

RECENT BOOKS ON SOUTH ASIA

ADRIAN C. MAYER, ed., *Culture and Morality: Essays in Honour of Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf*, Delhi etc.: Oxford University Press 1982. xvii, 261pp., Index. £10.00.

T.N. MADAN, ed., *Way of Life: King, Householder, Renouncer: Essays in Honour of Louis Dumont*, Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de L'Homme 1982. x, 418pp., Index. FF140.

These *festschriften* are dedicated to two of the leading figures in South Asian anthropology, but though they cover the same general area they are quite different in content and orientation. The differences between the two books no doubt reflect the varying interests and achievements of the respective honorands. The Haimendorf volume has thirteen contributions which span a wide range of different social groups, and its emphasis is on ethnography. The Dumont volume contains sixteen papers, most of which are longer than those in the Haimendorf collection, and one essay by the editor reviewing the contributions and the current state of studies 'for a sociology of India'. The book is mainly concerned with the ideology of Hindu society.

In both cases the books are organised around a theme, and in this way some measure of homogeneity is achieved. The Haimendorf collection is focused on his book *Morals and Merit* (1967), an obvious choice since it is his main work of a more theoretical and general nature and probably also the one most widely known. The contributors are all anthropologists, and are drawn from those colleagues or students of Haimendorf's at SOAS who have a continuing interest in South Asia. By contrast, the Dumont *festschrift*, written to honour him on his seventieth

birthday in 1981, contains contributions from historians, Indologists, sociologists, social anthropologists, and philosophers. The thematic unity is provided by focusing on the Brahmanical concept of the 'good life' as contained in the ideology of *puruṣārtha*.

Mayer's introduction gives a brief outline of Haimendorf's career and emphasises his considerable achievements as a field-worker, noting that indeed few anthropologists 'can point to more than ten years spent in the field' especially in as many different and difficult locations. We are given a glimpse of Haimendorf's interests and activities outside his professional life, and are told of his deep concern with the duty of the anthropologist to record faithfully the nature of each culture encountered, and to present data which can help improve the lot of the people studied. Galey's introduction to the other collection emphasises the continuity in the development of Dumont's ideas and highlights certain features of his contribution to the social sciences which have been neglected, mentioning in particular Dumont's ethnographic monographs, his concern with the central opposition between 'traditional' and 'modern' universes, and his preoccupation with situating the social scientist in his analytical endeavour. In contrast to Mayer's introduction, we learn about Dumont through his own words in the transcript of a conversation between him and Galey, and this is successful in providing a welcome personal touch and insight into the unfolding of his career. It is worth adding that Dumont's comments hold out the hope that his long-awaited monograph on mourning in north India will be published.

The bias towards ethnography in the Haimendorf collection leaves little room for discussion of more theoretical questions, such as how one is to delineate and treat an area of social life which can be labelled 'morals and ethics', but this does not detract from the interest of the essays themselves. The papers range throughout the sub-continent. In the north there are three essays relating to Nepalese societies, two of which describe Buddhist communities (Aziz and Levine), and one deals with Newar priestly castes (Greenwold). Two papers concern Vishnavism, with Nicholas examining differing 'understandings' in the worship of the *tulasi* plant in Bengal, and Cantlie discussing the significance of food in Assam. There are three papers on Indian tribal groups, of which Standing's provides an interesting account of envy among the Munda, while Bailey seeks to explain why it is that the Konds do not have 'saints' when their Hindu neighbours do. Caplan's analysis of a dispute in a Christian hospital and Mayer's paper on *seva*, the idea of unselfish service, are both set in urban contexts. In the south, Rao gives an account of two anti-caste movements in Kerala, and Tapper analyses how the altruistic ideals expressed in a play about King Harischandra relate to everyday reality. Madan's essay, the only one not linked to a particular locality, discusses pan-Indian themes. He examines how three Indian novels illustrate the moral dilemmas involved in the conflict

between asceticism and eroticism.

The production of the book is good, with the only major fault being the omission of several references at the end of the last essay. With its ethnographic orientation this collection contains much of interest not only for South Asianists, but also for a wider anthropological audience.

The essays in the Dumont *festschrift*, on the other hand, benefit from some familiarity with his ideas and with Hinduism more generally. The volume contains papers concerned both with sociological problems and with metaphysical issues and textual questions. This reflects Dumont's (and Pocock's) proposal that for the study of India, Indian civilisation must be taken as a whole, and Indology and sociology must come together in an interdisciplinary approach. The influence of Dumont's ideas is evidenced throughout the collection. His emphasis on a holistic approach, his concern with ideology, his notion of hierarchy with the entailed distinction between status and power and so on, all are taken up in one way or another by the contributors, all except two of which directly link their essays to his work.

Taking the *puruṣārthas* together and relating Dumont's notion of hierarchy to them, Malamoud finds that it is difficult to establish the encompassing character of any one of them, and argues instead for a 'revolving hierarchy', though *mokṣa* remains separate, since it is of quite another order from the other three. Similarly, in his essay on *ārtha* Shah points out the complementary nature of the *puruṣārthas*. Four essays deal with kingship, though of these it is Marglin's which more than the others takes Dumont's distinction between status and power as its starting point. Three essays discuss renunciation, reflecting the importance of Dumont's perception of the tension or dichotomy between the renouncer and the man-in-the-world. On death, Nicholas's view that in *śrāddha* rites the paradigmatic action is one of birth or rebirth, seems to find a striking parallel in Parry's conclusion that in Kashi (Benares) 'good' death constitutes a sacrifice which recreates the cosmos. Among the other papers, Das discusses *kāma*, Madan argues that, for the Kashmiri Pandits, being a householder constitutes a variety of renunciation, and Selwyn examines the relation between *dharma* and its dark side, *adharmā*. Two contributions stand out as somewhat different from the others. Ramchandra Gandhi's rather unusual essay defending *brahmacārya* or celibacy, may baffle some readers, not least anthropologists who will be startled by such comments as: 'Only on the basis of the theory of reincarnation can a satisfactory explanation of incest prohibition be developed'. Pocock's paper, which is the most ethnographic, points to the problems related to the extent to which 'social anthropologists are prone to accept the ideology of caste as social reality'. He shows how the majority of the members of a caste of temple priests in fact do not pursue their traditional vocation but work in a variety of other jobs, and he makes the important point that often anthropologists' representation of

castes as associated with traditional occupations has a homogeneity which fits better with *varṇa* theory than with social reality.

In his conversation with Galey, Dumont expresses the belief that the researcher's work should be seen as part of a collective endeavour. In this regard he feels it unfortunate that his work, which was oriented to the community of researchers and was intended as a contribution to the collective construction of theory, paradoxically has been interpreted, and achieved recognition, as 'personal'. We are told that this is due in part to the conditions under which we work, which force us to move away from a collective orientation to a more personal stance, with the consequence that the stability and cumulative progress of our work is undermined. One must agree with Madan, however, that this volume forms a contribution to this common task, and is itself evidence of the influence of Dumont's work in establishing some common ground for discussion. At the same time it is a fitting tribute to one who has been so influential in the making of the sociology of India.

CHRISTIAN McDONOUGH

LOUIS DUMONT, *Affinity as a Value: Marriage Alliance in South India, with Comparative Essays on Australia*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1983. x, 214pp., Bibliography, Index. £17.50.

