

## BOOK REVIEWS

MARC ABÉLÈS, *Quiet Days in Burgundy: A Study of Local Politics* (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 79), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991. xxviii, 279 pp., Bibliography, Map. £50.00.

Yonne is a largely rural department in Burgundy with a population of over 300,000. Abélès carried out fieldwork there between 1982 and 1988 and this book (originally published in 1989 as *Jours tranquille en 89: Ethnologie politique d'un département français*) is the result. Among other things, the book may be seen as presenting a case-study of the local effects of the changes brought about by the decentralization reforms that the Mitterrand government enacted in 1982, changes that changed the nature of the French administrative department.

Abélès places his study of French local politics in the broader context of the question of the applicability of anthropological investigation to modern societies. Interestingly, the origins of the present study lie in the author's fieldwork among the Ochollo people of southern Ethiopia in the 1970s. In discussing Ethiopian politics one day, he was asked by a local elder about French politics. The elder understood that France was Socialist, as Ethiopia now was. It was in the course of trying to give an answer to this inquiry, and to explain the meaning of the French republic, that Abélès became dissatisfied about his own understanding of French politics and decided to find out how it might look from an Ochollo point of view.

Despite the subtitle (that is, the subtitle of the English version), this book might be better described as a study of local politicians than as a study of 'local politics'. The politicians within the department are approached as a 'group that had its own customs and rituals and whose members...maintained strong social links', and we learn a lot about the careers of a number of leading local politicians. Yet the book also claims to explain the dynamics of local politics more widely, including such matters as the ability of these politicians to attract electoral support from local constituents. The flavour of such explanation tends to the mythological: the successful politicians are apparently those best able to tap symbolic capital established—by their family lines or political parties—in an earlier era. The key to political success would thus seem to lie in the politician's power of mythological evocation. This is not just a subjective capacity but also an objective resource that some have and others do not. It is here that the basis of political eligibility lies. Eligible politicians are those able to tap into historical networks, whether through family status, inter-family ties, or party affiliation. To the extent they achieve this, mythological evocation translates into electoral success.

There is a striking absence in all this of the voter or support-giver. Can one really explain the phenomenon of political support-giving solely from the politician's side, without an ethnographic focus on those from whom support is obtained? It is assumed by Abélès—and not demonstrated—that local people simply do react in the prescribed way to mythological evocation. Arguably, one of the main challenges to the anthropologist who undertakes the study of politics

in such urban-industrial societies as France is to achieve a distance from the discourse of the mass media and the politicians themselves. This may be what Abélès thinks he has done by reaching back into history, but this is questionable since many of the politicians he speaks to would seem to share this sense of the importance of history. A much more obvious approach would be to focus on local people themselves; not necessarily solely on their discourse (which may resemble that of the politicians) but on how their periodic votes relate to local social alliances and reciprocities, something that would demand a more firmly grounded, socially centred ethnographic perspective than Abélès provides here.

JOHN KNIGHT

MARC ABÉLÈS, *La Vie quotidienne au parlement européen*, Paris: Hachette 1992. 438 pp., Bibliography. No price given.

As the European Union becomes an ever more present and influential political body, it is important for anthropologists to study its development and impact. Marc Abélès is therefore to be commended for having followed Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) between Brussels and Strasbourg, with the aim of discovering the 'rituals of this nomadic tribe' (p. 13). Unfortunately, the repetitive use of such words as 'ritual', 'tribe' and 'clan', presumably inserted to give an anthropological flavour to the text, does not add up to in-depth anthropological analysis. This is not to deny that the book is highly informative on the way the European Parliament is organized. It gives a good sense of (among many other things) the tight schedules under which the MEPs work and of their continual travelling, as well as of their isolation from the local people, the highly technical nature of their work, the way they fit (or don't) within the 'traditional' political structure, the problems and ironies occasioned by the diversity of their national cultural traditions, and their reliance on a multitude of persons including assistants, truck drivers and translators. The analysis remains, however, at too general a level. Each aspect mentioned above could and should have been developed. The author had plenty of opportunities to problematize his material and to discuss the implications of his findings. With the exception of an excellent chapter on language use (and translation), he misses these opportunities and produces a journalistic account.

Admittedly, his task was difficult. Not only is this the first book of its kind, but also its author could not suppose more knowledge of the institution among his readers than exists among the general public. The balance reached between background information and ethnographic material is none the less poor. The book begins with a lengthy chapter on institutional aspects, which the anthropologist may find too difficult and largely irrelevant. It ends with a description of the

legislative procedure recently introduced by the Treaty on European Union. This takes up half the concluding chapter!

This being said, anyone with an interest in European institutions will benefit from reading this book, which is written in very clear and flowing prose. In fact, the present reviewer already longs for similar work on the Commission and the Council. But, as far as anthropological analysis of the European Union goes—a vast topic allowing for various perspectives, she would recommend the reader to turn to other recent studies, such as the volume *Cultural Change and the New Europe* (Boulder, 1993) edited by Thomas Wilson and Estellie Smith.

#### MARIE-BÉNÉDICTE DEMBOUR

ANDREW BEATTY, *Society and Exchange in Nias* (Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology), Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992. xii, 297 pp., Appendices, Bibliography, Index. £40.00.

This book has to do with the relationship between marriage alliance, social stratification, and ceremonial exchange in central Nias. The island of Nias, off the west coast of Sumatra, has long been famous for its magnificent architecture, megalithic culture and extraordinary gold jewellery. Historically, it was also known as a major source for the export of slaves. For the anthropologist, however, Nias is notable for its system of asymmetric affinal alliance without prescription. That is to say, marriages are contracted unilaterally according to a rigorous system of asymmetric prohibitions, but there is no corresponding marriage rule, either terminological or jural, that positively prescribes a category of potential marriage partners. In this last respect, Nias differs from other regional systems of asymmetric alliance as found among the Batak of northern Sumatra and others scattered throughout the islands of Eastern Indonesia.

Asymmetric alliance occupies a privileged position in the study of Indonesian societies. Josselin de Jong and his colleagues at Leiden saw cross-cousin marriage as a definitive characteristic of Indonesia as a 'cultural area'; for van Wouden, indeed, 'exclusive' cross-cousin marriage was the original form of Indonesian social organization. Affinal alliance has also been a major theoretical concern at Oxford, where Andrew Beatty is a postdoctoral fellow, and the present study may thus be seen as following in the latter tradition. Beatty himself, however, is less concerned with theoretical issues than with describing how the system works on the ground; this is first and foremost an ethnographic monograph.

Nias society is made up of patrilineal clans divided into lineages. It is the latter group of agnates that constitute the category of wife-givers. The asymmetry lies in the fact that once the relationship of wife-giver/wife-taker has been established, it cannot be reversed, it is transitive. This sets up a linear structure:

wife-giver > wife-taker/wife-giver > wife-taker. The point to note here is that while wife-givers come in groups, wife-takers come as individuals. Thus brothers are united as wife-givers (they give their sisters and daughters to other men), but divided as wife-takers in that they may choose wives from different lineages. This prevents the formation of a structural imbalance in Nias society in that no descent group as a whole stands as wife-givers to another.

Women are exchanged for pigs and gold. Gold played an important role in traditional Nias society, acting as a medium of exchange, a standard of value, a store of wealth and a means of payment. It was also endowed with mystical qualities: only those who had commissioned new pieces of jewellery—who had ‘beaten gold’—could gain entry to the golden paradise of the Nias afterlife. There is no evidence to suggest, however, that the items of bridewealth exchanges were ever conceived in the sacred manner of Toba Batak *ulos* cloth.

Bridewealth payments, however, are just one aspect of a more general system of exchange in Nias. Exchange is the mainspring of Nias social life: gold, pigs and rice make their appearance in Nias mythology, not as mere items of consumption, but as commodities to be exchanged. Fundamental to the mechanics of exchange is the idea of debt. Debt (*ömö*) informs every aspect of Nias social relations, from commercial transactions to moral obligations and responsibilities. In the case of affinal alliances, women are said to be a ‘gift of life’. Not only do they bear children, but they are also responsible for the major share of agricultural labour, domestic duties, rearing pigs and chickens and so forth. For all this, a man is forever indebted to his wife-givers, who are spoken of as ‘those who own us’. He is also indebted to his mother’s agnates, to whom he is beholden for his very life. Debt is more than simply a question of payment due in return for material gain or services rendered: the concept of *ömö* also has a moral component. The Nias definition of sin is to get something for nothing. Ultimately, even man’s relationship with the gods is conceived in contractual terms; men may not partake freely of the wealth of the island, which is in the keeping of the deities.

