

## BOOK REVIEWS

JAMES F. WEINER, *The Heart of the Pearl Shell: The Mythological Dimension of Foi Sociality* (Studies in Melanesian Anthropology; eds. Gilbert H. Herdt, Fitzjohn Porter Poole, Donald F. Tuzin), Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1988. xviii, 305 pp., References, Index, Plates, Figures. \$40.00.

JADRAN MIMICA, *Intimations of Infinity: The Cultural Meaning of the Iqwaye Counting System and Number* (Explorations in Anthropology; ser. ed. John Gledhill), Oxford etc.: Berg 1988. ix, 177 pp., References, Index, Figures, Maps, Tables. £27.50.

The Foi are to be found in the area to the east of Lake Kutubu in Papua New Guinea. Weiner's account of them deliberately places myth in the foreground, 'with the aim not of negating Lévi-Strauss's work, but rather of augmenting it' (p. 155). While accepting the validity of the sorts of oppositions that routinely appear in structuralist analyses, Weiner follows the revisionist paths already set out by Dan Sperber, Paul Ricoeur and Roy Wagner. From Sperber he takes the view of symbolic images as cognitive, not semiological, i.e. that they constitute knowledge, not coded meanings; from Ricoeur, the emphasis on metaphor or tropes as distinct from structure; and from Wagner, the relation between metaphor and structure, and the idea of obviation, whereby each successive image in a myth does much more than merely continue the story—it sets up and then resolves contradictions in previously occurring images of like kind. Nor is obviation limited to myth: it is also shown informing the entire marriage sequence, including the exchanges that follow from it in later generations, and death rites. It is 'the successive substitutions of tropes by other tropes [that] results in the obviation sequences—large-scale metaphors—that myths represent' (p. 15). However, an ultimate resolution may be lacking, for mythical metaphors are elusive and need not reveal everything: 'It is up to the listener, Foi and anthropologist alike, to assimilate myth's intricate plots into a transcendent insight into the most important secret of all—the mystery of human sociality' (p. 14).

Thus Weiner is not seeking to replace structure with metaphor so much as arguing for an equal place for both in analysis, for they are mutually dependent: 'one cannot invoke metaphorical relationships without reference to the signs that are their ultimate building blocks, and one cannot discuss signs without considering the tropic equations that restrict and limit their associations' (pp. 154-5). But the base line has changed: whereas structuralism takes difference for granted, and tries to show the commonality of different oppositions, Weiner takes 'the structural interrelatedness of cultural meanings' (p. 12) for granted instead, continually striving to see how metaphor subverts conventional signs to produce meaning through the constant interplay of analogy and difference, how it replaces the arbitrariness of the relationship between sign and signified with a positive identity between its own terms: indeed, for the Foi, analogy occupies the position that

difference has in the West. Of course, that identity is itself cultural and therefore arbitrary at the ultimate level of analysis. So what is meant by 'nonarbitrary and determinate' (p. 124) to characterize the relationship between the terms of a metaphor? Within the boundaries of the culture, presumably, it is to stress identity, however contingent and temporary, as opposed to the representational character of a semiological system.

Such identities involve contradictions, for each metaphor involves simultaneous similarity and dissimilarity. A key contradiction for the Foi is the fact that men can only control procreation through social action, and not directly, as do women: this they achieve through bridewealth exchanges, which are themselves ultimately dependent on a 'head-man's' (*sic*) confidential trading contracts. Similarly, menstrual blood is a force for the creation of life when controlled by women, but in the hands of men it becomes a destructive agent of sorcery. Perhaps this much-criticized Lévi-Straussian association of male with culture and female with nature is the Foi's rather than Weiner's, though he does go on to attribute the dichotomy between the ritual construction of maleness and the precultural existence ('naturalness') of femaleness to New Guinea generally. A further contradiction is that cross cousins are simultaneously consanguines (one parent of each are siblings to each other) and affines (their fathers are brothers-in-law). Affinal exchange involves the differentiation of wife-takers from wife-givers (direct exchange is rare, but not particularly devalued), and thus of male from female goods (this is also true of inter-tribal trade). This distinction, and the inter-group exchanges it makes possible, are seen as analogous to the daily inter-person exchanges of food between husband and wife, and to the need to keep female domains separate from male for the sake of individual health, for men both need women and are threatened by them: 'A single idiom reflects all these domains: that of the perceived necessity to transform female productivity into male continuity' (p. 95). But such distinctions are essential to social life, for without them social action would be impossible (another very Lévi-Straussian point). One is reminded here of Hocart's dictum to the effect that one cannot perform any ritual for oneself, with its implication of a differentiation of statuses in the provision of ritual services. We also see how kinship generally is constructed rather than given: the bifurcation of agnatic descent groups depends on the activities of important 'head-men' rather than on progressive segmentation; closeness of relationship is a matter of co-residence and the acceptance of responsibility for bridewealth contributions and sharing rather than genealogical connection; and agnation is itself compromised by the recognition of matrilineal links. In all three cases, the contingencies of social action are seen as more important than the usual objective criteria of the structuralists.

