government, even though in many cases the same chiefs represented both. The traditional form of government - if one can so call the kind of political influence exercised by chiefs - was described in terms associated with maintaining and supporting correct behaviour (*cieng baai*) and looking after and bringing up and helping, as with children in a family (*koc muk*); or, since the traditional chiefs were also priests, carrying or upholding people's very lives. The associations of the word used for governing in the modern sense, on the other hand, were those of tethering or constraining in some way, *mac baai*. The word *mac* means to tether or restrain and reserve a beast for some purpose, as when an ox is promised to a particular divinity, and taken out of the usual circulation in marriage payments, or when cattle are handed over to secure a girl in marriage and, to translate literally, 'tied on the girl's back'. When used in relation to what modern government does, *mac* again has this sense of restraining, and is the word used for imprisoning - though local gaols were mostly very open prisons - those whom the Government has 'seized' or 'captured'. And a major complaint about the speed with which independence came in the south was that there had not been time to reconcile these two different sets of political ideas, which could only be done by talking through with influential local people the kinds of political developments which were inevitable if the Dinka and others were to be able to hold their own in the modern world. At the time of which I am writing, the District Commissioners' anthropological knowledge of the people for whom they were responsible was enough to permit discussion of Dinka affairs in their own terms; and the Dinka are very outspoken. There had indeed been mistakes made through placing too much reliance on anthropological categories, most particularly in assuming that there were ('good') priests and ('bad') magicians, and labelling as magician some great men who were accepted as spokesmen of God. Hence even prophets had been gravely misunderstood with serious consequences. But as the Southern chiefs started to talk things through with the District Commissioners, each side began to understand where their real differences and difficulties lay. I give an example from a meeting between District Commissioners and Dinka chiefs in 1939. I have to preface it by saying that it was well known that among many tribal peoples (and some District Commissioners were

Scottish) common descent as members of clans and lineages binds individuals together by a sense of collective responsibility, and in some situations results in their being regarded as equivalent to each other. Thus, members of the man's descent group quite outside the immediate family, had to contribute cattle to be given to the girl's 'clan' when she became a wife of their clansman. Similarly, the murder of any member of one descent group by a member of another was required to be avenged by any male member of the one by killing any male member of the other unless compensation in cattle had been accepted. On one occasion two young Dinka men met each other on a journey and were walking together in a friendly way when they found in conversation that they belonged to clans at feud with each other. One killed the other.

But the total identification of the individual with the group among 'primitive' or 'tribal' peoples was often crudely overstated in anthropological writings, and at the District Commissioners' meeting mentioned, this sort of matter was discussed between the District Commissioners and the Dinka chiefs. Their answer is reported in a Government file as follows:

> The suggestion that Government tax should be communal and not individual seemed to them ridiculous. When asked why, if the clan was willing to protect a cattleless member who had killed another by payment of blood cattle, should not the rich assist the poor in the matter of taxation, the unanimous reply was that such assistance was only given for the good of the clan. If a wife was not found for a healthy but cattleless man, he could not breed children who would in time be an assistance to the clan, or if a killing was not settled in blood cattle, by their laws any member of the clan was liable to be killed in vendetta. The payment of Government taxes however benefited nobody but the government and was therefore a matter between the Government and the individual. They argued that the communal payment of cattle was an indigenous system of insurance evolved by their forefathers. The system could not be extended to meet modern needs such as taxes because they were always a debit on the clan's wealth, and never an asset as in interclan payments.

Upon such small moves towards mutual understanding did the acceptability of a whole fiscal system depend. There is no doubt in my mind that the personal discussions between the relatively few British officials and local leaders in which they gained more understanding of each other's assumptions and prejudices were a most important foundation for any form of modern 'Western type' government among the Dinka and other southerners. They were very different in spirit from the usual form of 'consultation' in colonies where foreign rule was heavier-handed and more conspicuous, with individual members of the subject communities trying

to explain their views in unfamiliar surroundings to impersonal bureaucrats.

In 1947 in the Southern Sudan, there were only forty-two Sudan political officers representing 'the Government' in perhaps 250,000 square miles of territory, so it is not surprising that their government was on the whole very personal, and that official policy was to exercise it as lightly and inconspicuously as was consonant with keeping some sort of peace. As early as 1937, the then Governor-General Sir John Maffey ended a note on an official Government Memorandum of 1922 (which followed the Milner report on native policy of 1921) with the maxim:

> Experiment boldly with schemes of transferred administrative control, making no fetish of efficiency, remembering that in the long run the temper of his own people will do more to keep a native ruler straight than alien interference, and not forgetting that our efficiency is often more apparent than real and lacks those picturesque and 'amour propre' qualities of native rule which compensate for its apparent crudities.

District Commissioners in fact had primarily the task of intervening to prevent or put a stop to tribal fights and cattle-raiding, to enforce where necessary the decisions of the chiefs' courts (by this time the Dinka were becoming accustomed if not reconciled to the notion that judgments given there could be put into effect) and keeping open communications.

Yet of course this very personal form of government, and the number and variety of tasks which District Commissioners were required to perform or supervise, did exclude from the process of government very many of the governed, increasing numbers of them educated and accustomed to 'western' ideas. (It is said that during a strike at Rumbek secondary school over the quality of the food, the pupils were heard saying 'to the tumbrils with him' outside the headmaster's office). This situation was to be remedied by the Marshall Report of 1949, to which I now turn.

Though I am not sure that District Commissioners would all agree with Dr. Marshall that they were '...a bewildered race unable to carry out all their work, and uncertain what to leave undone', the list of their functions which he drew up in consultation with them seems to make them each into a whole local government in himself. There are some thirty of these main functions, varying from settling major tribal disagreements and directing the police service, to town planning and looking after local dairies and gardens. All these were to be transferred, some to specialized officers of the central government, some to certain *ad hoc* authorities, some to Province Headquarters and some to local authorities in themselves. The District Commissioners were to bring about this transfer as they phased themselves out. The recommendations of the Report were on the whole approved and welcomed by the Sudan Government. The then Civil Secretary, Sir James Robertson, gave an address to Council

in presenting it, at the end of which he made some comments on the role of the District Commissioner summing up how they themselves saw their work, though most would not have said it of themselves. 'The District Officer as such will presumably ultimately disappear', said Sir James, but:

> The difficulty is going to be in carrying out the District Officer's work without incurring considerable increase in expenditure. "The Jack of all Trades" may have been an amateur as Dr. Marshall says, but he was enthusiastic, capable, and could get work done cheaply without much assistance....As head of the political service and an ex-district and provincial official, it may be thought hardly my place to say a word here about the work which District Commissioners have done in the past. But it is very largely due to them, their devotion to duty, courage in loneliness and illness, sense of justice and fair play, that the Sudan is so well-administered today.

I had left Dinkaland before much could be observed of the change in government among the Dinka which the Marshall Report was intended to guide them towards, though Gogrial where I started work had already advanced further in that direction than many other parts of the Southern Sudan. Among the Anuak, to whom I had then gone, isolated from any government centre as they were for much of the year, the dynastic and inter-village rivalries continued as usual. The change from British to Sudanese government in Khartoum was seen as just a remote version of their own village 'revolutions' (*agem*), in which a headman who has ceased to satisfy the majority of his people is challenged by his opponents and often forcibly expelled in favour of another member of his family. Many years before - and this is an indication of a difficulty felt more widely in one form or another in producing any real electoral system there - the District Commissioner had tried to introduce a reform in the manner in which the ancient beads which conferred nobility on members of the noble house of the Anuak were circulated. These valuable and unique necklaces had traditionally remained in the possession of any one of several powerful nobles, each reigning independently in his own village until they were freely handed over to a chosen successor or, as became more usual, wrested from him by force by a dynastic rival and his followers. This often caused bloodshed, and the District Commissioner tried to persuade the more important of the nobles to have a periodic election of one of their number to hold the necklaces for a limited period and then peaceably pass this on to an elected successor. In fact each noble voted for himself as candidate, and the District Commissioner, with a threat of force, appointed whom he thought fit to be the recipient, some say, by tossing a coin.