The focus of the book is the Ovasa ceremony or feast of merit. This is where affinal alliances, pigs, gold, power, wealth, debt and social status all come together. Rank in Nias, whether acquired through personal achievement, or inherited (by virtue of membership of a noble lineage), is publicly proclaimed by holding a great feast (typically accompanying some kind of rite of passage). The host is rewarded with a ‘great name’ extolling his virtues, which is ritually conferred by his wife-givers. In the past the event would also have been marked by the erection of a megalith.

This is where pigs come in: the Ovasa feast is an occasion for the massive consumption of pork (traditionally, before the advent of a market economy, pork was only eaten at Ovasa ceremonies). Huge numbers of pigs are consumed—there are reports of up to 1500 being eaten at a single event—all adding to the status and prestige of the host. The host only provides a certain proportion of the pigs required, the rest he gets from his lineage agnates, wife-takers and through donations from non-aligned parties. The latter are either loans or repayments for

pigs that the host himself has provided at other Ovasa ceremonies. To bring a pig to a festival is in itself a meritorious act. Beatty unravels the complex relations of reciprocity and obligation that are brought into play on such occasions.

The point to note is that to attend an Ovasa feast is to put oneself in debt to one's host. The invitation must be repaid; the book contains references to 'challenge feasts', contests of reciprocal feasting, which continued until one or other of the parties was ruined, or 'crushed' in Nias terms. Again the concepts of debt and sin are intermingled: to receive the meat of others without the intention of returning the honour is a cardinal sin with dire repercussions in the afterlife. Beatty describes the mortification of dying men whose debts remain unpaid.

If debt is sinful, so too are riches. Profit implies getting something for nothing. Yet power and status depend upon the acquisition of wealth. In this respect, the pursuit of political influence in Nias society entails something of a moral compromise, and there are special rites to 'cool' the 'heat' of accumulated gold. Traditionally, a rich man would roll a slave off the roof of his house and then decapitate him; this was described as 'letting out the smoke of gold'.

The obsession with debt and getting a fair deal are reflected in the Nias preoccupation with measurement. Gold provides the standard: everything—even pigs—have their gold equivalent. Indeed, life itself comes in measures. Nias mythology describes the creator deity rationing out longevity, in terms of life-breath, on a pair of scales. Interestingly, bridewealth is not measured, except by eye; after all, it is said, who can put a price on a bride?

It is in relating the concepts of alliance, status, obligation and debt to Nias cosmology, mythology and eschatology that Beatty is at his best. The ritual and symbolic aspects of pigs and gold are especially interesting, as is the mystical bond between wife-giver and wife-taker that allows the former to bestow blessings or curses upon the latter. Exchange is more than simply a manipulation of material interests, it is a 'total social phenomenon'

Beatty is also interesting on the way pagan values are integrated into Christian beliefs. 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's', and 'As you sow, so shall you reap' are sayings that find a particular resonance in the native ethos. The concept of an all-merciful god, however, remains rather alien to Nias, where traditionally any infringement of the social code, particularly in sexual relations, was harshly punished. In the latter instance, sex between forbidden categories was considered the most heinous offence, punishable by death. There seems to have been little idea of an innocent party, rape victims, for example, being put to death along with their assailants.

In the end, the picture of Nias society, past and present, is a fascinating one, if rather grim. In Nias, Beatty observes, Jehovah is a more familiar figure than Jesus. There are no free lunches, everything is rigorously measured, transgressions of the social order are dealt with severely. Above all there is an obsession with gold. In the past, it seems, Niasans were not adverse to selling off their poorer relatives as slaves in exchange for the gold that would guarantee their eternal happiness. Today, modern Niasans make do with biscuit-tins and bacon-foil to

recreate the marvellous jewellery of their ancestors, their golden paradise exchanged for a Lutheran heaven.

JULIAN DAVISON

ELISABETH CROLL and DAVID PARKIN (eds.), *Bush Base, Forest Farm: Culture, Environment and Development*, London: Routledge 1992. xi, 263 pp., Name Index, Subject Index, Figures, Tables. £12.99.

The fourteen articles in this book form the published outcome of the sixth EIDOS (European Inter-University Development Opportunities Study-Group) workshop 'Cultural Understandings of the Environment', held at SOAS in June 1989. The publishers see the book as 'essential reading for students, teachers and policy makers in anthropology, development studies and environment studies', and it is indeed a nexus for three fashionable subjects. However, 'culture', 'environment' and 'development' are three of the most nebulous and polysemic categories in the academic literature. Almost inevitably, despite (or because of) the contributors all being anthropologists, the book represents such a plethora of different approaches that one wonders what use most policy-makers (not to mention students and teachers) are likely to make of it. In its pages we are taken to Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Soviet North, India and nine different African countries, but not to the Americas, Oceania or Europe. A wide range of environmental features and 'modes of livelihood' are discussed: trees, floods, National Parks, holy mountains, wet-rice cultivation, shifting agriculture and the herding of cattle and reindeer, to name but a few. Subjects touched on by more than one paper include psychology, politics, gender and religion.

Those who have seen him perform at ASA conferences and elsewhere will know that David Parkin is expert at disentangling common threads from disparate papers. However, he and Elisabeth Croll have been severely challenged in attempting to do this in their two introductory chapters here. Their creation of 'bush' and 'base' as an 'imaginative dichotomy' (p. 17) that is culturally dissolved, maintained, celebrated or condemned, is a useful starting-point, as is their model of a threefold 'development gaze' in the history of negotiations between people and environment (and other human agents). However, such statements as 'humans create and exercise understanding and agency on their world around them, yet operate within a web of perceptions, beliefs and myths which portray persons and their environments as constituted in each other, with neither permanently privileged over the other' (p. 3) and 'anthropologists question the conventional oppositions between human and non-human agency, or between person and environment' (ibid.) lead one to ask, 'Which humans?' and 'Which anthropologists?'

Furthermore, if the anthropological approach to the environment is to be that bush is also base and forest is farm (or that, as the blurb on the back cover puts it, 'human beings and their natural surroundings are inseparably fused'), we are immediately faced with the problem of why so many cultures (including some described in this volume) maintain a strong dichotomy between these components. While the editors emphasize the ambiguity and paradox contained in the relationship in many cases, it is surely over-simplistic to link such dichotomies to colonial intervention, an 'implicate' Golden Age tarnished by the Cartesianism of the wicked West. It is unfortunate that where 'Western thought' is invoked by the contributors, it is so often treated without the subtlety of approach accorded thought elsewhere.

The rest of the book is divided into two parts on 'Ecocosmologies' and 'Change to Order'. Tim Ingold's chapter in the ecocosmologies section is a theoretical linchpin for the volume as a whole. He bases his argument for the mutualism of person and environment (at a theoretical rather than a conceptual level) on the anti-cognitive theories of such psychologists as Gibson and von Uexküll. Positing perception and action as interlinked processes is certainly in line with much current thinking in anthropology, but many will feel uneasy at being asked to put all their anthropological eggs into one psychological basket. Ingold's related propositions that we could quite easily leave culture (as he defines it) out of the ecological equation, and society out of the social equation, are provocative.

For Jan van den Breemer, writing about the Aouan of Côte d'Ivoire, who combine conservationist beliefs about nature with environmental devastation, the relationship of culture to the use of nature is indeed 'less direct than might at first be assumed' (p. 106). One is reminded of similar situations in Japan, Europe and elsewhere. Melissa Leach, for example, argues that Mende use of the environment is 'a context through which cultural constructions of both environment and gender are created and recreated' (p. 76). These are the sort of relationships social anthropologists are adept at making, and for the development field Johan Pottier and Augustin Nkundabashaka present a fine analysis of the links between 'official' (that is, agricultural extension workers') distrust of banana groves and the history of protest cults in Rwanda. The chapters by Walter van Beek and Pieteke Banga (on the Dogon) and Günther Schlee (on the Gabbra), are also ethnographically fine, but one wonders how development practitioners would apply the knowledge contained in them in an operational sense: The editors clearly have problems with chapters such as those by Michael Drinkwater (who applies a critical-theory model to understanding conflicts over pastoral management practices in Zimbabwe) and Carol Drijver (who provides a comparative study of 'dimensions of participation' in four environmental projects in Africa and India), because they avoid 'excursions into conceptual otherness' (p. 26). One cannot, however, help thinking it is chapters like these (in which, as Ingold suggests, culture is largely left out of the people-environment equation) that development practitioners will find more congenial.