LINA M. FRUZZETTI, *The Gift of a Virgin: Women, Marriage, and Ritual in a Bengali Society*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 1982. xiv, 134pp., Appendixes, Glossary, Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. \$22.50.

It is an excellent idea to make some of Louis Dumont's most significant articles available in a single accessible volume, if an obvious one in view of their author's undoubted importance as a leading thinker on Indian society (and Western society, in the light of it), and on kinship. The present volume can be said to honour his work on the latter rather than the former, since it gives attention to Australian as well as to South Indian kinship, and touches only tangentially on the question of caste. It is a corpus which can bear some highlighting, particularly for those who still think of Dumont primarily as an analyst of caste and other hierarchically-structured conceptions of society. (This is perhaps the point to enter a plea for the issue of some of the articles from *Contributions to Indian Sociology* in a similar handy format.) More particularly,

this book might at first sight be described as dealing with terminological systems of prescriptive symmetric alliance; but we are left in no doubt here as to the superficiality of comparing Dravidian and Australian systems as like and like.

Five of these six papers have appeared before (two only in French), though the author has added new Comments (dated 1981) to the first and third of these, and shorter Postscripts to Chapters 5 and 6; in addition, occasional emendations have been made throughout. The papers previously published are (with original publication details in parentheses): Chapter 1, 'The Dravidian Kinship Terminology as an Expression of Marriage', including the subsequent correspondence with Radcliffe-Brown (*Man*, 1953), in which the Dravidian kinship terminology is used to illumine the equal presence of alliance (or 'continuous affinity' in contradistinction both to consanguinity in indigenous terms, and to descent theory in terms of contemporaneous anthropological analysis; Chapter 2, 'Hierarchy and Marriage Alliance in South Indian Kinship' (Royal Anthropological Institute, 1957: Occasional Paper No. 12), which amongst other things adumbrated the structuralist, in contrast to the functionalist study of Indian society, a process eventually to culminate, of course, in *Homo Hierarchicus*; Chapter 3, 'Nayar Marriages as Indian Facts' (*L'Homme*, 1961), which set out to bring the apparently anomalous Nayar back into the Indian fold sociologically, and not merely culturally, as Gough had done; Chapter 5, 'The Kariera Kinship Vocabulary: An Analysis' (J. Pouillon and P. Maranda, eds., *Échanges et Communications: Mélanges offerts à Lévi-Strauss*, Paris: Mouton 1970), in which he explodes the myth of the *total* similarity (cf. Radcliffe-Brown, etc.) between Dravidian and Australian alliance systems, and distinguishes the 'global' dualism of the former from the merely 'categorical dualism' of the latter (pp. viii-ix of the present volume); and Chapter 6, 'Descent or Inter-marriage? A Relational View of Australian Section Systems' (*Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 1966), in which he challenges the once received wisdom about four-, etc., section marriage systems - that they are based on systems of double unilineal descent - and demonstrates the lack of real evidence for any such phenomenon in Australia.

The Comments to the first and third chapters - and the whole of the fourth - provide some welcome clarification of and enlargement upon the theses of the original papers, but scarcely present retractions from the positions held previously. Quite the reverse, in fact; in respect of the Comment to Chapter 1, for instance, those who have previously found it difficult to swallow the view of one's mother's brother as an affine will surely choke on the emphatic reaffirmation of one's father's sister as the same class of relative - but now we are told that she appears as an affine more for a female than for a male ego, 'affinity holding strictly between persons of the same sex...'; with parallel consequences for one's mother's brother, one supposes. However, the author does now regard his isolation of

the terminology as a sub-system of the kinship system as less useful than formerly, especially in view of the subsequently-discovered recalcitrance of the North Indian kinship system to similar analysis. In addition, much of this Comment is taken up with a reply to Scheffler, who, as a result, is shown to be at the opposite pole to Dumont in both attitudes and understanding where kinship terminology is concerned. Similarly, the Comment to Chapter 3 tackles Yalman on his view of the *tali*-tying rite among the Nayar (roughly, is it to do with puberty, or marriage, or both?), and Fuller for his inconsistencies and fence-sitting in accepting the Nayar as sociologically Indian, while denying their integration with their 'social environment'.

This brings us to Chapter 4, the one chapter never published before, entitled 'Stocktaking 1981: Affinity as a Value'. In this the author deals - representatively rather than comprehensively - with the leading direct and indirect responses to the original versions of the papers on South India in this volume. He starts by refuting the explicit denial of Schneider and the more implicit ones of Tambiah and Scheffler 'that there is a domain or system of kinship'. He then goes on to discuss the related problem of deciding which features are 'extrinsic' and which 'intrinsic' to the domain of kinship, and the danger 'of confusing an empirical juxtaposition with a necessary combination', citing in particular the place of stable (corporate or other) groups in marriage alliance, and questioning whether instead it might not be preferable to see *relationships* as the stable factor, the one governing the nature of such groups rather than vice versa.

These two problems take up approximately only the first one-fifth of the chapter, the remainder of which is devoted to the substantive nature of South Indian kinship itself, and the questions it gives rise to. Dumont deals successively with the way in which descent theory has prevented the proper importance of affinity in South Indian kinship from being recognized (Gough, Yalman); the attempts to devalue affinity, or to avoid the issue altogether, by introducing 'overarching cultural concepts' - in particular, 'the idea of substance (as a paramount conception) ...' - in order to produce unity between North and South India on the one hand, and between caste and kinship on the other (Marriott, David, Barnett); and Carter's attempt to unify India sociologically by using componential analysis to dismiss the cross-cousin marriage of the South as a mere 'surface feature'. Running all through this, of course, is the problem of the confusion of 'levels', such that the holism of a single cultural idea is mistaken for relational structure, hierarchy is introduced analytically as a dominant or equal principle where empirically it is subordinate, and above all, there is the unwillingness, even inability, of many ethnographers to recognize in India especially 'the full status of affinity in the system, a status equal to that of consanguinity...Hence the title of this little book'. For Dumont's chief concern here is 'the assertion of affinity *as a value* equal to that of consanguinity,

the assertion, that is, of identity and relation as indissolubly solidary' (my emphasis). Dravidian is contrasted with Western kinship, where affinity in one generation becomes consanguinity in succeeding ones - wife's brother becomes uncle - so that the latter 'encompasses' the former within a 'hierarchical opposition'; in the Dravidian system affinity is constant - wife's brother becomes father's wife's brother (or in anthropological language, 'mother's brother') - and balances consanguinity in 'an equistatutory opposition'. This message underpins the whole of this edition of Dumont's papers, and as he points out: 'We have thus come not only to understand the Dravidian system, but to learn something from it about our own'.

Fruzzetti's book on Bengali kinship concentrates on the place of women within it, and on the ritual actions they perform in the marriage ceremony. Its theoretical approach in many ways represents the antithesis of Dumont's ideas, and the book exemplifies many of the points he argues against in Chapter 4 of the foregoing volume. First, the mother's brother is given consanguineal status, and the affines of one generation are merged into the consanguines of the next, so that affinity is subordinated to consanguinity, and its continuity denied. Secondly, the main aim of marriage is presented here as the continuity of the husband's line (*bangśa*), so that the spectre of descent theory is seen obtruding itself yet again into Indian anthropological analysis. We are not given any real insight into the motivation for alliance from the point of view of the girl's family, which is, after all, the source of the initiative in making the match. It may be, in this milieu where exchange marriages are both common and acceptable, that the desire for an alliance with a family of higher status is less pressing than in the Gangetic Plain. But to erase the pollution and risk of incest presented by having a virgin daughter residing at home is hardly a sufficient alternative explanation for this part of India, especially in view of the lack of regard for child marriages here (at least in higher-caste circles). Furthermore, we are left in no doubt that dowries are essential to the making of an alliance, and that they are often large; but can their significance really be economic only, as the author alleges?