Though not of this kind or intensity, the histories of rivalries and conflict between different local leaders among both

the Dinka and Nuer made it difficult initially for them to co-operate and accept collective responsibility. Each, as in the traditional system, would tend to put the interests of his own section first, and if he did not do so would be likely to lose the local support which had placed him in his official position in the first place. I have little direct information about this matter for the Dinka, and since probably their kind of chieftainship was more influential than chieftainship among the Nuer, some of the problems arising among them may have been different from those which arose among the Nuer. But given the basic similarities of their interests, political organization and geographical distribution, I think much that is said of the beginnings of local government among the Nuer, and which has been described in a paper by Mr. P.L. Roussel who as a District Commissioner was involved in bringing it into being, must have applied to the Dinka also.

Like the Dinka, the Nuer are widely dispersed and constantly moving over long distances pasturing their herds. Nomadism in itself has always been difficult to reconcile with central control, as the one-time obsession of many Middle Eastern countries with policies of settlement, 'sedentrization', bears witness. But in addition to this, and congruent with it, the political structure of this people was maintained by what Evans-Pritchard called 'fission and fusion' - that is, the tribes were held together by the way in which political segments which were opposed to each other at lower levels of political activity, united with each other when any one of them came into conflict with more distant, similarly composed, groups. There was no tradition of chiefly rule, but from time to time and place to place men of remarkable personality and speaking in the name of God - prophets as Evans-Pritchard called them - gained wide political influence. Since the memory of the greatest of these is still held in reverence, Roussel's comments on their position vis-à-vis 'government' are interesting:

> The only effective Nuer leaders were their prophets, especially in times of stress. These, however, sprang up erratically here and there...it was unreliable and spasmodic and formed no basis for a governing class. ...However they are always a very present source of influence, and any relaxing of government vigilance, or the appearance of an outside threat to the Nuer tribes, might well be the signal for their reappearance with an influence far beyond that of any Government official who might be in charge of that area. Indeed, a successful prophet may well have adherence from beyond his own tribal boundaries within Nuerland, while a well-known Dinka prophet will attract Nuer and vice-versa.

This situation, political because religious, might well affect therefore the stability of any local secular government,

but it could scarcely be allowed for in Dr. Marshall's report. The people of Coventry could scarcely abandon the city council to follow a religious revivalist.

The difficulties which faced the Zeraf Island Rural District Council - the first experiment in local government among the Nuer following the publication of the Marshall Report in 1949 - started with deciding where it should be centred. If in Britain at the present time the redrawing of local authority boundaries has created quite deep feelings of resentment, it can be imagined that the creation of an entirely new authority intended democratically to administer a highly mobile population consisting of communities historically often in conflict raised many strong objections. Consequently not only had geographical location to be taken into account, including the vast climatic and ecological differences between different seasons of the year in that part of the world, but also tribal affiliations. For example, plans for a second council were shelved not only on grounds of communications but because of

> ...objections on purely tribal grounds, for although the Ghol and Nyarreweng Dinka might settle down with the Baar Gaweir (Nuer) in a common council, it was expecting rather much that the Radh Gaweir would settle down with the Baar (Nuer) as their relations had always been at the best in the nature of veiled hostility. Again, the Dinka to the North of central Nuer District had little affinity with any of the other tribal sections involved and were in any case a very scattered community who would have fitted in much better with the Ngok Dinka of Malakal District with whom they had much closer connections in every way.

But once a council was established, its difficulties were in fact those of implementing orders, the difficulties indeed of a District Commissioner's in the past, but without his indifference to unpopularity if force had eventually to be used. Members of the council discussed the plans and practice of government intelligently and with detailed local knowledge, but it was found difficult to execute their decisions. I take as an example what was always a source of anger and opposition to the Government - forced or very cheap labour on the roads. Among the Dinka in fact some people by 1950 were beginning to value communications for some of the benefits they promised to bring - certain trade goods, some educational and medical services, and even the possibility of intervention to prevent tribal fighting from going too far, for to have to make peace by *force majeure* did at least produce without loss of face some peace, which the more statesmanlike Dinka leaders often inwardly wanted to have imposed on their hot-headed young warriors. Unfortunately the main period for repairing the roads was after the rains, when the harvest was in, and traditionally a time for relaxation, dancing and feasting.

According to the minutes of the Zeraf Island District

Council, the reallocation of roadwork was discussed at its meeting in 1951, and was - in the District Commissioner's words - 'one up to the council'. I shall quote part of the minute, because it gives an impression of the grass-roots problems, so to call them, of maintaining modern government services among people who may want them but do not wish, unpaid, to undertake them themselves. (And here one must ask how many of us would in normal circumstances acquiesce in working on these terms to keep the roads in repair?)

> Bwom Wur, Executive Chief of the Fagwir Court area, said that in the past anyone who lived east of the Zeraf had done work east of it, and anyone who lived west of it had done work west of it.
> There was a *gatwɔt* (clan head) called Bangoat, he and his stretch of roadwork were in the west of the Zeraf, but some of his men lived on the east of it and worked with a *gatwɔt* not their own. Similarly there was a *gatwɔt* called Lam Cine, he and his stretch of roadwork were on the east of the Zeraf, but some of them lived on the west of it, and worked with a *gatwɔt* not their own....

And so forth until a reasonable decision was reached, and, as appears, successfully implemented for a year under the chairmanship of a Nuer of very strong personality with political experience of central government affairs. But at the end of 1952 he

> ...left to take up politics again, and the council immediately relapsed. Their roadwork, so well started, was in danger of being ruined and was only saved by the intervention of the District Commissioner, while council buildings were so neglected that they finally had to be repaired by prison labour.

It is because so much of the government's place in the lives of the Dinka and others went no deeper than this, because traditional forms of political control were so strong just beneath the surface of modern government and so ready to reassert themselves, that social anthropologists have been able to write a great deal about these peoples without dwelling at length on their colonial rulers. I can imagine that now, if money for development is made available to pay people for performing unpleasant tasks, and some local executive can back up effectively the local elected authorities, the situation may have changed considerably. But between 1947 and 1952, and presumably until the British left at least, the only way to real change was by maintaining a constant dialogue between the people and the administration, talking things through for as long as necessary in open forum, and allowing for the exercise of the rhetorical skills, the sharpness in debate, the humour and satire, with which these peoples are remarkably well-endowed. For post-independence (for the most

part Arab) administrators, new to the kind of history and dialogue I have sketchily described, to try to take over in the middle of it was bound to place them in very great difficulties, eventually made insoluble for years of war by the use of military force, which the British had learnt more and more to hold in reserve.

GODFREY LIENHARDT

PERCY CORIAT ON THE NUER

Percy Coriat (1898-1960) spent nearly ten years, from 1922 to 1931, as an administrator among the Nuer, and, as the first British official who became fully conversant in Nuer,[1] he counts as the first administrator who could be considered an authority on them. It is unfortunate that he published only two pieces (*The Gaweir Nuers* [1923] and *'Gwek the Witch-Doctor and the Pyramid of Dengkur'* [1939]),[2] and only one of them (1939) has become generally known to those interested in the Nuer. He is better known through references about him in other persons' writings. He is mentioned in two administrative memoirs (C. Borradaile ('Ben Assher'), *A Nomad in the South Sudan*, London 1928, pp. 222-3; and V.H. Fergusson, *The Story of Fergie Bey*, London 1930, pp. 283-6), and he is the source of much information on the Gaawar in H.C. Jackson's early article on the Nuer ('The

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[1] C.H. Stigand, who was Inspector at Nasir in 1915-16 and Governor of Upper Nile Province in 1916-18, was one of the few early administrators who had any linguistic training in African languages. His *A Nuer-English Vocabulary* (Cambridge 1923) which was published posthumously, however, shows traces of having been put together with the aid of a Dinka interpreter. V.H. Fergusson worked exclusively through Dinka and Atuot interpreters. John Lee, Assistant District Commissioner at Nasir in 1921-29, also became fluent in Nuer at the same time Coriat did, but unfortunately he committed less to paper than almost any other administrator among the Nuer.