Culture wins the day in three other stimulating chapters, but not necessarily for the reasons Croll and Parkin consider 'crucial' (p. 26). Rosalind Shaw investigates the meaning of floods in Bangladesh for both men and women, rich and poor, and aid agencies and local people, while Gerard Persoon examines the symbolic associations of rice and sago cultivation amongst the Mentawaians of Western Sumatra. Piers Vitebsky's study of the Siberian Eveny's perceptions of landscape, and their successful quest for political autonomy, concludes the book on a topical note, reminding us how both 'environment' and 'development', like culture, are polyvalent concepts. It is conflicting and changing constructions and imaginings of the environment, often within a single 'culture', rather than a straightforward identification or instantiation with an environment, which give these and other successful papers in the volume their vitality.

Overall, *Bush Base, Forest Farm* is germane to three fashionable topics in development anthropology, but it serves only to emphasize the uncertainties, paradoxes and complexities inherent in the concepts it seeks to integrate.

ANDREW RUSSELL

THOMAS HYLLAND ERIKSEN, *Us and Them in Modern Societies: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Trinidad, Mauritius and Beyond* (Foreword by Bruce Kapferer), Oslo: Scandinavian University Press 1992 (distributed by Oxford University Press). xii, 208 pp., Bibliography, Author Index, Tables, Figures. £30.00.

Thomas Eriksen has impeccable intentions and reaches impeccable conclusions. He wishes to answer such questions as, 'under which circumstances are social identities, specifically ethnic identities, made relevant in conflicts in modern states, how do such conflicts arise and how can they be resolved' (p. 57). Unfortunately, the book under review is a disjointed compilation of his doctoral thesis with four previously published articles. Each of the articles has been copied directly to form a complete chapter with the addition of a new final paragraph to lead into the following chapter. As a result, the reader is presented with repeated outline histories of Trinidad and Tobago and Mauritius and a great variety of introductions and conclusions within and between chapters. There is also a general lack of theoretical consistency. Nevertheless, Eriksen's discursive approach to theoretical argument does mean that the book provides a useful and engaging critique of anthropological literature concerning nationalism and ethnicity.

Eriksen depicts a world of 'high modernity' (p. 190) characterized by globalization and localization, cultural homogenization and differentiation (p. 12, pp. 184-90). Unfortunately, this depiction is incongruously contradicted by Kapferer's foreword in which he criticizes the modernist perspectives of Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson as being Western and outdated in this post-modern

world, where 'highly deterministic and closed systems of thought' (p. ix) and 'the universalist formalist linearities of the modernists' (ibid.) are no longer dominant.

Throughout the book, Eriksen compares and contrasts Trinidad and Tobago with Mauritius, supporting, changing, developing and finally abandoning his theories about ethnicity and nationalism. Early on he defines ethnicity as 'the systematic and enduring social reproduction of basic classificatory differences between categories of people who perceive each other as being culturally discrete' (p. 3). In subsequent chapters he treats ethnicity as a comparative concept 'devoid of substantial content' (p. 9) but with 'semantic density' (ibid.). By this Eriksen means that ethnicity depends upon context: it needs to be located in time and space. For example, 'someone who is emphatically a Creole in an urban environment may be defined as a "near-white" in a village' (p. 169).

Eriksen assesses the various situational, historical, and cultural contexts of ethnicity and ethnic differences. In chapter three, he employs the Wittgensteinian concept of language-games 'to distinguish, in a formal way, between inter-ethnic contexts where the degree of shared meaning is variable' (p. 33). The result is a stimulating discussion in which it is suggested that language defines the self and that 'culture should be conceptualised as a language-game' (p. 47).

Eriksen does not address the question of whether or not the concept of the state and the ideology of nationalism translate from their Western historical origins to the post-colonial islands of Trinidad and Tobago and Mauritius. Instead, he explicates the differences between the particularist ethics of ethnicity and the universalist ethics of nationalism (pp. 50-70) and describes the various forms of nationalist ideology that stress 'the cultural differences between us and them' (p. 13). There is no substantial contextualizing history or ethnography about the islands, bar the observation that Trinidadian Indians possess the characteristics of a minority group, similar to that of Afro-Mauritians. Furthermore, Eriksen insufficiently accounts for the intellectuals from Trinidad—S. Selvon, C. L. R. James and V. S. Naipaul, for example—who have been influential in the Caribbean and beyond. Instead, he explores the dual phenomenon of nationalism, which formally organizes the state (unattended, respectable Independence Day celebrations), and nationalism, which informally organizes the civil society (irrepressible, unpredictable Carnival celebrations).

Finally, Eriksen develops his polemical abandonment of the concept of the 'plural society' for being contradictory, semantically vacuous and empty of context. He concludes that cultural differences are context-dependent, that the reification of ethnic groups in conversation does not corroborate with reality, and that 'ethnicity is like a linguistic idiom...through which agents negotiate who they are and define themselves through contrast' (p. 179). This rightly entails and predicts a post-ethnic, post-nationalist condition whereby 'identities are negotiable' (p. 190) and 'boundaries are not necessarily justified on the basis of ethnicity or nationality' (ibid.).

JONATHAN SKINNER

LEE HARING, *Verbal Arts in Madagascar: Performance in Historical Perspective* (Publications of the American Folklore Society, New Series), Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1992. 218 pp., Sources Consulted, Index. £25.00.

As the title implies, Lee Haring's new book is a treatment of various generic types of oral artistry in Madagascar combined with a preliminary discussion of the history of Malagasy folklore studies. The base material for this analysis is culled solely from written sources, that is, nineteenth- and twentieth-century manuscripts. This attempt at 'folkloric restatement' (the author's words) is original and, as such, bears closer scrutiny, not only for tantalizingly seductive subject-matter viewed through time, but also for the methodological issues that it raises. From the outset, it must be stated that Haring is quite candid in isolating and admitting apparent problems, as well as in discussing their relevance for folkloric research.

The Malagasy language was rendered in Arabic script in the seventeenth century and by the Roman alphabet in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the book begins with a discussion of how this new literacy became the ready instrument for the imposition of state power by the dominant ethnic group of the island, the Imerina. Since the early missionaries and colonial masters aligned themselves with the Merina powerbrokers, the folklore itself reflects this bias. Indeed, most of the examples provided here were originally collected from that group, to the almost total exclusion of any examples from other local communities with cultural and linguistic identities independent from that of the island's rulers. Thus only the 'tip of the iceberg' is represented in the written sources from which this book derives its 'primary' material.

The author isolates four generic types of verbal art: riddles (*ankamantatra*, *fampanononana*), proverbs (*ohabolana*), longer poems (*hainteny*), and formal oratory (*kabary*), all included under the broad classification *fitemin-drazana*, 'sayings of the ancestors', for formal and performative analysis. All other forms of verbal artistry, such as song and narrative for instance, are excluded. In the case of songs, this surely reflects the collecting biases of those Europeans undertaking such work. Nor are we given a clear picture as to how these categories might fit in with those the author has excluded from his analysis. Haring seems to accept at face value the generic statuses of these artistic categories and delineates in them a binary substructure comprised of precedent and sequent, a two-sided format deriving from an inherently interactive situation, such as the riddling encounter. (Of course, as the texts were collected decades ago, any account of the indigenous conceptualization of their appropriate stylistic, performative, and contextual enactments is necessarily lacking.) Haring then combines this analysis with the Bakhtinian notion of alternating and overlapping dialogic and monologic rhetorical voices implicitly embedded in the folkloric text. Riddles, for example, provide a case for dialogic opposition, whereas proverbs impose their will in a monologic fashion sanctioned by the authoritative ancestral voice of 'tradition'. The more elaborate and stylistically inclusive genres of

*hainteny* and *kabary* incorporate these genres and structures in greater detail and intensity. I find this an illuminating argument in some cases, but when promoted as a unique phenomenon of Malagasy rhetorical style, I view the imposition of this 'structure' an instance of ethnocentric 'structuring' by the researcher. It also seems to me to be a rather blunt analytic instrument, as it is surely almost universal in its generality and possible application. In many instances, 'dialogic' is, in my opinion, applied rather freely whenever any kind or level of antithesis can be drawn from the data.

Finally, and the author creditably acknowledges this, the texts themselves are open to question. Most likely the greater proportion of them have been bowdlerized by their collectors (and subsequent editors) for nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Malagasy and/or European consumption. In addition, many were collected in contexts not intended for or conducive to their 'proper' performance, and most were not collected with a view to an 'exact' (perforce written) accounting of their verbal and paralinguistic renderings. These questions might be thought to amount to an argument against the idea of ever undertaking such an 'archaeological' enterprise in the first place. In my view, however, it is a worthwhile project, provided such methodological reservations, which are considerable, are kept in mind. It remains now for some first-class fieldwork to be done to further develop and bring fresh light to these issues, with new and extensive evidence viewed from a contemporary perspective. None the less, Haring has given us an insight, oblique as it necessarily must be, into a subject until now dominated by Malagasy and French academic discourse.