There is a constant emphasis throughout on the reflexivity of culture, and on the existence of 'differentially constituted domains within a single culture' (p. 1). Weiner is keen to eschew the search for any single key value, in relation to which any others are mere extensions, figures of speech, transformations etc. He thus implicitly distances himself from, say, Dumont's latter-day work on differentiation,

in which any distinction automatically introduces hierarchy, and also requires the identification of one fundamental value that is 'the mother of all others' (Dumont's words). There is no reduction of culture to 'objective' facts, in the manner of the typical functionalist analysis (which can now be seen to include much Lévi-Straussian structuralism, of course, especially where myth is concerned). For Weiner, the objective is as subjective as culture, since it is equally a cultural construction. Nor, implicitly, is the Durkheim-and-Mauss position followed, of seeing the classification of the natural world as simply the result of the projection of social categories on to it. The point is not that there is no connection, but that neither nature nor society is primary: each acts to define the other, in a perpetual oscillation of cultural reflexivity.

Weiner manages to contradict himself on the matter of whether contradiction is or is not a 'necessary' part of culture. Early on (p. 16) he makes the essentially Lévi-Straussian point that it is, and that everyday social action depends on the ability to ignore it temporarily, which myth sustains. Towards the end, however, he explicitly denies this, and contradiction becomes a manipulative technique in the manufacture of meaning, 'an end in itself, a strategy of mythic and cultural revelation, rather than an analytic by-product that must be mediated by further analysis' (p. 290). This would seem to be nearer to the attitude of the Fois themselves, who recognize metaphor not merely as a mythical device but as an instrument of status and power whose use must be learnt and whose control must be acquired. This echoes the standard Marxist or Blochian position that knowledge and mystification go hand in hand to produce unequal power relationships. Myth thus aids the more perceptive in society and does not necessarily resolve paradoxes, as structuralist orthodoxy teaches. Hence Weiner argues that it is not structure but obviation, i.e. the successive replacement of metaphors by others that may compound as much as remove contradictions, that is the motivating force behind what he calls 'mythopoeia'.

Mimica's book is more complete in its rejection of Lévi-Straussian structuralism, is similarly infused with a common theme, and also views myth as a creative 'epistemic' force allowing contradiction as well as resolution—what *he* regards as 'mythopoeia' (myth for him is the framework in which this force operates). His inspiration, however, is explicitly phenomenological. His principal case is that the idea of mathematics as an abstract science of universal applicability whose epistemology is asocial is itself the product of particular trends in Western intellectual history and therefore culturally bound. But mathematicians generally come in for rather less criticism than such psychologists as Piaget and such anthropologists as the neo-Piagetian Hallpike, and also Lévi-Strauss, for whom mathematics is the ultimate acultural reality and almost gratefully embraced as such.

Mimica argues his case with reference to the counting system of another New Guinea people, the Iqwaye of Morobe Province. The first thing to note is that they do not regard their system as any sort of abstraction, but as a practical method of arranging exchanges and (in the past, at least) assembling a sufficiency of warriors

for attacks on their neighbours. Secondly, Iqwaye numeracy involves a binary scheme: although there are numbers beyond two, two and one are the key elements, which rapidly add up to the further unities of the hand, foot and whole body. The successive replacement of each duality with a further unity, through a successive series of inclusions, leads Mimica to suggest that the ultimate number for the Iqwaye is one. This is analogous to our idea of infinity, not only in that both are the ultimates of their respective number systems, but also because both are metaphysical concepts, including infinity. For the Iqwaye, 'one' is therefore the 'intimation of infinity'.

This unity is replicated in cosmogony, in which the first man, Omalyce, in fertilizing himself, also created the world—indeed, he *is* the world during this cosmogonic moment (and this is not a metamorphosis, but a 'simultaneity', p. 86). This creation involves a shift to duality, or rather to a series of dualities—up/down, sky/earth, light/dark. As the first man, Omalyce also includes woman, who is variously his back (while he is the front), or his shadow, though since the whole body remains male he encompasses her, in true Dumontian fashion. Indeed, Omalyce is 'an autogeneal being...at once his own father, mother and son' (p. 75). Iqwaye catastrophe theory involves the elimination of this duality, as everything returns to the primordial unitary darkness. Another replication concerns the status of women in relation to men in this patrilineal society. Until her marriage a woman has no identity separate from her patrilineal descent group—this is unity. But she must marry into a different descent group, to which she represents a difference—this is duality. Her actual marriage restores unity by incorporating her into her husband's descent group. Therefore marriage is cosmologically 'a conjunction of the oneness and twoness' (p. 90). Children too represent their father synecdochally, just as fingers represent the whole body in counting. Finally, the preferred form of marriage itself involves oscillations between unity and duality. The preferred marriage partner is a classificatory FM, defined sociocentrically, not genealogically, to mean that one's spouse must come from the same patrilineal group as one's actual FM. This is said to ensure that ego's son will receive the same combination of father's and mother's patrinames as ego's father, and will thus replace him. In fact, out of the duality of ego and his father a unity is produced between the two males whom ego links patrilineally: and through this alternation, ego produces in his son the man who will ensure his own birth, his own father.