[2] A selected annotated bibliography of the writings of Percy Coriat is provided below, at the end of this article.

Nuer of Upper Nile Province', *Sudan Notes and Records* [hereafter *SNR*], VI:2 [1923], p. 162). He is also referred to occasionally by E.E. Evans-Pritchard (cf. 'The Nuer: Tribe and Clan', *SNR*, XVI: 1, XVII: 1, XVIII: 1 [1933-5]; *The Nuer*, Oxford 1940; *Nuer Religion*, Oxford 1956, *passim*), by B.A. Lewis ('Nuer Spokesmen. A Note on the Institution of the *Ruic*', *SNR*, XXXII: 1 [1951], p. 83) and P.P. Howell (*A Manual of Nuer Law*, London 1954, *passim*). None of these references gives a coherent picture of his work or his knowledge of the Nuer.

As yet no single library or archive has a comprehensive collection of his writings. This would be a difficult collection to compile, for most of what he wrote is found in government correspondence and brief reports. Some of his papers can be found in the Central Records Office, Khartoum (CRO) and in Rhodes House, Oxford. The majority of his most important reports are still to be found in Upper Nile Province where he served, and these are scheduled to be transferred to the Southern Regional Records Office (SRRO) in Juba in 1982. Some of his correspondence referring to the districts in present-day Jonglei Province have already been transferred to Juba. The collection of the SRRO will inevitably be incomplete, because of the attrition government documents have suffered in the district headquarters of the Southern Region. None of Coriat's papers on the Lou were found in Akobo, to which they were transferred in 1935, and none on the Gaawar and Zaraf Nuer were found in New Fangak when both these headquarters were visited this year. Some copies of his reports have, surprisingly, been found in Nasir, where he never served, and correspondence has also been found in Bor, a district with which he had numerous dealings. Most of his existing reports have been found in Malakal, and more may yet be found in Bentiu.

This article is a brief survey of the most important of Coriat's papers which have so far come to light. It will also give a summary of his career among the Nuer, and an assessment of the value of Coriat's papers for any study of the Nuer. In the near future some of his government reports may become more accessible to researchers, and some such assessment must be made if his work is to take its proper place in Nuer ethnography.

Percy Coriat served in the Middle East during World War One, and in 1921 he went to the Sudan employed by the Sudan Cotton, Fuel and Industrial Development Company. The company soon went bankrupt, leaving Coriat stranded at a station in Lake No on the White Nile. He was recruited into the Sudan Political Service by the Governor of Upper Nile Province, K.C.P. Struvé, in 1922 and was immediately sent as an Assistant District Commissioner to the small outpost of Ayod among the Bar Gaawar. Here he took the unprecedented, and never repeated, step of staying in his district during the rainy season. It was during the rains of 1922, cut off from all other British government officials, that he learned to speak Nuer and established many ties of personal friendship with the Gaawar, including the prophet Dual Diu. In 1923 the Lou Nuer were included in his district, and in 1924 his headquarters were transferred from Ayod (which was considered too isolated) to Abwong on the Sobat river. Abwong had the advantage

of direct and year-round contact with Malakal, but as an administrative centre for the Nuer it had certain disadvantages, the first being that it was situated in Ngok Dinka country, and the second that it was rather distant from the Gaawar and even some Lou. Between 1924 and 1926 all of the Gaawar and Zaraf Nuer were transferred from Coriat's jurisdiction to that of the administrative centre of Fangak on the Bahr al-Zaraf.

Coriat served as Political Officer on the patrol sent to the Gaawar in 1928 following the outbreak of hostilities with the Lou. He also served in the campaigns against the Lou throughout 1928-9. From 1929 to 1931 he served as District Commissioner for the Western Nuer. By the end of his career among the Nuer Coriat had administered all but the Eastern Jikany, and he personally provided a good deal of coherence and continuity to Nuer administration throughout the province in this formative period. Three of the most important administrators among the Nuer in the 1930s - Wedderburn-Maxwell and Captains Alban and Romilly - benefited directly from his experience and advice.

In 1932 Coriat left Upper Nile Province and served in other parts of the Southern Sudan until transferred to Kordofan in 1935. He served in the Sudan Defence Force from 1941 to 1945 and ended the war in Libya in command of a Nuba battalion. From 1946 to 1953 he was part of the administration of Tripolitania, and in 1954-5 he was commander-in-chief of the Muscat & Oman Field Force. He died in 1960.

Coriat is remembered among the Gaawar and Lou as a harsh man who 'tamed' the Nuer, and a number of stories are still told about his summary justice and his role in the pacification campaigns. His horse made an almost equally strong impression on the Nuer, and Coriat on his horse riding down the Nuer is a picture still frequently recalled. It is even said that his eye was poked out by the branch of a thorn tree when he was chasing fugitives through a forest during the Nuer Settlement, though in fact he lost his eye in battle during World War One. For all his remembered harshness he is also remembered with admiration and affection by many older persons who knew him. The fact that he was capable of strong personal friendships with individual Nuer is a point told in his favour. His friendship with Dual Diu is well known, and to a certain extent the war between the Gaawar and the government is attributed, unfairly, to a falling out between the two men. It is clear from a number of his letters that Coriat regarded Dual as a friend throughout the hostilities and had some reservations about government actions against him.

Of all the Nuer Coriat knew the Gaawar best, and his experiences there coloured his view of other Nuer. This is particularly evident in his assessment of the nineteenth century. During the 1860s and 1870s the Gaawar had been the target of intensive slave-raiding. This created a number of deep divisions in Gaawar society as some sections allied with the slavers against others. Coriat's description of the impact of the slavers on Gaawar society (*The Gaweir Nuers* [1923], p. 3) was gathered from persons who had lived through the events of the nineteenth

century and follows very closely the account given by the Bar Gaawar today.[3] Coriat assumed that other parts of Nuerland suffered the same sort of devastation and attributed the dispersal of Lou clans and lineages to the breakdown of social order that followed Arab raids ('Notes on a paper on Nuer read by Mr. O. [*sic*] Evans-Pritchard at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, September 1931'; also 'Gwek the Witch-Doctor', p. 225). This was clearly not the case as the Lou suffered very little from slave-raids in the nineteenth century. The impact of the slavers on the Nuer was a point on which he and Evans-Pritchard disagreed (Coriat 'Notes' [1931], Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, p. 133). It is clear from Evans-Pritchard's more detailed descriptions of segmentary fission and the dispersal of kin that the 'social disorganization' that Coriat attributed to the slavers was really the product of Nuer expansion when kin groups lost their territorial cohesion. In assigning the cause to the effect, Coriat underestimated the impact of the slavers on Western Nuer society because it showed fewer signs of 'disorganization' ('Report on Eastern District (Nuers) Bahr el Ghazal Province' [1931]. In fact the Western Nuer had been exposed to slave-raiding far longer than any other Nuer region, but they had expanded less and had not experienced the same sort of mixing that Evans-Pritchard described for the Nuer of the east.

Most of the other aspects of Gaawar life and history that Coriat recorded (*The Gaweir Nuers* [1923]; 'Settlement of Ol Dinka-Gaweir Boundary Dispute' [1926]; 'Transfer of Barr Gaweir to Zeraf Valley District' [1926]) can be corroborated by modern Gaawar testimony. Because of the brevity of his 1923 pamphlet some of what Coriat has written could be misleading to a casual reader. It is only as one becomes more familiar with the Gaawar that the importance of some of his more cryptic passages becomes apparent. His writing on the Gaawar refers mostly to the Bar rather than the Radh. He gives a different list of age-sets for the Gaawar than Howell does, for example, but Coriat's is a list for the Bar of the Duk ridge, while Howell's is a list for the Radh Gaawar and the Lak and Thiang inhabitants of the Zaraf island (Coriat, *The Gaweir Nuers* [1923], p. 22; P.P. Howell, 'The Age-Set System and the Institution of "Nak" among the Nuer', *SNR*, XXIX: 2 [1948], p. 179).