GREGORY VAN ALSTYNE

FRANS HÜSKEN and JEREMY KEMP (eds.), *Cognition and Social Organization in Southeast Asia* (Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 145), Leiden: KITLV Press 1991. 221 pp., Bibliography, Index, Map, Figures, Tables, Diagrams. D.Fl.45.

The editors of this volume plainly see it as being in some ways complementary to the Leiden approach to Indonesian social organization, which focuses on marriage alliance and forms of unilineal descent and which was reviewed not so long ago in *Unity in Diversity* (1984), edited by P. E. de Josselin de Jong, an earlier volume in the same series. It is true, as the editors claim, that a good deal of work has been done on alliance and descent in Southeast Asia, while despite the attention drawn to cognatic kinship by George P. Murdock and J. Derek Freeman, cognation has been somewhat neglected. It has, however, been only somewhat neglected, and it is well to remember that Rodney Needham and Edmund Leach, both of whom have made many contributions to the study of descent and alliance in

Southeast Asia and elsewhere, have also contributed to the ethnography of cognatic societies in Borneo.

There has been a tendency to overdraw the contrast between the cognatic arrangements characteristic over a vast stretch of territory running down from the Philippines through Borneo to Malaysia, parts of Sumatra and Java on the one hand, and the alliance systems in highland Sumatra and eastern Indonesia on the other. There are in fact, non-unilineal, non-alliance societies in the east too, for example on Alor, and quite unusual approaches to alliance and descent, as shown, for example, for the east by Barraud and McKinnon (Tanimbar Archipelago) and by Lewis (Flores), and for the west by Andrew Beatty (Nias). Needham's comparative work on relationship terminologies in eastern Indonesia demonstrated the considerable variety there is there in prescriptive and non-prescriptive forms. Although there is no completely homogeneous outlook in this collection of essays, there is one strong strand that takes a similar attitude toward the variety of cognatic arrangements. Of the twelve studies in the book, five concern Malaysia and there is one each on the Philippines, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, Bali, and Thailand, while another touches on both Java and the Philippines. Thus the geographical spread sticks very close to the classic terrain of cognation, and to this extent the book presents few surprises.

In his general survey of the debate concerning cognatic social organization and stratification in Borneo, Victor T. King reviews a sufficient richness of anthropological contributions to further qualify the claim that this form has been neglected. He notes that some of the variation in Borneo may easily derive from differences in anthropological points of view. Much of the debate has centred around Freeman's definition of the kindred, which other anthropologists have wanted to define differently, or in some cases to leave out of their descriptions. Accepting Maurice Godelier's observation that 'the appearance of real social classes implies precisely the disappearance not of kinship relations, but of their capacity to be the general form of social relations', King argues that 'there are significant differences in terms of kinship between the egalitarian and hierarchical societies of Borneo' (p. 30). Agreeing with Needham, he argues against isolating cognation and the features usually associated with it to establish a positively defined type of society. In other words, cognatic kinship does not provide a basis for comparison.

Jeremy Kemp adopts an overtly anti-corporatist stance in his paper on the Thai farmers of Hua Kok: 'the cognatic nature of the system with its primary emphasis on dyadic relations remained unsullied by the taint of corporatism' (p. 107). If the absence of unilineal descent does not make cognatic societies a unified category, neither does the absence of corporations make for any distinctive set suitable for comparison. Several anthropologists have demonstrated that not all unilineal groups are corporations. Kemp in any case aims at the wrong target in attributing to Evans-Pritchard the view that 'social structure is only about corporate groups'. He says nothing of the kind in the closing pages of *The Nuer* cited by Kemp. Instead, Evans-Pritchard says (p. 203) that 'Nuer lineages are not corporate, localized, communities'. He makes the same point more forcefully in his

contribution to *African Political Systems* (London, 1940), where he writes (p. 287) that 'clans and their lineages are not distinct corporate groups'.

Roseanne Rutten explores the instrumental importance of kinship among poor labourers of Hacienda Milagros, Negros Occidental, the Philippines, where workers maintain relations of mutual aid with a wide range of bilateral kin, affines and ritual kin. Comparing Central Luzon, in the Philippines with Central Java, Willem Wolters demonstrates, among other things, that in Java there is not such a close relationship between kinship and political factionalism above the local level as there is in Filipino society. Frans Hüsken brings out the varying importance of wider kinship ties among different classes in north Javanese village society. While they are of little importance to the poor, the élites 'attain a high degree of social closure by developing a conception of semi-corporateness among kinsmen and kinswomen' (p. 167). For Bali, Mark Hobart turns in another tongue-in-cheek discourse in his accustomed manner, mixing spurious and fictitious scholarship with philosophical references and observations about native Balinese metaphysics. All is aimed at demonstrating that the Balinese have no 'kinship'. He acknowledges that Balinese domestic and kin relations have already been pretty thoroughly set out by other authors, which relieves him of the need to produce much in the way of evidence and allows him to get on with slaying his straw men, most of whom, however, have been slain long ago by others.

C. W. Watson also makes heavy weather of the fact that Kerinci social organization has both cognatic and matrilineal features. He suggests that alternative views of Kerinci in these terms are similar to the *trompes-l'oeil* in Escher's etchings. Frankly, I think he makes too much of the difficulty. While it is true that there are examples of anthropologists with unilineal preconceptions misconstruing aspects of social organization, it is also true that there is a wide consensus, reflected in our teaching and writing, that cognatic relationships will be recognized and are likely to be important in all societies. This is not a new consensus either. Watson might, for example, benefit from looking again at Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer concepts of *buth* and *mar*. In his contribution to *Studies in Social Anthropology*, the Festschrift for Evans-Pritchard edited by John Beattie and Godfrey Lienhardt (Oxford, 1975), H. H. Meinhard (p. 12), called the view that all societies recognize cognatic kinship within certain limits a commonplace to social anthropologists, unrecognized by the older (nineteenth-century) generation of scholars.

Maila Stivens argues that on the other side of the Malacca Strait the matrilineal *adat perpatih* of Negeri Sembilan is not a unitary social phenomenon. Instead, the present kin relationships embrace contradictory elements, some matrilineal, others cognatic. She thinks the latter are becoming more important than they were in the past. It is interesting that whereas Stivens thinks cognatic ties have become more important through migration, Watson cites Diana Kato in support of the view that migration does not undermine the Minangkabau matrilineal ethos. T. Wong presents an empirical, unspeculative account of domestic developmental cycles in a village in Kedah, Malaysia. Her conclusion is that 'control over familial labour depends on actual control over land and other economic resources, thereby

generating progressive social differentiation within the village' (p. 201). Josiane Massard looks at exchange practices in a Malay village in Pahang; kinship ties can be subordinated to other factors, such as physical proximity or economic motives, while exchange practices illustrate, rather than obscure, economic disparities. Taking material from another Pahang village, Bill Wilder demonstrates that Malay kinship is many things at once, and is also fluid and highly malleable. Janet Carsten draws on field research on the island of Langkawi off the north-west Malaysian coast. She focuses in particular on the relationship between parents-in-law, which has a central importance on this island. Parents-in-law frequently call on each other for many kinds of mutual aid. Many exchanges focus on common grandchildren. She also discusses the commonplace theme of the co-occurrence of equality and hierarchy: 'if the community is in one sense a collection of consanguineously related households and compounds within which relationships are based on hierarchy, in another it is also a collection of affinally connected households whose relationships with each other are founded on a notion of equality' (p. 112). The relationship between parents-in-law represents affinity, community and an ideal of equality. However, this egalitarianism does not imply actual equality in the social system.

There are no startlingly new perspectives or discoveries in this book. Its utility lies in its central claim, namely that it addresses forms of social organization that are important in the lives of a great many Southeast Asian peoples, and which are not accounted for by ideas of unilineal descent and marriage alliance. Since the older Leiden approach apparently still has some life in it, but has little useful to say about cognatic kinship, it is right to have the balance corrected. However, the ghost of the maddened unilineal descent theorist that hovers about the pages of this book should not be allowed to cause the authors, paradoxically, to exaggerate the differences between those societies that do not resort to unilineal descent and those that do. There is just as much variety in the land of descent and alliance as there is here.

R. H. BARNES

CHARLES LESLIE and ALLAN YOUNG (eds.), *Paths to Asian Medical Knowledge* (Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care), Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1992. ix, 296 pp., Index, Figures. \$40.00/\$15.00.