Thirdly, there is the elevation of an indigenous conception of the person - in this case involving blood - to the point where, in conjunction with ritual symbols and ritual action, it is felt able to elicit the meaning of kinship. In other words, instead of being examined directly, structure is approached through cultural values, and the way they act upon - even determine, in this view - structure through the performance of ritual, so that structure appears subordinate to culture, and even to a single cultural idea. One thinks at this point of such figures as Geertz, or Turner, but never Dumont, save as an antagonist of such views. This is not a new approach, of course, and it is true that the author states her aim as the unified study of the economic, ritual and ideological aspects pertaining to Bengali marriage; but the choice of ritual as the key element

from which all else is to be explained seems risky, even arbitrary, and unlikely to be wholly successful. While one can certainly expect ritual to correlate to a large extent with other aspects of the society one is studying, it is surely unreasonable to expect (or to achieve?) a totally coherent view - there are commonly many symbolic and ritual details that are obscure in their meaning to anthropologists and indigenes alike, and it is precisely at this point that rationalisations begin to nudge out reasons. The danger of this approach is exemplified by an instance provided by the author herself. In Bengal, it seems, ritually-expressed inequality in the marriage ceremony does not necessarily reflect the sort of hypergamous ranking found in the Gangetic Plain, because of the very real possibility of the return of a bride at some stage, with its consequent reversal in the flow of prestations, etc. This, surely, is tantamount to an admission that here ritual inequality is purely situational, and has no necessary correlation with social structure.

Despite its analytical contradictions and inconsistencies, however, the book is still a worthwhile contribution to the anthropology of India. Above all, while concentration on women in this area is nothing new, there is a clear value in demonstrating that the nature of their relationship with men is not merely one of 'subordination' and 'oppression', to use a common Western stereotype, but one of complementarity within a clearly-demarcated sphere of their own. On a more modest level we have a description of female ritual action in the marriage ceremony as detailed as one could wish, if open to the objection that the author's setting-aside of the male role therein leaves us with a one-sided interpretation of limited general value. Nonetheless, we are left with a clear impression of the ideological status of women in Bengal - separate (but not isolated) from men, yet subordinate to them, in a relationship that is 'hierarchical and reciprocal at the same time'; they are thus 'encompassed by their contrary', to use Dumontian language.

Ethnographically, one of the most striking things that emerges from this study is the reaffirmation of the idiosyncratic nature of Bengali society when compared to the North Indian standard. Here we have Hindu ideology, caste hierarchy, dowries, and the inauspiciousness of the widow, but apparently no widow inheritance, more child marriages among low than high castes, and above all, as we have already mentioned, the acceptability of exchange marriages. Bengal is an area that fully deserves the increased attention it has received in recent decades, but in the long run such attention can only be expected to fuel the controversies concerning the nature of Indian society that these two books represent.

R. J. PARKIN

ROY C. AMORE and LARRY D. SHINN, *Lustful Maidens and Ascetic Kings: Buddhist and Hindu Stories of Life*, New York etc.: Oxford University Press 1981. xii, 189pp., Bibliography, Illustrations. £9.95.

WENDY DONIGER O'FLAHERTY, *Siva: The Erotic Ascetic*, Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press 1981 [1973] (Galaxy Book 650). xii, 318 pp., Appendixes, Bibliography. £5.50.

Two collections of stories from India could hardly suggest a greater divergence of interest and methodology than those considered here: one is concerned with moral truths discovered at the narrative level of tales orally transmitted in the socially-intimate context of cousins, courts and monasteries, while the other describes eternal conflicts logically resolved at the structural level of disengaged, 'free-floating' cycles of mythology. In the first text, *Lustful Maidens and Ascetic Kings*, Amore and Shinn present 65 stories selected on the basis of their entertainment and didactic value. Story-telling, designated as India's major educative device, is best understood by reference to the notions of 'model for' positive behaviour and 'image of' undesirable action. This distinction, appropriated from the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, encapsulates the authors' basic analytic procedure and serves them well in their attempt to demonstrate the moral and ethical dimensions of Indian religious lore.

The tales are organized around four major themes - Family and Social Roles and Lay and Monastic Values. Each of these is explored according to several sub-categories for which a selection of Hindu and Buddhist myths are cited as appropriately illustrative. Brief statements locate the various subjects within their social and religio-legal context and the tales themselves, rendered in a simplified and chatty style, are followed by condensed commentaries. This particular mode of presentation is potentially productive of both clarity and insight, and constitutes perhaps the most valuable feature of the book. Indeed, Amore and Shinn have treated some elusive yet important features of Indian life and, as a work which proceeds to unravel some of the socio-religious complexities of South Asia for a general, non-specialist audience, it is to be applauded.

However, some problems beset their enterprise. One of these, a certain ethnographic naivety, is readily apparent and may be briefly mentioned. For example, the variety of subdivisions within the brahman caste is not recognized, and this results in the misrepresentation of categories such as teacher, priest, and ascetic. A second problem is not so easily designated, but is a direct product of the authors' attempt to demonstrate the moral and ethical qualities which they believe inform the Indian ideological universe. It results specifically in the superimposition of a system of meaning which denies or

misinterprets notions fundamental to Indian thought. An instance of this is evident in their disregard for the role of *māyā*, that is, 'illusion'. Amore and Shinn construe human and divine intercourse in Indian tales as a grand battle within which the forces of good and evil rage, and incidents in which *māyā* prevents an actor from accurately seeing the true relation between things are curiously rendered by the authors. *Māyā* is presented as a *post hoc* excuse rather than as an essential element in the imperfect human apprehension of existence. Thus, for example, when Yudhisthira discovers his blameless relatives suffering in hell, he refuses to leave until their release. The narrator of this tale clearly states that illusion has landed them all, even Yudhisthira, there in the first place: they are released only by recognizing this truth, by piercing the veil of *māyā*. Yet Amore and Shinn refrain from comment on this central theme and instead proffer the tale as an illustration of familial devotion.

Frequently, a given tale's appropriateness to serve as the 'model' or 'image' specified by the authors is questionable. Those familiar with Hindu mythology might hesitate to accept Kṛṣṇa's slaying of the serpent-demon Kāliya as an exemplification of warrior/king as protector, or Durgā's battle with the buffalo-demon as an illustration of courage. When King Parakṣit insults an ascetic only to be killed by the latter's son, does this really demonstrate the virtuousness of teacher/priest, or does it not have more to do with the power conferred by engaging in austerities? And assigning titles such as 'Pride Goeth Before a Fall' or 'The Buddhist Job' to Indian tales, serves to obscure more than clarify.