Coriat's descriptions of the Lou ('General Report S8 (Lau Nuer) Patrol' [1928], 'Nuer Settlement - Guncol Area Report'

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[3]Some of Coriat's information on Gaawar history may have been derived from K.C.P. Struvé, who as Inspector in Upper Nile Province before World War One published a fair amount on the nineteenth century in the Sudan Intelligence Reports and the Governor-General's annual reports on the Sudan. It should be noted here that Coriat was consistently inaccurate in his dates for events in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[1929], 'Gwek the Witch-Doctor' [1939]) are more at variance with modern Nuer testimony than his material on the Gaawar. This seems to be a result of the fact that while stationed at Abwong Coriat did not have the same access to as wide a range of sources among the Lou as he had for the Gaawar at Ayod. His accounts of Ngundeng and Guek seem drawn mostly from sources antagonistic to the two prophets, and he did rely a great deal on three of their personal enemies: Guet Thic, Lam Tutthiang, and Lam's son Mayan, a government interpreter at Abwong (all three are mentioned in 'Southern (Abwong) District (Handing over Notes)' [1929]).

On the subject of religion Coriat is again at variance with Evans-Pritchard on some major points. He shared with other administrators a prejudice against 'witchdoctors' of all sorts and was not particularly careful in distinguishing between diviners, magicians, priests and prophets (*The Gaweir Nuers* [1923], pp. 19-20, 22-3; 'Notes' [1931]). On two points, however, he seems to have been better informed than Evans-Pritchard. The first was his observation that priests, too, were inspired by a *kuoth* (*ibid.*). This is *kuoth rieng* (Divinity of the Flesh), though he does not name it as such. Evans-Pritchard rather underestimated the importance of this *kuoth* in his analysis of the priests, preferring to call it 'priestly virtue' (*Nuer Religion*, pp. 109-10, 299), thus presenting the priest as more removed from Divinity than he actually is. The second point was the political or secular influence of the Lou prophet Ngundeng. Coriat was quite correct in attributing extensive secular influence to Ngundeng ('Notes' [1931]), a point that Evans-Pritchard consistently denied (*SNR* [1935], p. 56; *The Nuer*, p. 188).

The Coriat Papers at Rhodes House, Oxford

There are only four reports of any particular ethnographic interest on the Nuer in the Rhodes House collection, and the rest of the papers contain fragmental autobiographical notes, some papers covering his service elsewhere in the Sudan,[4] and letters to his wife during most of his career in the Sudan Political Service, the Sudan Defence Force and the Muscat and Oman Field Force (see Mss. Afr. s. 1684). There are forty-nine letters (a total of three hundred and thirty pages) from the years 1924-31 in Upper Nile Province. Much in the letters is of

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[4]Of some ethnographic interest are his comments on the Tuleshi, which are found in his letters from Kordofan and his report on the removal of the Tuleshi from their hill villages in 1945. There are also photographs of the Tuleshi and Mrs. Coriat's own comments on the Tuleshi operations. Additional notes on Kordofan by Edward Aglen (a copy of which has been deposited in the library of the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford) are also found in the Coriat papers in Rhodes House.

a personal nature, but a good deal describes his administrative work and the personalities involved in the administration of the Nuer and Upper Nile Province. The most valuable from the point of view of information on the Nuer are the letters from 1925 to 1928, particularly those covering the campaigns against the Lou and Gaawar. There are no letters from the year 1929, when his wife was with him in the Sudan. The letters of 1930-1 are less descriptive than the earlier ones but are filled with more specific references to persons and places among the Western Nuer that Mrs. Coriat knew from her own experience while with her husband. Evans-Pritchard is mentioned only twice: once in 1930 after his first field trip among the Nuer when he complained that the Nuer were 'harder to know than ever', and once in 1931 when his second field trip ended in illness. 'He looked fairly rotten', Coriat reported, 'but one couldn't expect anything else with the awful food and servants he puts up with when he is living with the Nuer.' Other administrators associated with the Nuer he mentions are: the Governors Struvé, Willis ('Chunky') and Pawson, and the District Commissioners Fergusson, Lee, Pletts, Wyld ('Tiger'), Romilly ('Dub'), Alban ('Obang'), and Masterman ('Pink Eye').

Coriat's own papers on the Nuer are supplemented in the Rhodes House collection by papers written by others. There are a number of Nuer Settlement reports, also found in the Civil Secretary and Upper Nile Province sections of the Central Records Office in Khartoum. Three by Willis (dated 26.11.28, 11.1.29 and 20.6.29) give summaries (frequently inaccurate) of the Gaawar rebellion, the final suppression of the Lou and plans for the future. There are in addition three reports by veterinary and agricultural experts surveying the economic potential of the Lou, Gaawar and Thiang.

By far the most interesting of the additional papers are the draft memoirs of Mrs. K. Coriat (Mss. Afr. S. 1684 [11]). These were composed with the aid of her husband's letters but also fill in the gaps not covered by them. They do not provide the same sort of ethnographic or historical detail, but they give a vivid account of her life with her husband among the Western Nuer in 1930-1, including two descriptions of the execution of one of Fergusson's murderers. They also show rather more insight into the personalities of other administrators than do Coriat's own letters.

The full range of the Coriat papers available both in Britain and the Sudan provide a dimension often overlooked by anthropologists in their reappraisals of Evans-Pritchard's ethnography. Administrative observations on the Nuer are dispersed in many different reports and letters, and it is therefore more difficult to make a comprehensive assessment of their value. Administrators like Coriat often had more limited or specific interests in the Nuer than Evans-Pritchard and frequently did not address themselves to topics that interest anthropologists, but they did spend longer among the Nuer, had a more comfortable (if less profound) understanding of the language, and more personal dealings with individual Nuer than either Evans-Pritchard

or most of the missionary ethnographers had. They are, therefore, a source of information that must not be overlooked.

Selected Annotated Bibliography of Percy Coriat

1923 a 'Barr of Southern Gaweir--Précis of Note by Coriat 19.1.1923 '(CRO Dakhlia I 112/13/87). Brief note on Bar Gaawar political divisions.

b *The Gaweir Nuers*, 10.7.23, 23pp. (a copy can be found in the library of the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford). Published as a supplement to Jackson's *SNR* article when it was issued as a pamphlet. Contains the same information found in 1923a as well as notes on Gaawar history, customary law, economy, religion, and relations with the Dinka and other Nuer.

1926 a 'Settlement of Ol Dinka-Gaweir Boundary Dispute' (UNP 66.B.11).* Report of boundary settlement in December 1925, giving a summary of the previous thirty years of Gaawar-Dinka relations.

b 'Transfer of Barr Gaweir to Zeraf Valley District' (UNP 66.B.10).* Gives much the same information found in 1923a and 1926a, considerably updated and expanded.

1928 'General Report. S8 (Lau Nuer) Patrol', 20.3.28 (CRO Civsec 5/2/11). Summary of events leading up to the 1928 campaign against Guek Ngundeng. It disagrees significantly with some of his statements in his 1939 article on Guek.

1929 a 'Southern (Abwong) District (Handing Over Notes)', 6.5.29 (Rhodes House). The only known copy of his handing-over notes on the Lou to his successor, Capt. Alban. Gives suggestions for administration following the Nuer Settlement, discussions of specific aspects of office routine and district administration. Brief biographical notes on forty Nuer and forty-three Dinka leaders. One appendix on Lou Nuer political prisoners, but the appendix on division of road work is missing.

b 'Nuer Settlement--Guncol Area Report', 24.5.29 (CRO Civsec 1/3/8; Rhodes House). Final report on the death of Guek and Nuer Settlement operations, with final returns of prisoners, casualties and cattle captured from the Gun Lou.