Compared with the numerous monographs on South Asian notions of the self, emotion, morality and cosmology, 'Asian medicine' is a comparatively neglected area. This new volume, of a consistently high quality, derives from a 1988 American Anthropological Association symposium and follows Charles Leslie's earlier *Asian Medical Systems* (1976), in which he first argued for a sympathetic consideration of Chinese therapeutics, Ayurveda and Unani as coherent systems of practice in their own right, rather than for judging them against biomedicine

(that is, Western or, as it is increasingly termed, 'cosmopolitan' medicine). Leslie had emphasized that these humoral theories should be evaluated according to their own claims to efficacy.

Given Foucault's idea of contemporary medical epistemology as an objectifying 'gaze' that was developed by eighteenth-century European science, Shigeheisa Kuriyama provides an intriguing account of the impact in Japan of an illustrated Dutch anatomy text. This neatly fitted Japan's own eighteenth-century search for a 'modernizing' perspective, opposed to tradition and to subjectivity, that attempted to describe the physical world as an independent and objective reality. Not only 'modern', however, for this search fitted Daoist concerns to penetrate beyond illusion; illusion now standing for an outdated tradition. Paul Unschuld, the doyen of Chinese medical historians, charts the changing Chinese attitudes to European medicine—and the converse. While both cultures, he argues, have tended to a homogenizing perspective of the other, Chinese medical practice has been the more pragmatic, pluralistic and incremental, in contrast to biomedicine's claim to represent accurately the natural world once and for all. Judith Farquhar argues similarly that the Chinese case histories used in medical education were not paradigmatic of fixed categories nor of anomalies (as they were typically in Western medical books), but were rather in a dynamic and empirical relation to the earlier collections of cases and medical theory. Gary Seaman provides a useful and detailed account of geomantic correspondences and causalities in Chinese medicine between the living and the dead, human and land, rice and the body. Margaret Lock continues her previous work on the 'diseases of modernization' in Japan, detailing the recognition and treatment of school-refusal syndrome, mother-son 'incest', apartment neurosis and the menopausal syndrome. Japanese physicians debate whether these are 'real sicknesses' or just the consequences of woman's idleness in a mechanized consumer household. Lock notes that the salient characteristic is that Japanese women now live in good health well beyond child-bearing age. The impetus behind the new pathologies is perhaps less idle housewives than idle (male) gynaecologists.

The second section contains papers on Indian medical systems. Margaret Trawick considers four apparently dissimilar therapeutic practices in Tamil Nadu (textual, charismatic, spirit mediumship, devotional), and argues that at a high level of generality they are linked by the need to privilege life over death and health over pain, when the shared cosmology argues for the mutual necessity of these complementarities. Gananath Obeyesekere, examining the translation of Ayurveda to a Buddhist context in Sri Lanka, suggests that on the way it has become more empirical and bereft of mythic resonances. In his fascinating paper, Leslie argues that medical anthropologists have generally assumed that ayurvedic patients themselves 'understand' the system (as opposed to Western patients who have been generally represented as dissatisfied with their treatment as it ignores their own understandings), yet at the same time medical anthropologists funded by international aid agencies have regarded local healers' appropriation of pharmaceuticals and stethoscopes as quackery. He argues that to 'understand' is not to

'agree' and that anyway ayurveda has always been syncretic; from the time the East India Company's orientalist argued that there was a linguistic and cultural continuity between classical Greece and ancient India (and, indeed, encouraged a local Indian 'renaissance' of Vedic medical texts), there has been a continuing debate within South Asian medicines as to the degree of Western influence and medical technique that may be incorporated, a debate closely tied to that on national identity and which led directly to the assassination of Bandaranaike in Colombo.

Following his arguments in *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats* (Berkeley, 1987), Francis Zimmermann argues here for a common tripartite division in Indo-European medicine: cathartic (including surgery and purification), soothing, dietetic. The cathartic element of 'managed violence' is now lost in the competition with biomedicine, leaving the 'Indian medicine' marketed in the West as simplified and commodified, a 'gentler' version of tablets, aromatherapy and massage, holistic in name if hardly in practice. Mark Nichter's detailed account of local responses to Kyasanur forest disease (a tick-borne virus that has become more prevalent with afforestation and cattle-rearing) demonstrates the multiple levels of understanding. Local aristocrats encourage an idiom of troubled spirits (particularly those spirits that once articulated feudal relations) to delay (successfully) further land reform, whilst patients and their families look at individual vulnerabilities through astrology and an angry pox deity, and local modernizing activists in touch with public health officials favour the idiom of a 'disease of development'. Nichter argues that 'karmic explanations' do not make for fatalism as is so often argued, but rather back up the gaps in biomedical explanations.

The final section, devoted to Islamic medicine, is the shortest, reflecting the relative interests of medical anthropologists today. Byron and Mary Jo Good begin to address the question of how a discrete corpus of Graeco-Arabic medicine articulates a variety of social and political concerns from West Africa to the Pacific, and consider some of the local divergences from the founding texts. Thus Galen's theory that both sexes contribute to the foetus has been generally replaced in Arab societies by a monogenetic (male) origin. Carol Laderman takes the instance of how the introduction of the Graeco-Arabic hot/cold classification into peninsular Malaya in the fourteenth century appropriated and revised existing hot/cold systems; as with related debates on the introduction of medieval Hispanic medicine into the Caribbean and into Central and South America, the accounts of the 'prior' aboriginal practice (Senoi, negrito) are, of course, of twentieth-century provenance. If Leslie's earlier volume established Asian medical systems as reasonably coherent and historically grounded systems of knowledge and practice, this collection starts to tease out political issues of creolization, external influence, local contingency and historical divergence. Without exception, all the chapters here are informative and lively, uncontaminated by the hermeneutic and phenomenological jargon that has settled on to many medical anthropologists, not excluding some of the contributors to this volume.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD

VANESSA MAHER (ed.), *The Anthropology of Breast-Feeding: Natural Law or Social Construct* (Berg Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Women; gen. eds. Shirley Ardener and Helen Callaway), Oxford and Providence: Berg 1992. x, 181 pp., Index. £30.00/£8.95.

The subtitle suggests the argument pursued throughout this new collection of essays. The various authors show that although, as mammals, women are equipped physiologically to breast-feed their babies in the first few months of their lives, how it is done, how often, for how long, by whom, and even whether it is done at all, are everywhere matters of conscious decision based on social and economic factors. In some places it is the mother's decision, but in others it is the father's, or it may even be the 'decision' of the prevailing medical authorities. In her study of breast-feeding in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Iceland Kirsten Hastrup writes that 'the basic assumption of the present paper is that we cannot study the practice or absence of breast-feeding in any particular society without considering the larger cultural context' (p. 96). This assumption runs through all the book and is supported by convincing ethnographic evidence.

Vanessa Maher, whose own area of study is Morocco, begins and ends the book with theoretical sections in which she points out, among other things, that the present attempt of the medical profession to persuade Third World women to breast-feed is yet another example of men trying to tell women what they should do (and, one might add, of rich women telling poor women what to do). She argues that the current insistence of international organizations on the promotion of lengthy breast-feeding as a way of ensuring healthy babies takes no account of the surrounding factors. The effects on the mother's health (or lack of it) are ignored, as are other equally important factors, both social (such as gender inequality) and economic (such as poverty).

The core of the book consists of ethnographic studies dealing with the issue of infant feeding in different cultures. Some of these are such 'traditional societies' as those of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Iceland, a Tunisian mountain people, traditional Iranian society (and the institution of milk kinship) and two Nepalese groups. Only the paper by Balsamo, de Mari, Maher and Serini is concerned with breast-feeding in an urbanized setting, in this case Turin in Italy where both the hospital and its medical personnel intervene to a considerable extent.

The experience of the Turinese mothers, most of whom were breast-feeding with their own mothers' encouragement (but without that of the obstetricians, who believed that breast-feeding damaged the mother's eyesight!), provides an interesting contrast to the findings of my own studies of breast-feeding among the urban Hong Kong Chinese. In Hong Kong the rate of breast-feeding is currently extremely low, and it is almost universally discouraged. Grandmothers are at best neutral on the issue, but rather tend to discourage their daughters on the grounds that it is a nuisance and far too tiring. It is fairly routine in Hong Kong hospitals for the mother's breasts to be bound. Whereas the Turinese mothers say that they

breast-fed because they 'didn't think about it because it never occurred to me to do otherwise' (quoted on p. 64), many Hong Kong mothers claim it never occurred to them to breast-feed.