Finally, one questions the title of the book itself with its designation of lustful maidens and ascetic kings. Not one tale gives evidence of an ascetic king. Within Indian tradition the pursuit and implementation of power is incompatible with asceticism. Even in the tales presented here, rulers abandon absolutely their throne and engage in penances in a territory distinctly separate from that of worldly power. Furthermore, in the given tales one meets few lustful women, rather an abundance of those such as Savitrī and Sitā who embody virtues of self-denial and chastity. By its very style the title, *Lustful Maidens and Ascetic Kings*, presages some form of structuralist inquiry which is certainly not pursued here; and as the content of the tales fails to validate these polarized categories, one is led to conclude that its selection proceeded with a conscious view to popular, even sensational appeal. The adoption of a structuralist posture, in a well-intentioned though inappropriate ethical straight-jacket, somehow renders the material inauthentic. The authors might have done better to let their enjoyable translations stand on their own, to allow the reader simply an exploration of Indian tales at the level of commonsensical and even nonsensical narrative delight.

That Amore and Shinn should without compunction entitle their particular book in such a manner as to imply the exploration of underlying, polarized tensions in Indian thought, is

rendered possible in the first place by the pioneering work of Wendy O'Flaherty, whose seminal study, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva*, first appeared in 1973. Such has been its popularity that in 1981 it reappeared as an OUP paperback, although under a significantly different title. If the publishers of this book also wish to capture unsuspecting prurient interest, then an 'erotic ascetic' will surely do the trick.

O'Flaherty's study demonstrates superb expertise in Puranic literature and in the application of Lévi-Straussian structural analysis. Major *motifs* in the mythology of the god Śiva are outlined and tabled, interconnections traced, and the entirety rendered valuable as a handbook by the construction of a comprehensive coding system whose numbers appear in the page margins at appropriate points in the presentation of a myth. The basic theme of the work is that the god Śiva is ambiguous and enigmatic, the supreme ascetic yet simultaneously lustful, incarnate in the imperterbable yogi and the erect phallus. The key to unravelling this paradox lies in a structural appraisal of the entire body of Śaiva myths found in classical, tribal and contemporary sources. In this manner, the study demonstrates that attitudes, as structured categories, considered mutually exclusive in the West exist in Hindu thought in a state of complementarity.

Again, criticism has proceeded largely on the basis of the author's neglect and even rejection of ethnographic context. Society plays no role at all and culture is admitted only in the sense of other, written or expounded interpretations of mythology. By contrast, later publications of this same author (such as *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* or *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*) pursue an avowedly eclectic approach, allowing a greater intimacy with the human myth-bearers. This, one suspects, is partly a product of inevitable difficulties which arise in the structuralist enterprise, particularly in the process of isolating significant categories.

O'Flaherty herself admits the dilemma - how is one to attain a proper balance, how to avoid selecting overly-specific and thus (in structuralist terms) insufficiently patterned *motifs*, and how to designate categories with a content not so broad that they approach pointless abstraction? In O'Flaherty's study of Śiva, the reader is at times victimized by this very predicament: one comes to wonder when an opposition and its mediation represent a specifically Hindu insight and when it might demonstrate a purely structuralist elucidation of universal polarities. Certain instances can be cited here. As stated by the author, it is a structuralist tenet that character motifs can, in mythological contexts, exchange function with impunity. Is the arbitrary nature of Hindu gods, the difficulty in arriving at a substantive definition of their character to be understood then as a phenomenon not particularly Hindu but rather as a universal revelation of structuralist theory? The interpretation of one Baiga tribal myth in which a brahman's severed penis kills the

tribal man who innocently eats it, suffers from this same rejection of specificity. O'Flaherty believes this myth demonstrates a universal theme - that 'the sexual act is dangerous' - and in so doing she avoids the undeniable yet socially rooted significance of the contradiction posed by the two categories 'brahman' and 'Baiga'.

The axis upon which the character of Śiva is plotted has for its co-ordinate sexuality (whether expressed as desire, *kāma*, or in the cult of the *linga*) and control (expressed in the steadfast yogi and also in the erect phallus). This theme is expanded to conclude that the entirety of cosmic life is dependent on the constant tension between eroticism and asceticism. The reader might feel ill at ease with the seemingly tautological quality of the entire argument and with its exclusiveness. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that classification itself, that is, designation of motifs and their variants and demonstration of their dominance and mode of operation, is the product of a foregone conclusion. This is perhaps most strikingly confirmed by the relative unimportance attached to other mythologically significant aspects of Śiva's activities, particularly the relationship between him and the god Viṣṇu. One wonders if there are not *motifs* other than that of sexuality and chastity to be explored in events such as the constant interruption of Śiva's *tapas* (austerities) by the other gods. What in fact is the relationship between Śiva and the entire sphere of order (*dharma*) embodied in Viṣṇu?

Finally, preoccupation with the erotic/ascetic polarity results in a condensation of certain categories. One hesitates to accept the narrowly-implied relation obtaining between, for example, *tapas* and *kāma*, austerities and desire. These are each treated as singular and uniform phenomena, when in fact both refer to a variety of notions, and the relationship between them is not constant. Thus love, lust, the desire for progeny, or even simply erotic power may all be contained in the notion of *kāma*. Besides, there is in the case of both these categories an important distinction to be made between their efficacy as mechanical force on the one hand, or as emotional on the other. These niceties are important in determining the actual meaning they contribute to any mythological event, and thus in allocating a value to any given motif.

Certainly *Siva: The Erotic Ascetic* in paperback will secure a wider audience, one which might not otherwise appreciate either the dazzling variety of Hindu mythology or the rewarding complexities of structuralist analysis. And though O'Flaherty would consider Amore and Shinn's work to be a latter-day example of nineteenth-century pursuits in which myth is reduced to 'a moralizing comment', both works are consciously seeking popular readership. Fortunately, one factor remains constant in both works: the myths, fables, stories and tales maintain their own integrity. Despite analysis and synthesis, speculation and interpretation, the tales remain distinctively Indian in character and never fail to exert a compelling force over the

reader, to catch the imagination in the heady delight of the violent or pacific affairs of the gods and the gentle, often resigned self-mockery at the absurdity of man.

LYNN TESKEY

M.K.A. SIDDIQUI, *Muslims of Calcutta: A Study in Aspects of their Social Organization*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1979 [1974]. xi, 120pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index. No price given.

This is a second edition of a monograph based on an extensive survey of the Muslim population of Calcutta. The survey was conducted as a follow-up to a broader survey of the City done under the directive of the Anthropological Survey of India in 1962-3. The earlier survey showed that Calcutta's Muslim population was residentially, occupationally and culturally distinct from the wider population of the City. Siddiqui's research was directed towards describing how national, ethnic, linguistic and caste boundaries persist within the Muslim population and his book provides much useful descriptive material on this theme. However, in examining the question of the persistence of a caste-like social organization among Calcutta's Muslims, he adds little new to our understanding of Islam in India.

Studies of the social organization of Muslim groups in India tend to be preoccupied with asking whether Indian Muslims have a caste system comparable to that of the Hindus, despite the egalitarianism of Islam. Posing the question in these terms, it is not surprising that most studies conclude that Muslim society in India represents a corruption or variant of an ideal Hindu model.

Siddiqui tackles the question of caste among Muslims by showing that the Muslim population of Calcutta is divided along national, regional and ethnic lines and into religious sects and *Khanqahs* (centres of Sufi religious training). He then describes the hierarchy of endogamous descent groups, with the *syeds* (putative descendants of the Prophet via his daughter Fatima), at the top and the sweepers at the bottom, and concludes: 'the basic structural elements of caste are present in the Muslim society of Calcutta'.