1931 a 'Western Nuer District (Handing Over Notes)', 1.2.1931 (CRO Civsec 57/2/8; Durham 212/14/9). List of political divisions of Western Nuer tribes, including population

estimates and descriptions of prominent leaders.

b 'Administration-Western Nuer', 5.2.31 (Rhodes House). Brief summary of previous administration of Western Nuer, mainly outlining difficulties that have arisen, seeking clarification of future policy from the Governor of Upper Nile Province.

c 'Notes on a paper on Nuer read by Mr. D. [*sic*] Evans-Pritchard at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. September 1931' (CRO Dakhlia I 112/12/87; END 66.A.1+). Detailed critique of Evans-Pritchard's first presentation of his Nuer material; a number of his comments were cited by Evans-Pritchard in his revision of the paper which was published in *SNR* 1933-5.

d 'Report on Eastern District (Nuers) Bahr el Ghazal Province' and 'History and General Tribal Organisation' (END 66.A.1+). Summary of Nuer and Atuot origin myths, nineteenth-century history and progress of Anglo-Egyptian administration. Some of the same information is found in 1931a.

1939 'Gwek the Witch-Doctor and the Pyramid of Dengkur', *SNR*, Vol. XXII:2, pp.221-237 (ms. in Rhodes House). Full-length account of the prophets Ngundeng and Guek, written apparently from memory with perhaps only 1929b as a reference. It disagrees in many important aspects with some of his own reports (1928 especially).

n.d. 'Easy but Uncertain' (Rhodes House; *Karama*, forthcoming). The only complete article surviving among the various drafts of his autobiographical material, it describes an incident during his rainy season tour in Ayod in 1922 and gives a vivid sketch of Nyang Macar, one of his earliest Gaawar friends.

* Schedules for transfer from the Province archives, Malakal to the Southern Regional Records Office, Juba, in 1982.

\+ Scheduled for transfer from the Nasir District archives to the Southern Regional Records Office, Juba, in 1982.

DOUGLAS H. JOHNSON

BOOK REVIEWS

E.E. EVANS-PRITCHARD, *A History of Anthropological Thought* (edited by André Singer and with an Introduction by Ernest Gellner), London and Boston: Faber and Faber 1981. xxxvi, 204 pp., Bibliography, Index. £10.50.

The editor of a posthumous volume has a difficult task. He can only guess what it was in the writer's mind to do with its unfinished sections, and whether he would eventually have revised the whole so as to remove discrepancies. It seems from André Singer's brief Introduction to this book that the essays in it, based though they were on lectures given to Evans-Pritchard's Oxford students, were written at very different times, and one could wish that a date had been given for each chapter, or at least that the customary acknowledgements to publishers had specified the sources being quoted.

The general lay-out presents fifteen completed chapters followed by 'Notes and Comments' on ten further writers. As Singer points out, Morgan, Marx and Lowie have been left out rather than be 'represented by sketchy and misleading paragraphs'. And it seems that Evans-Pritchard must have contemplated essays on Spencer and Fustel de Coulanges which were not even sketched.

What an encyclopedia the complete work would have been. As it is, it brings home how much less well-read Evans-Pritchard's contemporaries were, and I am pretty sure his successors are.

If the length of an essay is the measure of the importance attached to the subject, it is surprising to find that Tylor rates only four pages in these days when the current view is that everything to be found in Frazer is already to be found in him. The answer seems to be that Frazer made more mistakes. The Scottish Enlightenment is represented by Kames, Adam Ferguson and Millar, and it is made clear, as it should be, that the 'conjectural' history which they favoured, and which Radcliffe-Brown rejected, was by no means the kind of history that Evans-Pritchard said we needed to study (though he did make the debating point, in his Marett Lecture of 1950, that 'all history is conjectural'). The studies of Pareto and Lévy-Bruhl compare their attitudes towards the 'non-logical' or 'pre-logical' ways of thinking as did a chapter in his *Theories of Primitive Religion* (1965).

Among the subjects of 'Notes and Comments' we come to Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown and battles not so long ago. Both are treated in a dismissive manner which one would expect from Evans-Pritchard's well-known hostility to Malinowski, but which surprises us when it comes to Radcliffe-Brown. In the first case the language could fairly be called abusive, though a little allowance is made for Malinowski's refutation of earlier theories. It is, alas, true that Malinowski had no hestitation in setting up and knocking down

straw men (even among his own pupils). It is true too that the theory of culture as a direct or indirect means to the satisfaction of basic needs had glaring weaknesses, and perhaps the worst, as Evans-Pritchard indicates, was that while claiming it to be universal, he in fact applied it only to 'primitive' societies while he was highly critical of that in which he himself lived. It is to this that Evans-Pritchard refers elsewhere in the book as a theory that lasted only a short time. Actually Malinowski's insistence on the interrelation of institutions, which marked an enormous advance in method, if not in theory, is still followed by all those who proudly announce that they have 'rejected functionalism'. It is what Evans-Pritchard rightly calls 'functional', and what he commends in Montesquieu, who, being an 'armchair anthropologist', did not work it out nearly so well. Evans-Pritchard calls both Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown 'slick'; I would never have used that word of the painful working out of the theory of needs.

The notes on Radcliffe-Brown enumerate generalizations that Evans-Pritchard does not consider to be valid. There is nothing about his concept of social structure, which so many of us thought had extricated us from the confusion in which Malinowski left us. We are told too that he 'eschewed all history'. Certainly he was not interested himself in historical studies, surely a legitimate attitude; I am not aware that he ever condemned them when they were seriously undertaken, and it is easy to see what he was rejecting when he dismissed 'conjectural history' in favour of the study of kinship structures as 'ongoing systems'. Again, we are not very enthusiastic today about the interpretation of kinship terms as expressing the extension of sentiments outside the nuclear family; but by 1940 or so Radcliffe-Brown wasn't either.

Ernest Gellner's Introduction - a sort of 'review in advance' - puts the whole book in the context of the philosopher's problem of the impossibility of ever attaining adequate knowledge of the world. Having been a close friend of Evans-Pritchard, but coming into the game himself when all the main contenders had left the scene, he is in a different position from one who, like myself, knew Malinowski well and Evans-Pritchard not very well; was I alone in being terrified of his 'acerbic' tongue? Here and there in the book I recognise some of his favourite poison-darts.

Gellner's Introduction includes a critique of the most significant studies, as well as an outsider's reconstruction of the climate of anthropological opinion in Malinowski's day (it should be remembered that he dominated the field for more than a decade while Radcliffe-Brown was away from this country). For the latter theme Gellner seems to rely very largely on two writers each of whom has been accused by an informed reviewer of 'not doing his homework' (i.e. Jarvie by J.H.M. Beattie, Adam Kuper by T.O. Beidelman). I am bound to query the somewhat laboured interpretation of the acceptance of the 'Malinowskian revolution' as the expression of a 'sense of sin' with regard to reliance on inadequate data. I don't know that any of Malinowski's then living predecessors changed their views because he brought their guilt home to them; nor was he in the least like Savonarola.

What I felt myself was a sense (much too strong, of course) of triumph over ignorance, of having received Truth from the fountainhead.

The Introduction - best read, I think, after the book - explains why, although it must be supposed that the different thinkers made advances each in his turn, each discussion seems to emphasise only errors. It also notes that in contexts where one of the subjects is mentioned incidentally, he is treated much more kindly than in the chapter devoted to him. I wish though that Gellner had not seen fit to quote, and so give unnecessary emphasis to, the most offensive references to Malinowski. The achievements of the Oxford Institute would have been no less if it had not been a factory for the abuse of a man who did revolutionise fieldwork, whatever else.

LUCY MAIR

ÁKOS ÖSTÖR, *The Play of the Gods: Locality, Ideology, Structure and Time in the Festivals of a Bengali Town,* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1980. viii, 236 pp. Index. £16.20.