Among Hong Kong mothers breastmilk is regarded as something useless and superfluous. This is in contrast, for example, to the situation among the Khmir women of the north-west mountains of Tunisia as described by Marie-Louise Creighton. There milk is a sign of *baraka*, 'a life sustaining force' (p. 37) that causes not only the baby to thrive but also all who are connected to the household. It is also the milk that bonds baby and mother, even extending to the mother's siblings; though, conversely, it can also cause the baby to fall ill. Apart from sustaining a baby and *baraka*, milk can create relationships beyond the immediate household. Jane Khatib-Chahidi shows how, in Iran, breast-feeding other people's babies is used to create 'milk kinship', both to prevent the incidence of marriage and to create alliances or easy relationships between the sexes among those whom one is not allowed to marry. She also touches on the very interesting topic of wet-nursing and what it meant in traditional Iranian society.

Catherine Panter-Brick compares two groups in rural Nepal who live side-by-side but have different economies, one being based on agriculture the other on animal husbandry. She finds that among the group where women's work is essential to the community, babies and nursing are easily integrated into the working day. Among the other group, where the women work at home and older women are also at home, both groups are more involved in child care.

A real puzzle is presented in Kirsten Hastrup's paper. She discusses the reasons for the Icelandic avoidance of breast-feeding, an avoidance that lasted for two to three hundred years with disastrous demographic consequences. Why people continue with a practice that to others would appear to be in their own worst interests raises the whole tricky question of rationality in human behaviour. Hastrup provides a convincing analysis of a complex of reasons for the avoidance, an analysis she could not have advanced without a thorough understanding of the society's history and culture.

It is for the lack of a thorough understanding of a people's background that, in her editorial chapters, Maher condemns those who indiscriminately promote lengthy breast-feeding in the Third World. She argues that the reasons for a mother's decision to give artificial milk are likely to be as rational as any other decision she makes. In Morocco, for instance, it is the husband's money that pays for the milk for the baby rather than the mother's malnourished, exhausted body.

This collection of well-researched articles demonstrates without doubt that breast-feeding an infant involves far more than 'natural laws', and far more than mother and baby in isolation. The book takes its place among recent anthropological literature that locates the occurrence of natural, universal phenomena squarely in a social context.

DIANA MARTIN

BRONISŁAW MALINOWSKI, *The Early Writings of Bronisław Malinowski* (eds. Robert J. Thornton and Peter Skalniĳ; transl. Ludwik Krzyzanowski), Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1993. xv, 234 pp., References, Index. £35.00/\$59.95.

This book is long overdue. As works of the principal founder of modern social anthropology one would have thought that Malinowski's early writings would have been the object of intense discussion, yet because most were written in Polish they have remained inaccessible to English speakers—until now that is. *The Early Writings of Bronisław Malinowski* contains nine essays by Malinowski written between 1904 and 1914. Five are translations of articles originally published in Polish or German, including his Ph.D. dissertation originally handwritten on only seventy-five pages, two are translations of hitherto unknown essays discovered by one of the editors in the archives of Yale University's Stirling Library, and two are republications of articles, written in English, but initially published in obscure places.

Readers will find his essay on Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) particularly interesting, not only because it is the earliest piece of scholarly writing we have from Malinowski's hand (probably written for a philosophy course on Nietzsche in 1904/5, and published here for the first time), but because of its functional interpretation of myth. Myths, 'in their basic social function', he says, 'are themselves the explanation, justification, or normalization of what is happening in the world' (p. 86). Those familiar with Malinowski's work will see in this the origins of his idea of 'myth as charter' that he later developed in 'Myth in Primitive Psychology' (1926).

Malinowski's doctoral thesis 'On the Principle of the Economy of Thought' is a critical analysis of the positivist epistemology of Richard Avenarius and Ernst Mach. In it he criticizes their conception of the 'economy of thought' (i.e. empiricism) as a psychological phenomenon of a normal human being since the criterion for normality is 'determined by the conditions under which it takes place' (p. 107). What concerns him 'is science taken socially, as a phenomenon of social life, not as a facet of the development of an individual mind' (p. 110). What he learned from Mach and Avenarius was that 'scientific methods are economical' and that 'we must pare our facts and events down until they are simple and as few as possible and arrange them into a lucid form' (p. 107), points Malinowski elaborated in his methodological disquisitions in 'Baloma Spirits of the Dead in the Trobriand Islands' (1916) and in his introduction to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922). Scientific thinking is equivalent to other modes of thought, and he argues that its value must be judged with respect to some socially determined purpose. He concludes that empiricism is a necessary but not a sufficient basis for a social science. Knowledge of purpose of such modes of thought and, in a broader sense, their function is also required. Malinowski concludes his dissertation by observing that 'we do not yet have an empirical basis for a philosophical world view' (p. 115). What was lacking was the empirical evidence to support and develop his 'proto-functional' ideas. He found it in the ethnographic material of Sir James Frazer.

In 'Myth in Primitive Psychology' Malinowski gives the impression that his conversion to anthropology was rather dramatic—the result of reading Frazer's *Golden Bough* during one of the bouts of illness that plagued him throughout his life. But as these essays show, it was in trying to come to terms with Nietzsche and Mach that Malinowski turned to Frazer in the first place. Thornton and Skalník suggest that Malinowski's anthropology grew from a synthesis of Frazer's ethnological projects and the philosophic thought of Nietzsche and Mach. In his later years Malinowski formed something of a mutual admiration society with Frazer: Frazer praising Malinowski's work in his foreword to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), and Malinowski paying tribute to the 'Master' in his preface to 'Myth in Primitive Psychology'. It is surprising to learn, then, that between 1911 and 1913 Malinowski published a scathing, three-part methodological critique of Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910) in the Polish journal *Lud*. Although praising it as 'an invaluable treasury and mine of facts' (*ibid.*) he finds Frazer's theories 'cannot stand up to serious criticism' (p. 125), that his arrangement of facts lacks 'a clearly formulated, purposeful method' (p. 126) and that his concepts are 'purely hypothetical and, as it were, purely personal assumptions and dogmas' (p. 135)—in short, Frazer's anthropology was entirely flawed. What Malinowski learned from Frazer, Thornton and Skalník comment (p. 4), was '*how not to do anthropology*' (original emphasis). Malinowski's critique of Frazer is not simply a litany of what is wrong with evolutionary anthropology. He uses Frazer as a foil for his own functional interpretation of totemism and exogamy.

The remainder of the essays discuss such diverse topics as religion, kinship, economics, magic, the family, marriage, and men's group's in Australia. They expose the myth that Malinowski's idea of 'primitive' societies as working and integrated systems grew from direct observation of them. Indeed, they reveal that he had already formulated the principles of his functionalism before he left for the Trobriands. It was because the ethnographic material available at the time was gathered and presented under an evolutionary framework, and was thus un conducive to a functional interpretation, that he was driven to fieldwork. These early texts give us the questions that Malinowski's Trobriand Island ethnography was meant to answer.

Thornton and Skalník have done us a great service by publishing these essays. Of Malinowski's early writings only his book *Wierzenia pierwotne i formy ustroju społecznego* (Primitive Beliefs and Forms of Social Organization), which was completed before he went to the Trobriands but only published in 1915, is now left to be translated. *The Early Writings of Bronisław Malinowski* provides insights into the philosophical and theoretical foundations of Malinowski's later thought (and thus of social anthropology in general) and is indispensable for anyone interested in his work or the history of anthropology. The editors' astute comments and summary of each essay add considerably to the value of the book. Like Malinowski's *Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1967), *The Early Writings of Bronisław Malinowski* will continue to be a source of discussion for years to come.

CHRIS HOLDSWORTH

DAVID S. MOYER and HENRI J. M. CLAESSEN (eds.), *Time Past, Time Present, Time Future: Essays in Honour of P. E. de Josselin de Jong* (Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 131), Dordrecht and Providence, USA: Foris Publications 1988. viii, 295 pp., Index, Maps, Figures, Plate, Bibliography. No price given.

Although sometimes looked at rather askance by anthropologists in the other main anthropological nations and despite it being strongly influenced early on by the *Année*, there is no doubting the self-sufficiency of the Dutch anthropological tradition, something it really shares only with Britain, the USA and France. One of its major figures is honoured in this book and, unlike a lot of *Festschriften*, it is not just the honorand who provides the bulk of its coherence. A number of contributors (e.g. Junus, Platenkamp, the Benda-Beckmanns) try to develop Dutch traditions in the literary and anthropological analysis of Indonesian cultures, with plenty of reference to the famous FAS approach, especially in the transformational revision of de Josselin de Jong's uncle's original programme undertaken subsequently by Patrick Edward. Visser seeks to combine this approach with Dumont's work on hierarchical opposition with reference to the elder brother/younger brother dichotomy among the Sahu of Halmahera, while Oosten applies it to the Indo-European world in a critique of Sahlins's study of the myth of the stranger king and the outside origin of sovereignty generally, an idea also dealt with by Visser. More independent of the approach are Needham's paper on changes in kinship terminology in eastern Indonesia (some of his earlier work here, of course, has been just as transformational in its way), Barnes's paper on various Indonesian representations of space, and Postel-Coster's attempt to revise the usual androcentric model of spouse exchange by showing female influence behind marriage choices as standard in many societies. A number of articles look at various aspects of history, Locher especially from a very personal point of view.