Like Weiner, Mimica declines to prioritize any one source for the several occurrences of this image of successive unities and dualities, neither the social order (*pace* Durkheim and Mauss) nor the functioning of the brain (*pace* Lévi-Strauss). It is Lévi-Strauss who receives the greatest degree of criticism here for isolating the brain, and the structures its functioning promote, from the outward stimuli derived from the individual's experience. For Mimica, the search for causality simply produces an ossified analytical structure and neglects the reality of continuous cultural construction from inner and outer stimuli: a dynamic, historical process involving contradiction and change. It is clear that for him too

the body is significant not just as a homology of the cosmos through the image of Omalyce, the primordial man, but also as a source of sensations projected directly on to culture. Thus the question of right and left, and of dual symbolic classification generally, is traced, through a series of 'correlations', to a source in the unequal power of the two hands, the primary association [of] the strong and the weak' (pp. 66-7), i.e. to nature rather than to society, as for Hertz and those who have followed him: 'We can see that the human body, oriented to things around itself as objects of potential or actual manipulation, imposes itself upon them as a source of orderliness' (p. 67), a return to the sort of naturalistic explanation Hertz was particularly keen to overturn. But while Mimica would evidently not deny the existence of such universals, 'even in the sphere of universality such as binary coding, one culture's unconscious is not exactly the same as another's' (p. 138).

Thus, inevitably, we return to the old story of what is universal (or at least uniform across many cultures) and what is not. Such Iqwaye features as affinal alliance between patrilineal descent groups, the encompassment of femaleness by maleness, the asymmetry of poles in a system of dual symbolic classification, the equivalence of alternate generations, and the image of the cosmos as a human body, though hardly universal, are certainly not unique. All that Mimica has really given us, therefore, are the local recensions of these widespread themes, not an explanation for their occurrences cross-culturally, i.e. elsewhere than among the Iqwaye. A similar situation informs many of the values of the Foi, such as their affinal alliance system, or the association of bone with men and flesh with women, or the identification of MB as a potential source of illness. The difference is that Weiner, in balancing structure and metaphor, leaves the way open to achieving a better balance also between the cultural specificity of a particular group and its parallels with others.

ROBERT PARKIN

THEODORE C. BESTOR, *Neighborhood Tokyo* (Studies of East Asian Institute, Columbia University), Stanford: Stanford University Press 1989. xvi, 268 pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index, Tables, Illustrations. £35.00.

SHEILA K. JOHNSON, *The Japanese through American Eyes*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1988. x, 171 pp., Index, Illustrations. £22.50.

OKPYO MOON, *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope: The Revitalization of Tradition in Japanese Village Life*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press 1989. vii, 177 pp., Glossary, Bibliography, Index, Maps, Figures. £35.00.

These three books are representative of several of the current trends in the field of Japanese anthropology. All have something to recommend them to the student of

Japan, with the book one would expect to be the most theoretical—Johnson's on the American structuring of the Oriental other—being the disappointing one of the three. In fact, Bestor's and Moon's books, while obviously Japan-based, are really the more useful books in a wider anthropological sense: Bestor tackles notions about the invention of urban tradition, while Moon challenges long-held notions about rural-urban migration and the role of tourism in a village economy. Of the three, *Neighborhood in Tokyo* is the most theoretically ambitious, while it is *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope* that makes the more interesting statements.

What is common to all three books is that their subject-matter—the other, tradition and tourism—is the stuff of current anthropological debate, though I would hesitate to add that any of the three has made the impact it should outside the area Japanese studies. There are various reasons for this, the most obvious being that anthropologists of areas outside of Japan tend to find Japanese material unexciting, often because it appears almost functionally straightforward, and functionalism is out of fashion. However, one must admit that the ethnography of Japan is often not well written, and lately it is not even well edited as publishers rush to make money out of the Japan boom. (Manchester University Press is, unfortunately, one of the worst culprits.) This should not deter readers from looking, at the very least, at the Moon and Bestor books. Johnson's book presents another problem altogether.

*The Japanese through American Eyes* begins promisingly enough. Johnson admits that while she is a social anthropologist, she is not a Japan specialist; her husband is. As a result she spent time in Japan and read all the English-language material current in the 1960s. She found that this material presented a 'dangerously antiquarian and exceptionalist image of the Japanese. Sometimes they were depicted as cruel warriors driven by a spartan code of ethics called *bushido*. At other times they were seen as harmony-loving worker bees, or perhaps as otherworldly aesthetes. Many books laboured hard to explain how the Japanese could actually be all three: the argument was that they were a very contradictory, not to say schizophrenic people' (p. v). She presents her book as a reaction to this viewpoint, a valid and worthwhile academic pursuit these days: the examination of the very assumptions that have fuelled the work of prior anthropologists is important work. However, this is not the point of *The Japanese through American Eyes*. There is, in fact, little if any discussion of the anthropology of Japan, à la Said's *Orientalism*. The book is actually an updated version of her 1976 'report', *American Attitudes toward Japan, 1941-1975*. In both versions, the most interesting section is the one on the research done as part of the U.S. military's wartime national character studies. On re-reading this chapter, my reaction remains that the material would have made a fascinating book in its own right.