The Play of the Gods is a detailed description and analysis of two types of Bengali festivals: the Durgāpūjā, the festival of Durgā, the great goddess of India; and the gājan, that of the Lord Śiva. The study is strictly focussed. Each of these two types of festivals is given a descriptive chapter. Together they comprise the heart of the book around which Östör adds a preliminary description of the issues and problems peculiar to his undertaking and a concluding structural analysis of the festival system.

His approach, the author tells us, is concerned with, and constrained by, the elucidation of types of social structure and the problems of Bengali social organization. He attempts to isolate not only his own mode of analysis but, through a descriptive method, indigenous modes as well. Östör clearly sets the parameters of the investigation, and the fact that he does not wish to analyze in depth the history of the worship of Śiva or the Great Goddess, or discuss the role of these gods for Indian culture in its broader dimensions, means that *The Play of the Gods* is of necessity a specialist's book. Social theorists familiar with the literature on Indian society will welcome it for its detail, and historians will find the descriptions of the ritual content of the festivals quite revealing.

DAVID NAPIER

BASIL SANSOM, *The Camp at Wallaby Cross: Aboriginal Fringe Dwellers in Darwin*, Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies 1980. vii, 267 pp., Index. $12.95.

Australian aborigines have historically been relegated to the margins of white Australian society. Typically they have been encountered by white 'missionaries' who have attempted to convert them to middle-class commercial values and suburban life-styles. The ABSCOL scheme, piloted during the 1960s, was representative of this missionary approach. Educational scholarships were awarded to a small number of aboriginal students who were fostered out to middle-class parents in the suburbs, and sent to some of the leading public schools where they were groomed as future accountants and businessmen. For these students, education became a stifling and uni-dimensional experience. Only nowadays is aboriginal education becoming a more balanced and bi-cultural experience which involves children in learning both from their aboriginal elders and from professional teachers. Nevertheless, aborigines continue to live on the fringes of the Australian

social fabric, and they remain a people little understood and largely forgotten.

Basil Sansom's *The Camp at Wallaby Cross* is to be welcomed as the first published ethnographic study of everyday life in an aboriginal fringe camp. This alone makes it a valuable contribution to anthropological literature. It will also be of interest to anyone concerned with the ethnography of speaking, and with such questions as the linguistic dimension of social identity, the functional relationship between words and cultural valuations, and the situational nature of status endowment and change.

Sansom's aim is to analyse happenings, 'the word', and aboriginal valuations of shared experience. His account describes the social processes and social structures which respectively energise and impose form upon aborigines' daily activities in the camp. These activities include 'leading men' organising and regulating drinking sprees for aboriginal visitors spending their time and money in the camp; 'fighting men' ensuring the protection of camp dwellers against white raiders; men disciplining deviant wives; and wives preparing food for their husbands and children in a group hearth. In studying process and structure Sansom focusses attention on the concept of a people's 'interaction idiom' - the words and phrases they use when staging or representing happenings in their lives. It is Sansom's point, which he continually stresses, that language is a means.

> Aborigines use words in order to create and establish social forms: I shall examine their use of words to inform an account of the ways in which Aboriginal social groupings are brought into being and sustained.

In the first and second parts of his monograph Sansom shows how the aboriginals' common subscription to a specific style of speech - aborginal English - in the camp at the Cross is the means whereby they not only distinguish themselves from urban whites but also unite themselves as 'the same', despite their diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. He proceeds by a method which is descriptive and interpretive. Episodes, or 'happenings', are described as situations-in-train. Then the structure of these episodes is teased out to show how the actors represent their actions in terms of moral concepts and spiritual beliefs. The fourth chapter, and especially the section on 'moral violence', is a good example of this method at its best.

The third and final section of the book is devoted to understanding political action, and in 'exploring the ways in which emic or native theory constitutes the sequence of action it informs'. At this stage Sansom shifts his focus from the 'interaction idiom' - language - to the arena of political action. The transition is not unrelated to earlier chapters; for, as Sansom explains, his aim is to 'show what politics entails in a society of jurisdiction of the word'. Political action is defined by aboriginal camp dwellers as any action which is

designed to modify the existing balance in their social relationships. This study of politics, then, is a study of how fringe dwellers organise their dealings with one another in the spheres of ceremony, 'whitefella law' (especially the courts), and cash income. In each of these chapters Sansom shows how local personnel are matched to local chances and resources. This part of the book seems to presuppose the idea of homeostasis. Actions and responses are directed towards achieving social balance in order to maximise the survival of camp dwellers at any one time. Sansom concludes his work with some notes towards a theory of 'aggregate structures' - action sets, or groupings formed to achieve a specific purpose - and he suggests areas for future investigation.

The author draws upon a wide range of theoretical reading, and ably displays the relevance of sociological models developed in other social contexts. He uses his own ethnographic data well, often supplementing these with comparative materials drawn from Africa, the Middle East, Melanesia and North America. The book's strengths lie in these points. If it has any weakness it is the tendency of some descriptive sections to ramble, which occasionally hindered the present reviewer from grasping the main point. But this is a minor criticism of an important book which presents a lively account of the ways in which aboriginal fringe dwellers organise their constantly-changing social world.

A final note of praise for the high standard of the publication itself - the quality of the typeface (which has been set well), the paper and the binding make this a pleasurable book to use. The Institute of Aboriginal Studies is to be congratulated.

SCOTT K. PHILLIPS

JAMES M. FREEMAN, *Untouchable: An Indian Life History*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1979. viii, 400 pp., Appendices, Bibliography, Glossary-Index, Photographs.

Freeman's *Untouchable: An Indian Life History* is a welcome addition to the anthropological literature on South Asia. In it he departs from the form of more conventional anthropological texts. *Untouchable* is an exercise in the most extreme form of micro-anthropology: it is the study of one individual, Muli, an untouchable of the Bauri caste resident in the village of Kapileswar, Orissa.

The best, and most effective, sections of the book are the central chapters (4-29) in which Muli tells the story of his

life. These chapters are episodic in character and represent a chronological treatment of the salient events in Muli's life. They are arranged by Freeman in three sections: 'Youth and Hopes' which chronicle the years of Muli's childhood and adolescence (1932-1949), 'The Reluctant Householder' which covers Muli's marriage and the first twelve years of adult life (1950-1961), and 'Bad Times' which document the decade of Muli's middle age up to the point of Freeman's departure from India (1962-1972). The 26 chapters in these three sections are largely the narrative of the informant supplemented by meagre explanatory asides by the author and they represent the meat of the volume. Freeman prefaces each chapter with a short synopsis designed to highlight the narrative which follows. I found Freeman less than completely successful in this effort. Often his comments seemed intrusive - Muli is far more eloquent when allowed to speak for himself.

Aside from the Herculean task of collecting Muli's life story in the first place (to which commendation must be given to Freeman) Freeman's main contribution to the work is in the introductory and concluding chapters of the text. These are the five chapters found in Part One ('Muli: An Indian Untouchable') and Part Five ('Interpretations') which serve as an attempt to put Muli's narrative in perspective. These chapters were the least satisfactory of the book and were disappointing in their brevity. One hopes that in future publications Freeman will return to pursue at greater length some of the themes that he has so provocatively introduced here.

These are, however, but minor criticisms and they are not meant to detract from the overall merit of the book. Quite on the contrary, it must be said that *Untouchable* helps to fill a gap in the anthropological literature of South Asia. As an untouchable Muli's experience of India differs dramatically from the picture of India painted by his high-caste contemporaries (e.g. Sreenivasan, Mohanti or Ishwaran). The Brahmanic monopoly on literacy coupled with the Indologists' preoccupation with the 'Great Tradition' of Hindu society have resulted in a distortion of Western views of Indian society. *Untouchable* is an important step toward redressing this high-caste bias in the literature. Through Muli's narrative the student of India is provided with rare, and exceptionally vivid, roots-level view of India. Nowhere has the state of India's untouchables been described in such graphic detail. As India's untouchables represent 16% of the population (or over 100 million people) it is appropriate that they have at last become the focus of legitimate anthropological attention.

