

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 hesitation 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 SANSON, *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 ABSOL 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

E. E. Evans-Pritchard

**A HISTORY OF
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
THOUGHT**

Edited by André Singer

Introduced by Ernest Gellner

Faber & Faber £10.50

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 - aboriginal 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.

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 Frankfurt 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 'Hamaseh 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.

P U B L I C A T I O N S R E C E I V E D

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