The other chapters, on the 'legacy' of the war, Hiroshima, and the Occupation, are the same as in her earlier report, with the added chapters being about the sexual, cultural and business 'nexus'. The material for these chapters comes from novels and articles written about the Japanese by Americans. I am all for the use of popular culture in anthropological analysis, but Johnson's book suffers from the

same flaw as most of the recent attempts at an anthropology of popular culture, i.e. the lack of empirical research. Has she talked to the writers whose work she dissects? Has she talked to publishers, booksellers, critics and readers of *Shogun*? The mistaken assumption is that popular culture accurately reflects people's attitudes and beliefs, rather than being a sort of fun-house mirror in which the reflection must be carefully examined before one can draw any conclusions. Another major error in anthropological attempts to analyse popular culture is the assumption that the various media create dominant ideologies, or uphold them, so that people are manipulated. Johnson does not fall into this trap, but she shies away from exploring the complex connection between images of the other, as portrayed in popular culture, and cultural ideology. The material is all there in her book, but she doesn't go far enough.

Bestor's *Neighborhood Tokyo*, in contrast, is a successful challenge to many of the assumptions people make about modern Japan: that it is full of worker bees who live in cubicles in an impersonal city; that, if there are neighbourhoods (and by using this word Bestor is embarking on a debate with an important school of American sociology), they only exist because they are populated by rural immigrants who have transplanted their village customs to the city; and that if one is going to talk of urban traditions, one is describing dying customs once practised by blue-collar city-dwellers who are now outnumbered by white-collar workers and rural immigrants. In challenging these three diverse suppositions, Bestor is also taking on some of the classics of Japanese ethnography/sociology, such as Dore's *City Life in Japan*. That he succeeds in making a convincing case is due to the wonderful plethora of ethnographic material he presents, but little thanks to the style in which it is written: the book is structured like a Ph.D. thesis. The most exiting chapter is 'The Festival and the Local Social Order', in which Bestor examines how an invented local festival is used by the blue-collar neighbourhood dwellers to invert the hierarchy of middle- and working-class relations. Yet, again, one can imagine how non-Japan specialists might find this chapter disappointing: once again Japanese ritual is reduced to being about Durkheimian social relations alone. If more can be said about urban neighbourhoods, more can be said about Japanese ritual, but this is a minor quibble. *Neighbourhood Tokyo* is about the Japan that is all too often ignored in favour of studies about economic miracles, company structures and the education system. It is already an essential item on many people's Japan reading-lists.

*From Paddy Field to Ski Slope* also questions various assumptions that one encounters in the field of Japanese rural studies: that all Japanese villages are moribund, mortally wounded by migration to work in the cities, and that the main result of this, of course, is the death of the Japanese household, the *ie*. While it cannot be argued that this is not happening in some places, Moon examines the elements that have gone into revitalizing tradition in one village. In her study of Hanasaku, Moon takes on the various theories that have been used to describe rural social transformation: Smelser's modernization approach, Japanese sociologists' community theories, and U-turn migration theories. The case of Hanasaku seems

to refute all of these approaches: changes in farming techniques and the introduction of cash crops have not led to enormous amounts of individual mobility, the developing economy has not led to rampant individualism, and the village's revitalization is not due to returning immigrants.

What has kept Hanasaku going, as it were, has been the domestic tourist boom in Japan. The Japanese household, a much more resilient entity than sociologists of Japan often give it credit for, has always emphasized economic as well as kinship relationships. When it became apparent that a household could run successfully a small tourist inn for the growing numbers of skiers, the villagers who could afford to invest in inns. Moon notes that this trend occurs throughout the countryside where, in order to keep the tourists coming, such various attractions as hot milk baths, perfume baths and herbal saunas have been invented. Thus, this study of revitalization is also a challenge to some of the standard suppositions made about tourism: that development through tourism is difficult if not impossible and that tourism destroys authentic social structure at the cost of preserving 'quaint' customs. The villagers of Hanasaku may have invented a tourist attraction or two, but it has all been in aid of preserving the lineal, hierarchical household, the core of Japanese social structure. (It could be argued that the patrilineal household is a fairly recent invention, but Moon does not explore this avenue.)

If one must point to faults in Moon's book, they are mostly minor. As with Bestor's study, the structure of the work is somewhat conventional, but, more annoyingly, the book is full of copy-editing lapses and printing errors. Perhaps somewhat more disappointing is that Moon does not take the opportunity to question anything more than rural-urban migration theories. The book is rich with material on tourism and tradition that raises fascinating questions about authenticity and cultural change, but she does not tackle these issues. It must be added, however, that given the fact that tourism is not often explored by anthropologists, *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope* is breaking new ground and is thus a must for all students of anthropology.

D. P. MARTINEZ

MATTHEWS MASAYUKI HAMABATA, *Crested Kimono: Power and Love in the Japanese Business Family*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1990. x, 173 pp., Bibliography, Index. \$19.75.

This book fulfils the promise of the intriguing title Hamabata has chosen for it. The place of the crested kimono only becomes clear well into the text, but the phrase makes an engaging impact, and the subtitle is an accurate description of the contents. This is a book about Japanese business families, in fact rather influential



and high-powered ones, and it is about power relations and the place of love within those families. In fact this is a subject that has not really been addressed before in the rather abundant ethnography on Japanese family life, so it also fills a gap.