The book's title, of course, refers to T. S. Eliot's poem (Eliot being one of the honorand's favourite poets) whose overall four-five structure suggested to the editors the Javanese *monca-pat* system, which in a sense initiated the Leiden tradition through van Ossenbruggen's study of it in 1917. Perhaps they failed to notice that these very same lines also contain a possible epigraph (or epitaph?) for the more controversial aspects of that tradition—its treatment of double unilineal descent: '...an abstraction. / Remaining a perpetual possibility / Only in a world of speculation.'

ROBERT PARKIN

VERNON REYNOLDS and JOHN KELLETT (eds.), *Mating and Marriage* (Biosocial Society Series 3), Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press 1991. xii, 162 pp., Index, Figures. No price given.

The present volume brings together four papers on the interpretation of mating and marriage and the relationship between them from as many different disciplines and perspectives, namely zoology (Paul Harvey and Janet Rees), biological anthropology (Vernon Reynolds), social anthropology (Sir Edmund Leach, probably his last paper) and sociology (Ronald Fletcher). On the whole it is the biologists who impress the most, and Reynolds in particular shows a real interest and awareness of what is happening in the social sciences, which is not often encountered, much less reciprocated by practitioners in the latter.

But I begin with the social scientists. Leach's arguments against the genetic determination of marriage systems are reasonable if unremarkable, stressing that while mating is a purely biological and private matter—though still subject to social regulation through incest rules where humans are concerned—marriage is 'a public matter' involving the legitimation of children and rights to property. It is also purely human, though the claim that not all societies have it depends on accepting Leach's over-narrow definition. Personally, I find it very odd to see 'mating' applied to any aspect of human life at all: certainly in ordinary language, while 'mate' may occasionally be used ironically of a sexual or marriage partner, 'mating' generally suggests what goes on in the baser world of animals alone.

Fletcher is more open to other disciplines but wants to bring into the picture something akin to the sort of social psychology one can end up with by reading Durkheim in a certain way. What he means is the acting out of instincts arising in response to physical stimuli (i.e. the urge to mate), the sentiment of attachment which is thereby created towards whoever satisfied these instincts (i.e. the mate) and the institutions that arise out of these attachments (i.e. marriage, as far as human society is concerned). The associated argument that marriage is based on the needs of the family reminds one rather of Malinowski, though Fletcher himself traces it back to Westermarck and Crawley, neither of whom saw any great distinction between animal mating and human marriage, in view of the biological imperative underlying both and the social nature of many non-human species, something which frequently extends to post-natal care of the young. For Fletcher, indeed, mating is more than copulation and also includes, for example, the courtship displays of certain animal species: he is the only author in the book who seeks to blur the dichotomy the others insist on maintaining between mating and marriage. When applied to human societies, such arguments tend to sacrifice proper consideration of the cultural variation of marriage to a general account of its evolutionary development, and they rely overmuch on the satisfaction of mating instincts to the neglect of the human ability to control and channel them, if not to suppress them entirely. Certainly, in his efforts to account for them psychologically Fletcher seems to think that all marriages are love marriages, though Leach shows how uncommon these are cross-culturally. These two authors are also at

odds over the relevance of common rearing as a basis for incest taboos. Fletcher again follows Westermarck in accepting it as the explanation, thus disregarding the fact that a rule of clan exogamy can quite easily ban relations between two people who have never even seen each other, if the clan is large and dispersed enough. Fletcher is more valuable on trends in marriage in modern Western society, which is presumably his forte. He will not get far with social anthropologists by seeking to build on the largely outmoded ideas even of the worthy Westermarck (would any anthropologist nowadays seriously cite fear as a general explanation for incest or indeed any other taboo?). Nor will he impress them much by pushing on them the historically not unreasonable but nowadays wholly nonsensical suggestion that their subject is just a branch of sociology. Fletcher comes across largely as yet another example of the exponent of one discipline building his view of another on work that is decades out of date.

The main burden of the two biological papers is to knock the idea of species-specific mating patterns firmly on the head. Rees and Harvey do this primarily for non-primates, suggesting also that the requirements of ensuring a beneficial gene balance may limit outbreeding as much as inbreeding. This reminds one of the many human societies in which there is an outer, endogamous boundary as well as an inner, exogamous one (the Indian sub-caste would be a prime example, though it is not the only one). Reynolds concentrates primarily on primates and on the transition to human society, arguing, on grounds of differences between the sexes in respect of size, body hair etc., that humans evolved as a polygynous species and only subsequently came to value monogamy to any extent. Both he and Fletcher seem to see polygyny as always and everywhere a matter of status, though in many societies it is no more than the regular solution for childlessness and has no status implications whatsoever (except, perhaps, in preventing one's status from falling through a lack of children). According to Reynolds, humans also brought primate lineages with them in their evolution and possibly invented cousin marriage to 'counteract strife' between them. Well, affines regularly fight one another in many parts of the world, and N. J. Allen's tetradic theory, which Reynolds also brings in as an anthropological model of the evolution of human kinship systems, actually implies the absence of lineages of any sort at such an early stage. Non-human species may often practise the avoidance of near kin as mating partners, though *pace* Reynolds, Lévi-Strauss's theory of exogamy as something essentially human can still be saved by referring to the equally essentially human capacity to classify and regulate. This, of course, reflects 'the extension of the cognitive control of behaviour already seen in non-human primates', which 'has enabled humans to intervene cognitively in their own social systems', something which Reynolds freely recognizes. Indeed, one of the most congenial aspects of his paper is its situating of the social and biological aspects of the problem of what constitutes mating and marriage fairly in their relation to one another, and his frank assessment of just what sociobiology has to offer and what it has not.

Despite their differences, the message from all sides in this book is that not even non-primate mating systems are necessarily wholly genetically determined, let alone primate and human ones. This leads to some unexpected results. The biologists give equal weight to environmental and, where appropriate, cognitive factors, while the sociologist prefers psychology. Only the social anthropologist remains true to form in eschewing any real attempt at explanation at all: as so often, he knows what the explanation is not, but not what it is. One can divine the reasons behind the scepticism readily enough by perusing the papers by Reynolds and Fletcher, though they are attempting a more universal explanation of the evolution of human marriage rather than simply stressing variation, as Leach and also Rees and Harvey do in relation respectively to human societies and to animal ones in general. Yet all the papers have their points to make, and the book as a whole may help to dispel some of the social anthropological prejudice against approaches to kinship from other disciplines, approaches which are not infrequently stereotyped before they are fully understood.

ROBERT PARKIN

JENNIFER ROBERTSON, *Native and Newcomer: Making and Remaking a Japanese City*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1991. xviii, 236 pp., Bibliography, Index, Figures, Maps, Tables. \$29.95.

Jennifer Robertson carried out fieldwork in what is now largely a commuter 'bed-town' within the wider metropolitan area of Tokyo. This was also the district in which she spent much of her childhood, and though she says that this was not a direct influence in her choice of location, there is a richness and depth in her ethnography that is almost certainly due to her earlier experience. For Robertson, much of the time and energy an ethnographer new to an area spends in establishing fundamental detail about the location could be diverted into other activities, and the result is impressive. We do not learn a great deal about individuals living in Kodaira, not even about Robertson herself, but there is a wealth of collective representation unusual for an urban study.

The second characteristic feature of this book is that it is organized around a particular concept that the ethnographer found to be a 'dominant representation'. Thus, she writes, 'the ethnography is, to a large extent, a literary portrait of Kodaira condensed from the various repeatings of a particularly cogent word, or trope, in just as many contexts' (p. 4). The first chapter is then devoted to a detailed analysis of the 'resonances and ramifications on the national and local levels' (ibid.) of this concept, which lays the groundwork for the ethnographic portrayal that follows. This buildup is reminiscent of the introduction of words like *mangu* and *mana*, which were to become part of the vocabulary shared by all

anthropologists. Robertson is operating in a large and complex society, along with many other ethnographers, so that her concept is by no means new to the outside observer, but her analysis of its use is certainly the most comprehensive in the English language to date.