Untouchable is certainly a remarkable document but it is difficult to ascertain just how typical or representative Muli's life history may be. Muli himself, while clearly an engaging story-teller, remains something of an enigma throughout the text. As a Bauri he is a member of a caste of unskilled labourers. Evidencing a profound aversion to the traditional occupations of the Bauris (agricultural labour and stone-cutting) Muli's activities centre on the seamier side of village life. He derives

a substantial part of his meagre income through his activities as a pimp and procurer. Prostitutes, prostitution and the exploitation of low-caste women are major themes of the book. Several chapters are devoted to descriptions of Muli's activities as a procurer and his relations (both economic and intimate) with groups seldom mentioned in more conventional texts - prostitutes and transvestites - often in graphic detail. These make fascinating reading, but I was left wondering just how common Muli's experience as an untouchable really was.

The book is most successful in its explicit description of caste interaction. Through Muli's eyes we are given a new perspective on the phenomenon of caste itself. The picture Muli paints of the nitty-gritty of inter-caste relations differs dramatically from the classic, patrician accounts of caste most familiar to students of India (e.g. Hocart, Dumont). In Muli's world, friction, disharmony and constant conflict are the primary manifestations of caste. His repeated references to the various ways in which high-caste individuals manipulate caste status in such a way to exploit the Bauris of his village puts firmly to rest any notions of the harmonious village community. Muli's experiences with high-caste individuals almost invariably end in disaster: he is repeatedly exploited by a teacher (chap.5), a construction contractor (chap. 12), a goldsmith (chap. 25) and his Brahman landlord (chaps. 28-29). From Muli's account it is clear that conflict, not harmony, is the byword of inter-caste relations in Kapileswar. As Freeman remarks in his introduction to chapter five, 'Gone forever is the myth that untouchables are content with their place in society and with the treatment they receive from other castes'. While such a view may be somewhat premature, this remarkable book nevertheless hastens the day when anthropologists rethink their basic understanding of caste.

STEVEN SEIDENBERG

STANLEY BRANDES, *Metaphors of Masculinity: Sex and Status in Andalusian Folklore*, University of Pennsylvania: American Folklore Society 1980. 236pp., Index, Bibliography, Photographs. £7.50 (Paper).

In his second monograph the author of *Migration, Kinship, and Community* has moved his study from Castile to Andalusia, and has modified his analytical style and interests. A detailed ethno-

graphic approach to politico-economic variables and a somewhat 'structural/functionalist' approach to social change is replaced by an interest in symbols, sex and psychological explanation. Brandes stresses that the two Spains he is dealing with are very different: 'Unlike the small, egalitarian, corporate communities of northern Spain... the agro-towns of the south are deeply divided by conflict between classes as well as between sexes.' But he retains an implicitly personal fundamental conception of 'static tradition'. Despite much fascinating detail and many perspicacious comments no sense of 'social dynamism' or 'historical fluidity' are present to contribute validity to his more general remarks.

Metaphors is organised around 'basic cultural themes'. Over and above this Brandes claims his goal to be the demonstration of 'the rich variety of folkloristic genres through which the men of this town both express and define their identity'. The contents of Brandes' 'themes' and 'genres' give monographic expression to many elements of Spanish culture which underlie existence in other parts of this heterogeneous peninsula but which receive different emphases in the social structures. Some of these are linguistic features (e.g. titles, names and pronouns); popular Catholicism; jokes; and sex roles.

An important characteristic of the book is the analysis at chapter length (probably still too short) of two vital rituals in the life of the town. This type of analysis is rare in the ethnography of Spain and although Brandes' heavy reliance on Freud in this instance makes for easy criticism, his attempts must be commended in the light of the above themes.

In fact, this work develops many themes nascent but, unfortunately, underplayed in the ethnographic observation of his first book. It is a relatively rare example in the anthropology of Spain of belief studied in the social context which defines its meaning. This is a good start. However, it could be said that there is still not enough context. This is a short book; much too short. And the author assumes a folkloristic rather than anthropological stance whenever he can: this would appear to be used implicitly to justify the isolation of the specific topics of jokes and sex roles in the ethnographic present.

Admirably, he is trying to reach conclusions which have some relevance for the interpretation of material other than his own; and yet this work is not well enough grounded in context or history to be able to cope **sociologically** with the changes that have occurred in the five years since the death of Franco either in this community or in any other part of Spain.

ALARIC S. PUGH

OTHER NOTES AND NOTICES

A FURTHER NOTE ON LORRY NAMES

During field work in Northern Ghana (1963-1965) I was struck by similarities and differences between Ghanaian lorry names and the 'signs' (*letreros*) carried by Mexican lorries. Between 1952 and 1963 many Mexican lorries carried signs. These ranged from the carefully painted to the roughly scrawled, and were usually attached to the back of the lorry. Sometimes the message was divided between signs at the back and the front, and occasionally the sides of the lorry were also used. The majority of the messages were explicitly religious. They appealed to 'God' or 'The Virgin' or to a particular virgin, for help in danger. 'Take care of me little sainted virgin' (*Cuidame virgincita Santa*) or 'Save me Virgin of Guadalupe'(*Salvame Virgin de Guadalupe*) were typical of these. Another large category were ingenious sexual jokes; often combined with direct reference to the physical condition of the lorry or the state of the roads. A simple and frequently encountered example of the sexual joke is the sign 'girl/servant needed' (*Solicito Sirvienta*). Typical of a more ingenious combination of reference was the double sign: 'Oh What Curves!' (*Ay Que Curvas!*) painted at the back of the lorry, while another sign at the front read: 'And I without brakes!' (*Y Yo Sin Frenos!*).

In 1978 when I again had occasion to travel in Mexico I was amazed to discover that very few lorries were carrying signs. The lorries were in better condition; or it might be more accurate to say that there were many more lorries on the roads and a large proportion of these seemed to be in good condition. The roads themselves were very much improved and fewer lorries seemed to be in transit over regions with no roads at all. I concluded with disappointment that the age of the Mexican lorry-sign must have passed. I also felt safer as I travelled.

I noted too that the inside of buses had changed. In the 1950s and early 1960s most buses in Mexico City bore elaborate altars. These were constructed above the front window of the bus and consisted of printed images or small statues of virgins and saints adorned with flowers and other decorations. These often bore a religious inscription. The altar often obscured the driver's vision but given the condition of the buses and both the speed and style of Mexico City traffic, this was perhaps the least of a driver's worries.

In 1978 the buses I rode were relatively bare. At most a crucifix or a single image hung over the driver's mirror. Traffic within the city had slowed to a crawl as its density increased. The buses, though far from elegant, seem no longer to include those terrifying wrecks which used to attain such incredible speeds

that they dared not stop (assuming they had brakes). Passengers who were sufficiently determined were forced to alight while the bus continued on its way; slowing down only slightly (if that were possible) in recognition of the stops on its route. It is possible that the altar provided by the driver was meant as much for the protection of passengers and pedestrians as for the protection of the driver.

The decrease in the number of altars and religious signs combined with the modernization of Mexican transport tempt one to conclude that Malinowski's view of magic is confirmed. Men use magic and appeals to the supernatural when they feel that they have no control over dangers they can clearly observe. As technological progress and the strict administration of law have improved the conditions of commercial transport in Mexico, the supernatural protection to which drivers formerly appealed has become less important.

What of the other signs however, the ones with explicit sexual content? One might suggest that expressions of male virility and concomitant appeals to female support (hidden though they might be in aggressive sexual imagery) are like appeals for mystical protection. They both serve to increase the driver's sense of security in a dangerous occupation. However the sexual imagery suggests that the signs are all in some sense an expression of the driver's personal identification with the vehicle he drives. If this surmise is correct then a decrease in the adornment of bus and lorry might betoken a transformation in the relationship between driver and vehicle. In Mexico there certainly have been radical changes in ownership and organization of commercial transport services as well as changes in physical conditions. Two decades ago in Mexico (and this was also the case in Ghana during the 1960s) few roads were safe all year round. Lorry and bus travel were recognized as dangerous. In rural Mexico the motor vehicles which traversed the difficult terrain belonged to a large number of owners. Few drivers lacked some personal tie to the owners of a vehicle and many had entrepreneurial connections with the activities of the lorries. The owners themselves often drove the lorries. At present it seems likely that fewer owners control a larger number of vehicles. Some surely never drive the vehicles they own. While a few well-known owners control large fleets of buses and lorries some industries also have their own transport. Thus a larger number of drivers must now be paid employees with little personal stake in the larger commercial enterprises which pay their salaries. It is also possible that drivers now operate more than one vehicle depending on more elaborate schedules. The centralization of transport ownership would thus seem to be somewhat antithetical to the personal identification of driver and vehicle.