The presentation Hamabata has chosen is also interesting. Filled with yet another description of the feelings of an American of Japanese descent, discovering his (or her) ambiguous status on attempting fieldwork in the ancestral land, the first few pages draw a sigh. In recent years this seems to have become a recurrent theme, even providing the major theoretical basis for the ensuing analysis. However, one has to admit that it has worked. It has worked before, and it works again, although in this case, the theoretical underpinnings are more implicit than in other major examples, perhaps even largely unconscious. This is what makes the book intriguing. It sounds quite straightforward, even naïve at times, but it has taken a long time to appear and it may well have had more planning than seems to be the case.

Through sometimes quite painful descriptions of his own experiences, sudden realizations, and awful gaffes, Hamabata leads the reader into the lives of the families with whom he became close. In a true spirit of reflexivity, he reveals the errors of his first six months, and the way his most valuable findings emerged almost by chance as he found himself among women, rather than the men he had first targeted for his research. In this way he discovered the power of these women and the way their own relationships were related to, and indeed vital for, the pursuits of the men to whom they were attached. Through tales of the personal hopes, ambitions, realizations and failures of individual members of a few specific families, Hamabata manages to present (the glue holding together) a series of structural principles underlying the operations of a circle of the most important Japanese business leaders.

In fact, he has done this in a way that again draws a sigh in the early stages, because throughout the book and in support of his presentation Hamabata refers mainly to a small number of the oldest and most standard texts in English on the subject of the Japanese family. He refers to these texts uncritically, as if to provide a kind of template for his findings, so that for quite some time his general statements are always attributed to other, earlier researchers, some of whom have in practice been quite severely criticized since they first wrote. Perhaps his aim is to vindicate these texts, although he does not say that in so many words. In any case, it was interesting that these texts appear not only perfectly applicable to such high-powered families of post-modern Japan, but actually seem to have stood the test of time during a period that is otherwise constantly being claimed as characterized by tumultuous change.

Further into the book, Hamabata does venture ideas of his own. He asks some telling questions, and seeks to find answers among the experiences he recounts. Unfortunately, he leaves several personal stories hanging in the air, and it will perhaps require a sequel later on to convince the more sceptical readers that his arguments are sound. Personally, I liked them. I liked the style of presentation

too, and I shall certainly recommend the book to my students, and any others interested in Japan. This is the kind of ethnographic account that not only brings people alive within the pages of a book, but also rather painlessly introduces an awareness of the theoretical issues underlying social analysis. It also retains an element of intrigue rather appropriate for the subject-matter and the author alike!

JOY HENDRY

JANICE BODDY, *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zār Cult in Northern Sudan*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1989. 360pp, References, Index, Tables, Figures, Glossary. No price given.

This is an excellent book—perhaps even a classic. Although, by title, a study of spirit possession in an unidentified north Sudanese village (given the name Hofriyat here), Boddy's account unfolds as a vivid portrayal of personality, gender, social relations and identity within the context of a small community's encounter with external forces. Part one explores the symbolism and practice of Hofriyati childbirth, circumcision, daily chores, kin relations and visiting patterns. We are treated to a subtle explication of the symbolism of red and white, of openness and enclosures, of the vulnerability associated with body orifices, of flexible preferential marriage categories and other means that Hofriyati women use in self-identification. The descriptions of circumcision and infibulation, integral to Hofriyati womanhood, may worry Western readers, but it is a measure of Boddy's skill that she never allows her readers a facile view, or even the luxury of bland detachment. These are real people, in a real world, and she allows them ample moral space: 'For the female ethnographer, one message rings clear: though her sex may grant her greater access...it guarantees no privileged insight into what it *means* to be a woman in another cultural context; she and her informants may share a common biology: they do not share a common gender' (p. 56).

Parts two and three explore the 'parallel world' of *zar* spirits and the meaning accorded Hofriyati life through engagement with this—very real—spirit world. Boddy treats *zayran* as Hofriyati treat them—as 'human' personalities engaged in their own social relations, with their own histories, personality quirks and sorrows. Technically, *zayran* are red *jinn*. Technically also, all *zar* spirits are foreign, whether Arab nomads, Euro-American or Ethiopian. But all have been appropriated as significant beings within Hofriyati social contexts: 'Ideas and objects originating in the outside world are often absorbed and processed in such a way that, rather than diminishing the integrity of Hofriyati culture, they actually sustain it' (p. 48). 'Meaning' for both groups—spirit and human—is created in encounters with each other. These encounters achieve public recognition within the *zar* rituals, three-to-seven-day festivals usually funded by male kin, during which

interested women gather together, chant and drum the 'threads' specific to a litany of *zayran* (*zar* spirits seem to prefer women to men, although Boddy does describe a few men inhabited by *zayran*; also of interest are the behind-the-scenes strategies for obtaining funding for a ritual). *Zayran* 'descend'—or not, depending on the particular spirit's and woman's mood at the time—when they hear their particular thread. The woman goes into a trance, dancing, waving a sword, or marching like a soldier for about twenty minutes; through her body the spirit speaks, and often requests items that must be produced before the spirit (spirits 'descending' can be male or female) will subside. Some examples of *zayran* are Mistayr Brinso, an archaeologist who requires khaki pants and shirt, pith helmet, black shoes, socks and spectacles; Gasis Romay, a Roman Catholic priest; and Dodo, Sitt aj-Jabana (*sic*), an Ethiopian spirit who demands that coffee be prepared during her presence.