The 'trope' in question is *furusato*, literally 'old-village', though more accurately translated into English as 'home town' or 'native place'. It is a concept that has been used widely in the last two decades in Japan by politicians, city planners, journalists and advertisers alike, to evoke a sense of the usually nostalgic past related to some present or future purpose. In the case of Kodaira, as elsewhere, the notion of *furusato-tsukuri*, or *furusato*-making is brought into play in the social construction of the community—'a process of reifying a Kodaira of yesterday to serve as a stable referent of and model for an "authentic" community today and tomorrow' (p. 5).

Kodaira in fact comprises seven smaller communities that were reclaimed from barren land in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, cultivated through the intervening years, and amalgamated in 1889. The *furusato-tsukuri* movement is a 'second reclamation', aimed at restoring to the suburb it has become 'the harmony and camaraderie that allegedly characterized life and work in the seven original villages' (p. 9). Efforts are made to encourage newcomers to settle themselves as locals by adopting the 'pioneering spirit' it is assumed motivated the earlier settlers. However, to a considerable degree the descendants of these same earlier settlers—'the natives'—counter these efforts by continually claiming and indeed maintaining for themselves a special place distinct from that of the newcomers.

The title of the book reflects this antimony, and it is examined in various contexts in separate chapters on festivals, settlement patterns, religious consociations, ritual practices and neighbourhood associations. Participation at most levels is not only different for natives and newcomers, in many cases it is enforced as such by the exclusion from the long-standing associations and their activities of all but the families established for several generations. Thus, there is a third tier of relative natives, or relative newcomers, that establishes and runs a parallel but different set of organizations in the middle. A picture emerges of a deep and divisive rift, quite depressing in a world currently rather generally engaged in community building.

The overall thesis, of course, is one of historicity and the extent to which the past has been moulded and reinterpreted in the promotion of current interests. One of the most interesting chapters of the book is that which addresses, through historical documents, the original 'making of Kodaira'. For anyone who has travelled through the apparently endless urban and suburban sprawl that makes up the metropolitan area now known as Tokyo, it is fascinating to discover the nature and degree of social engineering that went into its creation over three centuries ago, and to learn something as clear and precise as this account provides about the type of landscape it has been built upon.

To discover that today's most honoured civic ancestor was a cruel and despotic landlord is also interesting, though not particularly surprising to Europeans perhaps, and herein lies the weakness of the book. For this excellent ethnography is presented in, and only in, the terms of the trendiest general theory current in the United States today. Thus, it is postmodern, particularly in its initial inaccessibility, but what is worse it virtually ignores the abundant related work by anthropologists who have carried out fieldwork in Europe and other complex societies beyond America. It even ignores the rather substantial literature already published on the very subject of its focus, namely uses of notions of nostalgia in Japan.

This lack of scholarly context, however, does not in the end detract from the book's appeal, for the account stands as a splendid piece of ethnography in its own right. It has an extraordinary depth, notably in the author's use of Japanese historical materials, as well as in her evident ease with local institutions. The depth of knowledge presented here will surely provide an excellent base for future comparative endeavour, should the author choose that path. The book will also be of interest to the generalist as well as the Japanese specialist for, as intimated earlier, the subjects it addresses are today of interest way beyond the shores of Japan.

JOY HENDRY

R. L. STIRRAT, *Power and Religiosity in a Post-Colonial Setting: Sinhala Catholics in Contemporary Sri Lanka* (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 87), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1992. xx, 231 pp., References, Index, Maps, Figures, Tables. £35.00/\$59.95.

*Power and Religiosity* presents a readily comprehensible sociological account of Sinhalese Catholicism. It is based on the author's field research from the 1970s onwards, as well as on historical materials that enable him to chart developments in Catholic policy and practice over the past century. It is a model of how the anthropology of literate, complex societies can be done. The author's long-term experience of Sri Lanka gives him a masterful control of the data that quickly wins the reader's confidence.

Stirrat begins (and ends) by denying that religion and politics can or should be separated in the Sri Lankan case. Power and dominance are central to both, and, if anything, religion appears to encompass politics, 'rather than existing as a separate domain which rarely interacts with the political' (p. 10). While we may applaud this principled position, writing an anthropology book in English that avoids the words 'politics' and 'religion' is well-nigh impossible precisely because these are such fundamental categories in Western understanding. This is Stirrat's contention as well, of course, but escaping this ethnocentric trap while writing in

a European language is about as easy as lifting oneself by one's bootstraps. What does clearly emerge is that religion is not an eternal thing 'out there', it is rather a zone that constantly gets redrawn according to historical shifts in dominance.

Under the British, from the late nineteenth century through the 1920s, the Sri Lankan Catholic Church was relatively protected and given considerable latitude in operating according to its own conventions and ambitions. This included the running of high-calibre sectarian schools that equipped Catholics linguistically and otherwise to assume prestigious civil service posts. The Catholics saw no obstacles to the expression of pride in their identity, which they could trace back to the sixteenth-century Portuguese colonization of Sri Lanka. As the country was still under European domination, connection to a colonialist regime carried little stigma, although there were occasional moments of friction with the Buddhist majority.

With the devolution of electoral power to the local population in the 1930s, the Catholics began to be seen as 'denationalized', as mongrels who had betrayed their true Sinhalese (Buddhist) identity. After Independence in 1948, but especially after the 1956 election of Bandaranaike's nationalist party, which declared Sinhala the official language and Buddhism the state religion, this situation was exacerbated. Catholic schools were nationalized, much to the distress of the Catholic community, and Catholic identity came under pressure from a number of angles.

In this nationalistic atmosphere, the Catholics in the region studied by Stirrat, most of whom are Sinhala speakers, felt it desirable and not radically contradictory, to cultivate a Sinhalese identity. This involved embracing as much of Buddhist national history as they could, while lowering some Catholic religious barriers. Official sanction was given to this course of action by the advocacy by Vatican II of the translation of liturgical texts into the vernacular, and by the promotion of the view that the Catholic faith could be maintained even when expressed in local cultural forms. Whereas the use of drums in ritual ceremonies and the wearing of white as a colour of mourning had hitherto been forbidden as heathen and contradictory to Catholicism, they were now embraced as elements of a traditional Sinhalese culture completely unrelated to religion. Here then, is a perfect example of how changing power relations contribute to the redrawing of the boundaries of religion.

The area to which Stirrat devotes most attention is the rising importance of pilgrimage centres, charismatic priests and holy men, and the incidence of demonic possession and exorcism within Sri Lankan Catholicism since the 1970s. Sorting out the various causes and meanings of these developments is a complicated matter, which can hardly be summarized here. Even Stirrat does not propose a single perspective or answer to the matter, but freely admits that these developments in Catholic practice are overdetermined. It is important to observe that these innovations parallel changes in Buddhist practice, such as the rise of the Kataragama cult described by Obeyesekere in his article 'Social Change and the Deities: Rise of the Kataragama Cult in Modern Sri Lanka' (*Man*, n.s., Vol. XII,

no. 4 (1977), pp. 377–96). This parallel could be the result of the post-Vatican II indigenization of Catholicism, a form of cultural adaptation or syncretism. Another possibility is to read these convergences as the product of the fundamental similarity between the traditions of Catholicism and Buddhism, both of which allow for the ideas of possession and exorcism. A third possibility is to treat the rise of ecstatic religion as a standardized response to common psychological or sociological predicaments—forms of religious convergence caused by cultural-historical modelling.

In a particularly interesting section (pp. 160ff.), Stirrat argues for a sociological approach whereby gods or saints parallel worldly patrons in their possession of *varam* (delegated authority). In the modernizing towns of Sri Lanka, patrons are indispensable. The common understanding is that complete devotion, whether to human patron or saint, will bring protection and rewards. Likewise, the success of others is seen to be at one's own expense and is envied, thus leading to increasing charges of sorcery and recourse to shrines for exorcism. Some reference to George Foster's 'Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good' (*American Anthropologist*, Vol. LXVII, no. 3 (1965), pp. 293–314), as well as other works of his, would have been useful here.

*Power and Religiosity* is an excellent book, which may be read profitably by students and advanced scholars alike. Its calm clarity of exposition makes it extremely useful as a comparative case-study that may illuminate the historical and cross-cultural study of Catholicism, as well as the relations between power and religion generally. Sri Lanka is a small country, but one which has generated a disproportionate number of superb anthropological studies. Stirrat's contribution extends this trend, and it sits nicely next to the works of Obeyesekere, Tambiah, Gombrich, Kapferer, Spencer and Scott.

CHARLES STEWART

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