A.K. Awedoba in his article on Ghanaian lorry names (*JASO*, XII:1 (1981) pp. 63-64) also notes the identification of driver and vehicle. He writes, 'The labels [i.e. names], if they were popular, soon became the name of both the vehicle and its driver ...'. One might predict that the pattern of naming vehicles in

Ghana may change as the organization and physical conditions of transport change. If, as in Mexico, vehicles and roads become safer and ownership is more highly centralized, naming will decrease. If, as seems unfortunately likely in the present economic climate, travel becomes even more difficult and dangerous, and/or ownership becomes less centralized, then the naming system might become more elaborate. In any case it will be interesting to know what will happen in the future to the names of Ghanaian lorries.

SUSAN DRUCKER-BROWN

Archaeological Reviews from Cambridge [*ARC*], Vol. I No.1, 1981. 60 pp. £1.75. Available from the Editors, *ARC*, Department of Archaeology, Downing Street, Cambridge.

ARC is a new journal by the students of the department of archaeology at Cambridge. The first issue is made up of an editorial, three articles, a review section, a humorous song, a small section of quotations concerning the treatment of women in archaeology, and several cartoons. In future issues we are also promised a letters column. The printing is done in an A4 format reminiscent of early issues of *JASO*; there are no photographic plates. The price is a modest £3.50 per annum for individuals for two issues, and £8.00 for institutions.

The new journal 'seeks to provide a platform for swift publication of all types of research in progress and for critiques and reviews of all theoretical aspects of the discipline... the only bias being towards all that is innovative and exciting.' The first article is a reflective work entitled 'The Significance of Archaeology: An Enquiry into the Nature of Material Practices and the Construction of Historical Knowledge'; the second suggests a new scheme for archaeological work in the little-known area north of the Humber between Tyne and Teeside; the third is an ethno-archaeological study done in North Kenya: 'The Role of Blacksmiths in a Tribal Society'.

Future issues, we are told, will take specific themes. The next issue will be devoted to 'spatial organization within settlements'. This is a format recently adopted by the *American Journal of Archaeology* and one which the French popular archaeology journals have been following for quite some time. I wish more journals would do the same as most of us find subscriptions too expensive, whereas we would buy individual issues which grouped articles close to our expertise.

The new journal is somewhat unusual (at least in archaeology) for its humour. Not that this is such a bad thing, but the

editors should remember the lesson we are taught at O-level English: humour can be dangerous as people rarely find the same thing funny. I certainly did not find the cartoons funny, and as for the comical side in the editorial (which I am sure was uproarious to members of the department at Cambridge), I found it rather alienating and, frankly, rather silly. This caveat aside the editors of *ARC* have made a fine start. I wish *ARC* well; continue to give us fine thought in archaeology. But please, don't let the humour intrude.

M.B.

Communication and Cognition, Vol. XIV No. 1, 1981 (Special issue 'Observation in Anthropology'). Subscription information available from The Editors, *Communication and Cognition*, Blandijnberg 2, 9000 Ghent, Belgium.

The editors of *Communication and Cognition* have published an issue of their journal which is of special interest to long-time readers of *JASO*. Volume XIV Number 1 (1981) of this multi-disciplinary and multi-language journal is a special issue devoted to the epistemology of anthropology. Subtitled 'Observation in Anthropology' the articles in this issue focus on the epistemological status of anthropological methodology.

There are six articles in this issue. Joanna Lowry's 'Theorising "Observation"' sets the stage. Here she shows how the methodology of fieldwork confounds the science/humanities debate which has dogged the discipline since the 1930s. Lowry explains the complexity of the ethnographer's observation. Suggesting that it bifurcates into theoretical and descriptive planes of discourse she discusses the effect that such division has on anthropological analysis.

Lowry's paper is followed by Walter Van Wayenberg's 'Some Remarks on Lévi-Straussian Analysis of Myth'. Drawing on hermeneutics and recent analytical philosophy he evaluates Lévi-Strauss' notion of observation as evidenced by his structural study of myth.

Addressing himself to the question of the identification of 'social facts', Claude Karnoouh continues the discussion of the problems inherent in the methodology of observation. His article, 'L'Observation ethnographique ou les vertus du paradoxe', is most effective in its examination of the ethnographic process. Karnoouh presents a pessimistic view and argues that anthropological understanding is impossible owing to the inherent 'culture-ladenness' of observation.

Rik Pinxten's 'Observation in Anthropology: Positivism and

Subjectivism Combined' is less pessimistic of the anthropologist's task. In this article he presents an innovative programme for the development of new approaches to the methodological traps inherent in fieldwork. Pinxten shows how the two main orientations traditionally found in fieldwork (as exemplified by Mead's positivism and Malinowski's subjectivism) each have their own possibilities and liabilities. Pinxten then suggests a programme for the integration of these themes through phenomenological and interactional controls.

In his short article, 'Remarques sur la construction d'un objet anthropologique dans l'étude des sociétés acculturées', Alain Babadzan refers to his fieldwork experience in French Polynesia to develop philosophical insights into the problems of fieldwork.

This special issue of *Communication and Cognition* concludes with Luk De Vos, 'Tekst als ken(re)konstruktie van observatie omtrent westerse wetenschap en Maya-Quiche kosmologie'. The editors inform us that 'De Vos examines the role of ideology and world view in the construction and continuation of myths (drawing on the critical philosophy of Frankfort and elsewhere)'.

The editors of *Communication and Cognition* are to be commended: they have assembled here an impressive array of articles on the epistemology of anthropology--articles which will, no doubt, stimulate much vigorous debate in the future.

S.S.

Journal of Research on North East Africa [*N.E.A.*], Vol. I No. 1 (1981). 83 pp. £1.50 for individuals, £2.00 for institutions. Subscription information available from The Editors, *N.E.A.*, P.O. Box 20, Oxford.

The first issue of *N.E.A.* appeared this summer. It was an impressive beginning with its 83 closely-typed pages, 66 of them devoted to main articles. As its title suggests it is a research journal aiming to be multi-disciplinary, with a focus on the geographical region of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and adjacent areas of the neighbouring countries.

Three of the five articles are solid contributions by established scholars: Professor B.A. Andrzejewski on 'The Survival of National Culture in Somalia During and After the Colonial Era'; Dr. Wendy James on 'Ethnic Terms and Ambiguities on the Sudan-Ethiopian Border'; and Dr. Richard Pankhurst on 'Hamasen and the Gondarine Monarchy'. Jane Wainwright, late of London University, on 'The Role of the Metropolitan in the Maintenance of The Imperial Ideal in Ethiopia, 1682-1855', and Dr. Tsehai Berhane

Selassie, one of the three editors for the first issue, on 'Man's World, Woman's Position: The Case of the Darasa Widow', are the other contributors.

The remaining 17 pages consist of a rather wordy editorial, reviews of 6 books, an 'Academic Notebook' which aims to give notes on relevant conferences, seminars etc., as well as a 'Who's Where' and notes on contributors, Letters to the Editor, and a 'Tailpiece' for other information.

This journal, then, if we may judge from this first issue, will be a welcome mixture of articles by academics and students from many disciplines, and a forum for the exchange of information and ideas with regard to North East African Studies. The quality of contributions in this first issue will no doubt present the editors and their public with a challenge to maintain such high standards.

J.C.

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JASO

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