In a world in which foetus and infant deaths are shockingly commonplace, *zayran* are often identified in a woman during times of sorrow or vulnerability (about 45 per cent of Hofriyati women have acknowledged themselves to be possessed). If herbal and local remedies do not help, if a medical doctor cannot help, if a Muslim *faki* is unsuccessful, then chances are a diagnosis of possession will usually be accepted: 'When a village woman who feels unwell but has identified no organic or mystical source for her complaint accepts that she is possessed, she can begin to recover' (p. 256). Boddy anticipates readers' scepticism. In a section that cries out for further exploration, she addresses common Western reactions. The ceremonies are not simply functional outlets against male domination, as some have argued. Nor, Boddy argues, are the women exhibiting symptoms of classical psychiatric hysteria or neurosis, for outside these trance states the women usually appear healthy and stable. Possession does, however, have a therapeutic function both for the women involved and for the community as a whole: 'Possession trance provides a context in which the patient is encouraged to achieve distance from her cultural context. ... Both [the Western psychotherapeutic process and *zar* rituals] aim at replenishing the culturally specific constitution of the self by exploring and transcending former pitfalls' (p. 354). Boddy documents the life histories of a number of Hofriyati; in the process casting light on the tenuous disposition of historical memory as each woman evaluates and remembers events anew with each *zayran* encounter.

Boddy's use of history in general deftly undermines the illusions of an ethnographic present. For example, opposition to the apparently 'timeless' practice of pharaonic circumcision has been introduced (against the beliefs of Hofriyati women) by a literate Islam that Hofriyati men encounter as migrant labourers on the Arabian peninsula. Boddy also includes information gathered on her second field stay seven years later to illuminating effect. Such items as painted ostrich eggshells hung in homes as fertility objects during her first visit had disappeared by her second. The 'Canadian' *zar* spirit that appeared during her first stay had also disappeared by her second.

Boddy refers often to the work of such predecessors as Geertz, Turner, Van Gennep, Comaroff, Lewis and Crapanzano. In fact, while *Wombs and Alien Spirits*

is part of a series edited by Marcus and Clifford entitled 'New Directions in Anthropological Writing', it is very reminiscent of ethnographic classics. Occasionally, Boddy's analysis skims where readers might prefer depth, but her care for detail is exemplary throughout and she comes across strongly as someone worth listening to.

SUSANNAH KENNEDY

HARALD BEYER BROCH, *Growing up Agreeably: Bonerate Childhood Observed*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1990. xiv, 174 pp., Glossary, References, Index, Maps, Photographs. £23.75.

Broch spent a year in the village of Miang Tuu (population c. 200) on the Indonesian island of Bonerate, south of Sulawesi. Being interested in individuals and the ways in which their feelings and behaviour evolve within a given cultural role and environment, and combining psychological and social theory, he examines the effects the village setting has on children and their socializers. The village of Miang Tuu is very isolated, with no schools to provide a formal education, thus leaving the socialization of the children solely to the community members. The study takes account of the individual's social position, birth order and personal resources.

Chapters 1 and 2 outline how children are defined by the culture, describing infancy and early years. Small children are not believed to possess knowledge, being regarded as *bodoh* (stupid), and are therefore not responsible for their behaviour. Consequently, they may express emotions that adults may not. A sick adult, however, is treated like, and may behave like, a child. The first years focus upon keeping the child alive in a society where 60% of infants die before the age of three. The initial five months of life constitute infancy, a transitional stage, the newborn infant being regarded merely as a body housing a soul that may easily be disturbed or offended and depart, resulting in death. After five months the named baby has made its entrance into the village community. Infancy and the toddler years constitute a phase when the infant is placed in the care of an older child. It is generally accepted that children are individuals who will develop at their own pace; motor skills, bladder and bowel control etc., develop at different ages, though it is recognized that girls tend to develop these skills earlier than boys. Verbal skills tend to develop fairly late. There is little verbal communication between adults and infants. Adults tend to use a babbling baby language, or to rely on body contact for communication. Many households are bilingual on a daily basis, another factor that may slow down verbal development. The author noted, though, that children from wealthier families tended to be more advanced, probably

because these families could afford more help with household and agricultural tasks, enabling more time to be spent training the children.

Chapter 3 deals with childhood, examining the socialization process, which gradually provides children with an understanding of societal values. By the age of six or seven, *bodoh* behaviour is less tolerated and children are now likely to find much of the attention previously focused on them redirected towards new babies with whose care they become entrusted; they will also be expected to participate in general household tasks. At this stage there is no difference in the chores assigned to the genders; work appropriate to gender is gradually learned. Men frequently spend many months away at sea, and women have to carry out their husbands' tasks. Furthermore, men carry out female tasks while living in the all-male environment of the *perahu*. Affluent children are assigned less work, the child of a poorer villager working for rich households, doing tasks for his or her wealthier playmate. Gradually children come to know their relative social positions. A child's social status is explicitly expressed in the way they are treated, and an individual quickly learns that he must know his social position and pay respect due to those of a higher social position (including other children) by submissive behaviour.