His explanation for this is that the ideology of the numerically-predominant sect, the Brelwi, and the requirements of the caste system are 'adaptive to each other'. Much of Brelwi ideology rests on accepting the clientship of the *pirs* (spiritual guides), who as putative descendants of the *khanqah*

founders (themselves *pirs* who belonged to the hereditary Silsilahs, or schools of Sufi religious training) are *syeds*. Brelwi-type Islam may therefore be seen to justify the caste hierarchy. Furthermore, since Siddiqui defines the customs and rituals of the Brelwi tradition as extra-Islamic, or outside the Islamic 'Great Tradition', he is forced to conclude that the system in Calcutta 'violates the spirit of Islam'. In other words, his view is that the social structure of the Muslim society of Calcutta represents a variation of the Hindu caste system (rather than of Muslim social structure), because the religion which justifies it is not properly Islamic. Since his informants would not question their identity as Muslims, Siddiqui adds that this 'violation of the spirit' of Islam occurs at the level of the 'unconscious'.

Although there may be some truth in his explanation, Siddiqui's failure to accept the possibility of contradictions in Islamic practice and variations in Islamic styles leads him to overlook other explanations for the apparent paradox that Calcutta's Muslim society has a caste structure. One is suggested by a reading of Gellner's book *Muslim Society*. Gellner argues that the tension between egalitarianism, on the one hand, and the need for religious organization and leadership and, as a corollary, inequality, on the other, is endemic in Islam and that one or the other aspect tends to be emphasised in different contexts in order to make the religion socially meaningful. Taking this line, we could explain the ancient tradition of Sufism (Islamic mysticism) and the high status of the *syeds* in terms of the need for religious organization, leadership and hierarchy.

Sufism apparently flourished in the Indian context. By the thirteenth century, branches of the major Sufi orders had been established in India and a new order founded. Brelwi-type Islam, with its notions of religious hierarchy, which predominates in present-day Calcutta, has its roots in Indian Sufism. In Siddiqui's view, the Wahabis, a small sect in Calcutta, who dismiss Brelwi beliefs and practices as *bida't* (religious innovation) represent 'maximum conformity to the Islamic Great Tradition'. Siddiqui fails to point out that the Wahabi movement originated in central Arabia in the eighteenth century as a campaign against Sufi 'innovation', and began in India in the nineteenth century mainly as a reaction to western influences. While Siddiqui's personal view may be that Wahabi-type Islam, which predominates in central Arabia today, is the 'true' Islam, this should not have blinded him to the importance of the Sufi tradition in India.

MEERA MUKHERJEE, *Metalcraftsmen of India*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1978. ix, 461pp., Illustrations. No price given.

The Anthropological Survey of India funded the initial research for this book between 1962 and 1964, though the results remained unpublished for a further fourteen years. Meera Mukherjee recorded metalworking in many regions of India, but she was prevented from including Assam, Gujarat and Maharashtra because of insufficient funds. The first two chapters, dealing with metalcraft castes and miscellaneous social and personal details, are organised little beyond the 'raw data' level of a field notebook. No reference is made to any of the Indian anthropological literature, a surprising omission considering the source of the fellowship, and the content is more anecdotal than ethnographic. Nevertheless, the author's training in sculpture is effectively exploited in the third and final chapter on metalworking techniques, where, despite an often eccentric use of English, the description of craft processes reflects keen observation and is presented with numerous incisive and charming illustrations. A skilled anthropological researcher could probably extract from the book many useful socio-cultural details, while the last chapter should assist the museum curator to identify and provenance Indian metalcraft tools and their products.

MICHAEL J. HITCHCOCK

MELFORD E. SPIRO, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1982. xvii, 477pp., Appendix, References, Index. £26.25.

The new eleven-page Preface to this book lets the reader know that the text has not been changed from that of the first edition, which was published in the U.K. in 1971.

In *Buddhism and Society* Professor Spiro is concerned with the relation between doctrinal Buddhism in a Theravāda form, and the religious beliefs and practices of the people of Burma. As an anthropological work it is a study of Buddhism transformed from a virtuoso to a mass religion, moreover a social form which he now regards as typifying an Asian rather than solely a Burmese Buddhism.

The primary focus is context rather than text (in the sense of Milton Singer). In the first instance Spiro is concerned with the ways in which '...social actors attempt to

negotiate their religious world in the same context in which they attempt to negotiate their economic world, or political world, or any other world ...' (p.xvii), that is, in a changing social context.

The book is in three parts: the first looks at the ideology of Buddhism, the second at ritual and the third at the monastic system. However, all three cover related issues, though from slightly varying standpoints. In the first part the important distinction between 'world-renouncing' or canonical Buddhism, and what might be termed the 'better-wordly' beliefs of the populace, is made. He also introduces other 'types' of Buddhism concerned with relief from trouble and for a better world here and now. This makes the work somewhat compendium-like in style.

There is a wealth of empirical material, organised around such traditional themes as calendrical, life-cycle and crisis rituals. There is also quantitative material: questionnaires have been used for topics such as peoples' ratings of different forms of action according to their meritorious consequences.

The work was originally criticised for being too western in approach, that is for not looking at the material primarily from the standpoint of Buddhist philosophy. It was also criticised from the other side, for not being an Asian equivalent to Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and The Rise of Capitalism*. These are rather fixed positions of criticism against ethnographic studies, and perhaps it would be wiser to concentrate on this work rather than on one which it is thought he should have written.

Away from the empirical level, the book is slightly amorphous. In part this comes from its breadth; in part it comes from an eclecticism of both method and theoretical approach; and in part it comes from a premature and over-elaborate typologising. One might have hoped for some clearer direction in a revised edition. But then that might have required further directed field-material: in any case, probably then it would have been a different book.

GRAHAM E. CLARKE

POLLY HILL, *Dry Grain Farming Families: Hausaland (Nigeria) and Karnataka (India) Compared*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1982. xvi, 296pp., Illustrations, References, Index. £9.95.

Polly Hill is a distinguished student of rural economies of West Africa, whose empirical studies are exemplary paradigms of 'indigenous economics'. Her method encompasses detailed field studies through interpreted interviews, sensible quantification

(especially of directly recorded land-holding surveys), key informant information, and archival research. She is best known for her studies of cocoa production in Ghana, and of Hausaland in the semi-arid north of Nigeria. By accident she came to do research in six villages in semi-arid south India, and the experience is reported here as a comparative study with her Hausaland material.

The book starts with a strongly-argued case for 'field experience', and its relevance to both economic theory, and development policy and practitioners. In particular it should undermine erroneous stereotypes based on inappropriate theories and inaccurate observations of homogenous peasantries and farming systems. Hill provides, for both areas, background material; some empirical details of farm holdings (ridiculing much official Indian statistics), household organization, other economic activities, agricultural intensification, household mobility, migration, rural-urban and employer-employee relationships. There are contentious discussions on a number of topics, including methodology, (economic) inequality, stagnation and crisis in the countryside, poverty, agrarian hierarchy, and, the main focus of the book, a 'dry grain mode of production'. This she explicitly differentiates from a historical materialist concept.