Children are generally passive and gentle, though they are taught to fear and avoid strangers and are allowed to direct anger and cruelty towards animals. Children are protected from environmental dangers such as the sea, but are not prevented from handling knives or fire, learning of these potential dangers through experience. These attitudes, Broch suggests, represent a dichotomy between the surrounding environment, which is to be feared, and the village environment, which is trusted.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with puberty and adolescence. Puberty is examined within the frame of girls' circumcision ceremonies. The author argues that in Miang Tuu circumcision does not mark an abrupt change from child to adult status, although the ceremonies do have symbolic meaning, and their public nature has significance for the novices and other individuals, especially for village integration.

Today boys are usually circumcised in Java, at a hospital, during their first trip to sea, and generally at a later age than before. No ceremonies are conducted. The real transition from child to male adult appears to be connected to a boy's achievements at sea. A girl's 'circumcision' consists of a light scratch inside the upper thigh. The accompanying ritual ensures future fertility and demonstrates ideal female behaviour; a ritual expert instructs the girl. The ritual also strengthens the sex-related self-identity of the novices, and indeed of the boys attending the ceremony. After her 'circumcision' a girl is expected to gradually adopt the behaviour and bearing of a young woman. Youngsters are not expected to suddenly change after their circumcision, rather the ceremony merely inaugurates children into a culturally accepted notion of a period of gradual development leading to adult life and status. Puberty and adolescence are described as comprising a smooth transition to adulthood rather than a stormy one, though

Broch does not claim that potential turmoil and rebellion are absent. During initiation rituals many of the problems of personal and collective significance, often rooted in the early socialization process, are brought into focus.

Broch describes the upbringing of Bonerate children in detail and highlights some important contrasts with similar studies elsewhere. The role of the mother in a society where the father is frequently absent is carefully considered. In similar societies a woman may find child-rearing a burden, but in Miang Tuu she gains social prestige when she becomes a mother. Furthermore, she is never isolated, always having a young helper to look after her child. Broch points out that contrary to the claims made by such authors as Kagan, the mother is not necessarily the major attachment figure, the young child-minder also has this role. This does not, however, undermine the mother as the primary attachment figure, for she remains the focus of the child's world. The mother-son and mother-daughter dyads are stressed above all others, the mother-daughter dyad being the strongest and most enduring, a young married woman always preferring to live close to her mother; moreover, young men make frequent visits to their mothers.

Although the book will be useful for those interested in socialization in a cross-cultural perspective, and it does draw comparisons where necessary, it is primarily one observer's account of what it was like for children to grow up in this isolated community in the late 1970s, describing the options chosen by individuals in different situations. In some respects the information is now out of date, as since 1978 the children have started going to school, where they will undoubtedly have become exposed to socialization processes very different from those previously in operation.

SIAN E. JAY

ALLEN FELDMAN, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1991. vii, 319pp., References, Index. £38.50/£14.25.

This monograph contains some of the most dramatic, most repulsive, most gripping ethnographic material I have ever read. For unlike reductionistic accounts that attempt to 'explain' terrorism in a tired sociological vocabulary, this one deals explicitly with part of its substance—with the lived reality of prison, and with the violence done by jailers on the jailed, and by the jailed on their own bodies.

A good proportion of *Formations of Violence* consists of extracts from transcripts of Feldman's interviews with imprisoned, or once imprisoned, gunmen—both republican and loyalist. In these, sometimes very lengthy, quotes the men speak in clear, direct voices of their experiences on the street and inside. They detail the spatial organization of violence, as the different sides take over

sections of Belfast and barricade themselves in. They recount the process of arrest, interrogation and beatings, and of how they organized themselves, contesting and compromising the system established by the turnkeys. Since jailed republicans learnt Gaelic so as to communicate without being understood by their enemy, Northern Irish jails now constitute the only *expanding* Gaelic communities in the whole island.

Feldman, openly acknowledging his debt to Foucault, structures the rich material he has gathered along the lines of an anthropology of the body. Instead of detaining himself over the social factors that a more traditionally minded ethnographer might have adduced, he explores the topic by examining the corporeal representations used by members of both sides. He also details the ritualized process of police torture and the way the disarmed gunman, once imprisoned, learn to use their own bodies as political weapons: for getting messages out, in the dirty protest, and in the hunger strikes.

*Formations of Violence* is clearly the product of a very committed ethnographer who has conducted hundreds of interviews under very difficult conditions. He has crafted this data into a highly imaginative, suggestive ethnography that analyses social life in performative, rather than formal, terms. Unfortunately, while his own text is an impressive extension of poststructuralist modes into the study of social conflict, the vivid words of the men he quotes tend to undercut the (sometimes considerable) power of his own prose. At times their simple speech about grave facts threatens to undermine the authority of his academic rhetoric, one heavy with polysyllabic abstractions. But this, presumably, was the risk Feldman was prepared to run for the sake of a richly polyphonic text.