Polly Hill is at her best with empirical material; she is strong on the deficiencies of official statistics and data production methods; her detailed discussion of cases based, as she makes clear, on observation, interview, and data collected by only reliable methods, are a direct confrontation of the evasions of other economic techniques of data production and interpretation. Unfortunately she does not deal with the latest formalists - the 'new institutional economics' - as opposed to the (somewhat vaguely caricatured) old formalists, substantivists, and Marxians, or with the statistical methods they employ on data she provides good grounds to suppose to be unreliable.

The major problem with her work (on Hausaland, and, I infer from its absence, the south Indian work) is the neglect or misrepresentation of local elites, agrarian merchants, the administrative bureaucracy, and the State. Surpluses were and are extracted from rural Hausaland in the forms of commodities, formerly slave and corvee labour, wage and migrant labour, tax, tribute, interest and in places rent. Present unequal access to the resources of the State are an extension of previous unequal relationships. Nevertheless her empirical material is sufficiently rich, informative, and consistent for interpretations based on alternative points of view; it is not highly summarised and abbreviated in the manner of more quantitative, but ironically less statistically valid work.

The arguments with which Hill takes issue, and on which she is usually interesting, are often rather loose caricatures of vaguely attributable positions. This is perhaps connected with her neglect of much recent related work. Hence while she avoids

outright injustice, except by innuendo or neglect, she is an inadequate guide to literature and debate. She seems to prefer shadow bouts with surrogates to direct engagement with work pertinent to her own. Possibly as a consequence her own positions remain sadly vague or inadequately established.

For example her views on economic inequality are very close at times to the 'cyclical kulakism' or multi-directional mobility of Shanin and others, emphasising the personal characteristics of the rich and the dispersal of wealth among more numerous inheritors as well as the obligations of the successful. She argues that '(R)ural inequality does not derive from the outside world though it is often enhanced by it', leaving one in serious doubt as to whether she is arguing that the changes wrought by imperialism, colonialism, and subsequently have changed the nature of inequality and poverty or not. Her mode of production remains curiously a-historical, and as much of the description shifts from past to present it is not clear whether it existed over the whole period, or only recently, and whether all these periods are characterised by economic stagnation.

However, Hill's West African work is essential material for specialists, and those interested in more general questions, and I suspect that despite lacunae her South Indian work will reward detailed attention. It is perhaps enough to be such an assiduous researcher and proactive skilful writer; nevertheless one hopes for a more satisfactory engagement with the literature.

R.W. PALMER-JONES

LEON SWARTZBERG, Jr., *The North Indian Peasant Goes to Market*, Delhi etc.: Motilal Banarisdass 1979. xiii, 156pp., Map, Bibliography, Index. Rs. 50.

The fieldwork behind this volume stems from a project at Columbia University in the early 1960s 'to conduct research in India on the adaptation of long-established agricultural communities to changes in the national economy, and the effects of these changes on traditional cultures'. Swartzberg's contribution to this project was to do research in a single-caste village near Patna, Bihar, during the period January 1964 to June 1965. Chapter 3 of this volume, 'The Roys: A History of an Indian Entrepreneurial Family' first appeared as the author's Master's thesis at Columbia in 1967. He was awarded his doctorate for the complete work in 1969 and it was published by Motilal Banarisdass 10 years later 'in order to make its findings more available to more people'. There is no evidence of any attempt at textual revision during the 10-year interval

between its submission as a thesis and its publication in book form; the most recent entries in the bibliography date from 1968.

Swartzberg, heavily influenced by Neale, pursues the thesis that the Indian village contains two economies - 'market' and 'household' - in a not overwhelmingly innovative re-hash of the old 'traditional' versus 'modern' debate in peasant studies. Theoretically the book is weak and parochial. Even in the mid-1960s the field of economic anthropology was not confined to Malinowski and Polanyi and in any publication from 1979 I would have expected that the authors would have taken cognizance of the strides that had taken place. At the very least I would have expected the author to address himself to the issues of his day. Thus I was surprised that he showed no awareness of Skinner's important expansion of central-place theory into the study of Asian anthropology (which took up three issues of the *Journal of Asian Studies* in 1964-1965) or of the massive literature from India on what they designate as 'Rurban' relations, both of which are germane to the work at hand. The book was, then, something of a disappointment.

This is not to say, however, that it is entirely without utility. While not living up to the promise of its title, Swartzberg makes interesting contributions in unexpected areas. Thus I was pleasantly surprised by his diachronic approach and his command of historical documents which anticipated developments in anthropological methodology only now coming to fruition. Also unexpected in a book of this title were his observations on the relationship between affinity and labour migration. While the neologisms he produced to describe the movement of excess male labour to sister's husband's village lack felicity (e.g. gyno-consanguine-local), the relations that he has discovered would seem to indicate a profitable new area of study for Indologists. Finally, as the analysis of a single-caste village, this book adds to the range of village studies available to us.

On a technical level the publishers deserve commendation. This excellent edition is without the niggling typographical errors which so frequently bedevil South Asian publications. With the exception of the cursory index, the editorial standards are high with only minor discrepancies of presentation intruding on the text.

STEVEN SEIDENBERG

BOOK REVIEWS

NADIA ABU ZAHRA, *Sidi Ameer: A Tunisian Village*, London: Ithaca Press 1982 [St. Antony's College Middle East Monographs no.15]. xvii, 204pp., Appendixes, Select Bibliography, Index. fl.50.

This is a skilled and sensitive study of a village in the Tunisian Sahel, which makes a major contribution to our understanding of Tunisian politics and society and evokes speculative thought of comparisons throughout the Arab world. One can only regret that it has been necessary to wait so long for the fruits of research conducted from 1965-68 to be publicly available and wish that the author were in a position to provide a much more extended review of changes over the past fifteen years.

The subject of the study is the village of Sidi Ameer, an inland settlement between Monastir and Sousse in an area of dry-farming dominated by olive trees which serve both as crop-producers and as savings banks, being bought and sold according to the ebb and flow of personal fortunes as well as having a degree of sanctity attached to them. Monastir was the birthplace of President Bourguiba and the region around Sidi Ameer has produced the political élite of independent Tunisia.

According to tradition, Sidi Ameer was the first man to settle where the village now stands, taking his place and drawing a ring around him with his rosary. He lived, as far as can be established, at the end of the Hafsid and into the Muradid dynasties at a time when political and economic circumstances throughout North Africa were propitious to belief in *walis*. Tradition attaches to him the attributes of strength and *baraka* common to all *walis*. Both the *zawiya* and the village of Sidi Ameer were constructed at the same time and the *zawiya* became a religious centre for the whole of the Sahel, and, with diminished force, remains so at the present time (even when the cultural committee of the Socialist Destour Party has taken over the organisation of the annual festival).

The village, characteristically, is defined in descent and space - the descendants of Sidi Ameer living in the *Zawiya* quarter, which is almost entirely exclusive to them, socially and geographically distinct from the four *'arshs* of the Ramada quarter. Before independence and the dissolution of the *habus* which followed, the descendants of Sidi Ameer did not need to work, being made financially independent by the *habus* dues, and the *Zawiya* women were veiled and secluded, as befitted those of higher social status who did not need to work in the fields.

The core of Dr Abu Zahra's anthropological study is in her account of the *'arsh* (patrilineal descent group) and the *dar*, which refers to the extended family (or in the first instance to

the elementary family of husband and wife) as well as to the house. Where *dar* changes into *'arsh* is not always clear, and social duties in the two groups differ only in the greater degree of obligation in the *dar*. By describing, with acute observation and proper scholarly discipline, the relationships and customs amongst both the Zawiya and the Ramada people, Dr Zahra provides a vivid account of the life of the village which is indispensable reading for anyone interested in the Maghreb. She depicts a demanding society, one where everything is known and where the main motives for conduct are self-interest and the pursuit of prestige, held together by rigorously defined obligations for the exchange of visits and gifts, softened by the *hadra* every Thursday at the *zawiya* and enlivened by the festivities that surround marriage (although obligatory gift exchanges in the form of money collections form part of the celebration). Spontaneity and indulgence do not figure large (although today, a bride who was found not to be a virgin would be kept by her husband if he was a 'good man' and her parents would return part of the marriage payment secretly). But the community which results is held together with strong bonds; in Dr Abu Zahra's succinct words, 'people compete with each other for social prestige, and this reinforces and emphasizes the common values according to which this prestige is assessed'.

The final chapters are both fascinating and tantalizing, since they are concerned with the impact of the modern state - tantalizing because they date from the period of Ahmed ben Salah's ill-fated reforms, largely abandoned in 1969, and because they describe processes then beginning which have perhaps continued and perhaps been reversed in subsequent years. Economic development has changed the structure of the village; not only have the Zawiya men lost the *habus* revenues but the Ramada men have been able to take advantage of new educational and employment opportunities (in, for example, the hotel industry). On the other hand, whereas the head of the Neo-Destour party branch before Independence was from the Ramada faction, at the time of writing the head of the government Socialist Destour Party was from the Zawiya faction and from the same *'arsh* as the sheikh of the village. Not surprisingly the possible foundation of a branch of the National Union of Tunisian Women in the village was not enthusiastically welcomed even by the most modern-minded men (who regretted that in their village there were no women sufficiently qualified), but the head of the Party branch recognised the wave of the future and was calculating how to ensure that his brother's daughter would be head of the branch when its foundation could no longer be resisted.

How strong the waves of modernisation have been and how resistant or resilient tradition has proved requires further detailed research. In the meantime the publication of Dr Abu Zahra's work provides invaluable insights into a specific community and has important implications for the study of any traditional society under the impact of modernisation.

J. VAN BAAL, *Jan Verschueren's Description of Yéi-nan Culture*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1982 [Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 99]. xiii, 105pp., Illustrations, Bibliography. No price given.

J.H.M.C. BOELAARS, *Head-hunters About Themselves: An Ethnographic Report from Irian Jaya, Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1981 [Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 92]. xv, 285pp., Appendixes, Illustrations, Maps. Dfl. 90.00.

It is always a pleasure and something of a relief to review books which one can recommend to other people as being books which are worth reading, as much by theorists (who cannot, of course, work without social facts) as by those who want to find out what their fellow men in other parts of the world, and in this case in such a part of it as Irian Jaya, are about. This is one such occasion.

Jan Verschueren's Description of Yéi-nan Culture consists of ten chapters, nine of which deal with such stock anthropological topics as 'Territorial, Clan and Moiety Organization', 'Kinship, Marriage and Conjugal Life', 'Initiation' and such like. Chapter 10 consists of an Epilogue by Professor Jan van Baal who has put together this book from papers left by Father Verschueren when he died. They were in chaos, and were sorted out by Father Hoeboer, a friend and colleague of Verschueren's, who also typed out those which he concluded might be of ethnographical interest and let Professor van Baal have a copy. This book is in the nature of a repayment of the debt which van Baal felt to Verschueren for his friendship and for the contribution which he made (in letters) to *Dema*, van Baal's impressive ethnography of Marind-anim life.

Verschueren was a missionary of the Sacred Heart, and this was the congregation, also, to which Boelaars was attached and through which he worked from 1951 to 1968 in the southern lowlands of Irian Jaya. *Head-hunters About Themselves* is about the Jaqaj (pronounced Ya'hry) which means 'human being'. Boelaars' book is more substantial than Verschueren's: it runs to 273 pages of text, and contains twenty fine plates which complement the text well, five informative maps, and four appendixes, one of which is a glossary, which is very useful. No glossary accompanies Verschueren's ethnography which is a pity for it is thereby much harder to read than it would otherwise be. Both books appear in the *Verhandelingen* of the Koninklijk Instituut in Leiden and, as usual, they are excellently produced and reasonably priced.

There is not the space to go into any of the issues which the data contained in these books raise, but one point can be made: this is that in the commentaries to Verschueren's text, some of the questions which Professor van Baal raises have an oddly old-fashioned ring. Thus even though a scholar of his

eminence will obviously be aware of the arguments (if they can be called that) of *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui*, there is still, in Chapter 4 of Verschueren, a discussion of how far Yéi-nan society is totemic. 'Totemic', however, is not an epithet which is usefully applied to societies, so that a discussion of whether or not a society is this or that much totemic tends not to increase our understanding of the society in question (and of other societies which might serve as comparative examples) very much. The world-wide use of, for instance, animals and to a lesser degree plants in symbolic classification seems to be an imaginative device to which all men tend, but the uses to which the device is put are socially very different. No significant correlations, moreover, would seem to attach to the uses to which the device is put. It is, indeed, an empty anthropological construct.

A slightly odd note is also struck in some of van Baal's Epilogue to Verschueren. He writes, for example, that 'the great significance given to this symbolism [sc. the sexual symbolism inherent in the headhunting ritual] in Yéi-nan culture as a whole . . . confirm[s] the theory that, fundamentally, the males suffer from strong feelings of inferiority vis-à-vis their females and feel they must compensate their inferiority by acts of violence.' It is to be supposed that few would find this a satisfactory view nor would it, of course, be possible to decide one way or another, if only because it is a proposition for which it would be difficult to conceive evidence in its favour or to its detriment.

Boelaars' book is the more complete (understandably, as it was written as a monograph) and although Verschueren, through van Baal, provides an interesting account about what he intended to be a description of the original way of life ('culture') of the Yéi-nan, Boelaars' book is the fuller, and thus the better, book. It also relies heavily upon indigenous accounts (as the sub-title says) and it is indeed 'amazing that the author has managed to collect such widely varied information on numerous topics which, from a native point of view, it must have been highly unattractive to discuss.' Boelaars has let people talk about themselves, and their accounts make fascinating reading - and also make a good case for the methodological premise of all the best social anthropology that one should find out what the people whose life is being described do and what they say about what they do, in the first instance at least. This is not only worthwhile in itself, it also leads to the possibility of real comparisons being made, i.e., things which we have not put together on the basis of faulty reasoning or of old habits of mind but which we put together because of the intrinsic natures of the social facts under consideration being compared, and it prevents the construction, complementarily, of such false categories as totemism.