If it is a reviewer's compliment to ask for more, I can say I was slightly disappointed that, given his interests, he did not mention or discuss the existence (if only rhetorical) of homoeroticism and maybe even of homosexuality among the imprisoned. Also, since female prisoners were degraded by their warders in ways specific to their sex, it would have been interesting to have had their experiences compared with the male material he presents so well. An anthropology of the body should not be restricted to men.

JEREMY MACCLANCY

HASTINGS DONNAN and GRAHAM MCFARLANE (eds.), *Social Anthropology and Public Policy in Northern Ireland*, Aldershot etc.: Avebury 1989. xii, 147 pp., Index, £21.50.

This book deserves a more exciting title. It is about what is often called 'applied anthropology' or even, as in the recent renaming of the BASAPP newsletter, 'anthropology in action'; though the focus here is the United Kingdom rather than

the more extensively discussed development context. There is undoubtedly much need for such a book as more and more anthropologists—especially anthropologists who have just finished training—find themselves working in the ‘policy-oriented’ field. The introduction by Hastings Donnan and Graham McFarlane charts this increased tendency and provides an excellent discussion of the problems, frustrations and disillusionments that often result in the encounters between anthropologists and policy-makers. Rather than simply bemoan policy-makers’ supposed favouring of numbers and ‘hard’ data, however, the introduction gives a more careful analysis of the different cultural expectations of both policy-makers and anthropologists. In other words, the introduction engages in what might be called, *pace* the distinction between ‘development anthropology’ and ‘the anthropology of development’, an anthropology of public policy.

Other chapters follow up this emphasis, transforming the book from what might have been a collection of case-studies about public policy in Northern Ireland to a much more general—but properly illustrated and documented—book about the relationships between social anthropology and those on the receiving end of policy. And, as is pointed out by one of the contributors, these days that probably means most people in the world. For this reason, the study of policy and its ‘heterogeneous interpretation and implementation’ (Dilley, p. 144) should be regarded not just as a specific, rather specialized and less academically respectable type of anthropology, but should be made more integral to the discipline. The growth of interest in relationships between the global and the local in anthropology and in issues of knowledge construction and practice should put the study of policy-making and its variable appropriation much more centrally on the disciplinary map than hitherto.

Northern Ireland provides the case-study material in this book. However, debates about sectarianism, which usually dominate discussions of Northern Ireland, are not to the fore. Most of the chapters concern such issues as housing and unemployment that, although they may have a localized sectarian dimension, will certainly have many parallels with work on these issues in other parts of the United Kingdom, and indeed elsewhere. Only in the final chapter by Roy Dilley, a study of boat ownership and patronage, is the question of discrimination against Catholics a principal focus. Nevertheless, the chapters do illustrate well the local factors that may affect the reception of public policies. Eithne McLaughlin, for example, discusses local (though probably extendable) ideologies about gender in her analysis of unemployment in Derry (‘the Maiden City’), and Rosanne Cecil shows how local notions of ‘neighbourliness’ affect the provision of informal care in a community. The studies also give ample illustration of policy-makers’ failure to recognize local factors involved in the implementation and reception of policies. Leo Howe, for example, shows how the office culture of local social security benefit officers may create and perpetuate a distinction between the ‘deserving’ and the ‘undeserving’ claimants that actually deters most claimants from taking up benefits for which they are eligible. Likewise, a study of unemployment by John Blacking, Kieran Byrne and Kate Ingram illuminates the multiple considerations



and beliefs involved in decisions about job applications made by the unemployed. (A particularly poignant example here is that of 'Edward' who, like apparently many other desperate job applicants in Northern Ireland, habitually submits six or more applications for every job in the hope, which he recognizes to be rather misconceived, that this increases his chances.) A theme that occurs in these accounts, and which is taken up further by Shaun Ogle in his analysis of tenant participation schemes, is that of 'success' and the variable expectations of what this may mean to the different participants involved.

Perhaps the main shortcoming of the book is that it does not include any direct studies of policy-makers or the policy-making process, a shortcoming that is pointed out in the introduction and several of the chapters. This is clearly an area deserving further research. In conjunction with the kinds of studies and issues raised here, it would also give us a better picture of complex interrelationships between policy-making and its reception (or rejection) and help us to theorize better these kinds of processes. Overall, however, this is a useful book that I would recommend to anybody engaged in policy-related research, whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere.

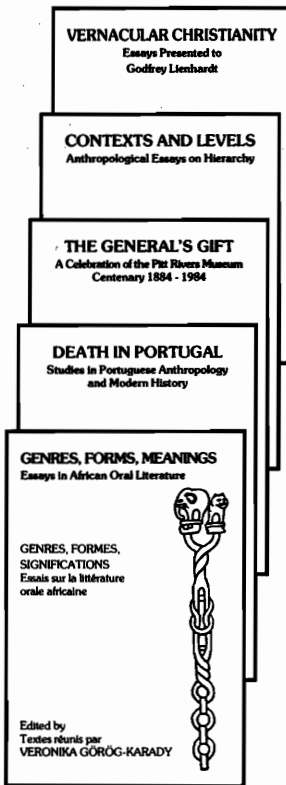
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