One can always find fault with the work of others if one wants to and van Baal raises points of criticism both about Verschueren's book and about Boelaars' but it would be churlish

to bring these up and to point to other possible drawbacks in these accounts when the value of the books far outweighs anything of the kind. Both are important contributions to the indispensable stuff of social anthropology - ethnographical description - and it is to be hoped (as van Baal hopes) that they will stimulate others to work in this area where 'cultural diversity has assumed such extreme proportions' and which renders this 'paradisiacal country', in this regard, second to none in the world. As van Baal says, once again we have to thank the Institute for publishing these fine books which continue the long and distinguished tradition of ethnography written by intelligent and sensitive missionaries. Social anthropologists have much to thank such men for, even though most, like this reviewer, can be supposed to be out of sympathy with their aims at whatever level of liberality the way of achieving those aims may be pitched - though it could never be said that men like Verschueren and Boelaars are at all the same as the imbecile portrayed in *The Sins of Rachel Cade* or as, for instance, the American fundamentalists in Venezuela among the Auca, whose aims are altogether more sinister and whose activities should be stopped immediately.

ANDREW DUFF-COOPER

PETER C. REYNOLDS, *On the Evolution of Human Behavior: The Argument from Animals to Man*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1981. xi, 259pp., References, Index, Illustrations. £20.00.

P.C. Reynolds' work is an argument on the grandest possible scale that seeks to demonstrate that human society, including the social traits that were thought to be purely the stuff of humanity, is the end result of instinctual behaviour that has evolved alongside and integrated with learned behaviour. This thesis, all 272 pages including extensive notes and references, is couched in exceedingly concise terms that, at first reading, may offend the sensitive reader as gratuitous jargon but, when armed with the supplied glossary, the elegance of the language and argument becomes apparent.

Although written in a scholarly and detailed manner, Reynolds has thoughtfully avoided alienating the general reader by providing two chapters that give a useful (albeit occasionally slippery) foothold on the field of ethology. The first chapter is a useful historical review of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thought on the structure and derivation of human societies and behaviour, while the second chapter gives a critique of current theories and lays the foundation for the ensuing argument.

Chapter Three looks at inter-individual relationships in man and primates and attempts to elucidate the former through the

identification of homologous behaviour and/or patterns of behaviour found among the latter. The result of this exercise in speculative though carefully constructed analogy is that social attachments in man can be explained as 'stabilized approach-avoidance conflicts' that have their basis in the instincts of aggression and fear and exhibited as antagonism. Chapter Four demonstrates quite forcibly the relationship between human conceptual thought and primate cognition. Reynolds argues that man's ability to modify external objects to a predetermined form as seen by the mind's eye is merely the substitution of this new level of instrumentality into the existing cognitive ability of apes to manipulate their bodies in an iconic manner. The difference in conceptualization among man and other primates, then, is more of a matter of scale and development than a difference in kind.

In Chapter Five Reynolds argues that object exchange networks in man are similar to primate grooming behaviour and that the former can be viewed as an outgrowth of the latter by substituting material objects as the medium of social exchange to produce the material exchange systems found in human society. In Chapter Six Reynolds proposes, in a rather complicated and convoluted fashion, that language is a new 'evolutionary emergent' but that this emergence was due to a reorganization of existing primate abilities rather than the development of newly-acquired capabilities. Chapter Seven is an essay attempting to apply the conclusions reached in earlier chapters to what is known archaeologically about early hominids and to identify the hominid behavioural traits that reflect continuity or discontinuity with those of other primates. Reynolds reaches the ultimate conclusion that learning does not replace instinct but rather instinctive patterning is needed for the acquisition and maintenance of human culture, and that human behavioural and/or cultural patterning can be seen as homologous with 'the simplest instrumental acts' of monkeys.

On the Evolution of Human Behaviour is a thought-provoking volume that challenges many a long-held belief regarding our sacrosanct uniqueness. Due to the nature of the available evidence, the strength of the thesis is dependent on the elegance of the logic, and elegant it certainly is. Both newcomers to the field of ethology and experienced ethologists will find Reynolds' book extremely useful and a source of controversy that will take years to thrash out.

JOHN DUMONT

SALLY HUMPHREYS, *The Family, Women and Death: Comparative Studies*, London etc.: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1983. xiv, 176pp., Bibliography, Indexes. £15.00.

Sally Humphreys has now established herself as one of the most original English-language writers on ancient history. Much of her inspiration (as the title of her previous collection of essays, *Anthropology and the Greeks* [1978] proclaims) derives from a long involvement with social anthropology. In fact the credit paid to anthropology may be more flattering than is strictly warranted, for all Mrs Humphreys' essays are properly historical pieces whose worth resides in their classical scholarship. If they are also 'anthropological', this is perhaps as much to do with a general revival of interest within ancient history itself in the exploration of Greek civilization as an alien culture with its own particular complex of values and institutions, as with any set of theories, methods or 'discoveries' about society which anthropology might be deemed to contribute.

The present set of essays might well have been entitled *Public and Private in Ancient Greece*, for it is the inter-relationship (by no means a static one) between the private world of the citizen and the public domain of the *polis*, explored in the context of family, of women, and of death, which gives this collection its unity. What was the relationship between the *oikos*, the 'household', and the *polis*, 'the state', in classical Athens, both in terms of social structure, and, importantly, in terms of the values which appear to have accrued to each and on whose conflict so much of Athenian tragedy dwelt? What was the relationship, at the political level, between private interests and loyalties and those of the community? How were women, paradigms of the private world, contained and accounted for in the public realm? What, indeed, was the role of family and of kinship in ancient Athens, and how best can such a question be approached? And of death, in one sense that most private of states, how was it publically celebrated? What were the connections maintained between the deceased and the community? With what community were they maintained, the family or the state, and in honouring the deceased, what was honoured - the individual or his place in society, the living or the dead?

These are the sorts of questions with which Mrs Humphreys deals, and they are thematic. That said, however, it must be admitted that many of the essays are very much occasional pieces. All have been published or are about to be published elsewhere. Two were actually written as Introductions to volumes of collected essays edited by Mrs Humphreys. All are relatively short. With the notable exception of 'Family Tombs and Tomb-Cult in Ancient Athens', which is a substantive piece of original research on an outstanding topic, the essays tend to provide a synthetic account of the problems tackled and to propose and suggest the manner in which they might be investigated, rather

than bringing them to a final conclusion. But they are none the less valuable for that, and it may be that these essays will provide the stimulus for a new and important programme of research in the ancient world.

ROGER JUST

PHILIP MAYER (ed.), *Black Villagers in an Industrial Society: Anthropological Perspectives on Labour Migration in South Africa*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press 1980. xiii, 340pp., Bibliography, Tables, Index. £13.95.

The problem of labour migration in southern Africa has always been crucial because of the changes and disruptive consequences it has brought about in village life. In one way or another anthropologists have paid attention to this problem, although their focus has tended to concentrate on those people who went out to work and little attention has been paid to the people left behind. This book is meant to redress the balance.

Black Villagers in an Industrial Society is concerned with Blacks living in villages where the influence of industrialization ineluctably exercises its impact. It is the result of intensive fieldwork done between 1976 and 1979 by a team of anthropologists led by Professor Philip Mayer who is known for his devotion to the study of social change. Here the authors are trying to portray, from different theoretical approaches, the impact exercised by labour migration on different aspects of the villagers' lives in Lesotho, Ciskei and Transkei.

In the first chapter Professor Mayer portrays the historical background of the present struggle between Black and White. The implementation of the policy of apartheid and the demand for labour stimulated labour migration and divided Blacks into those who went to work and those who stayed at home. Labour migration also resulted in contact with different ways of life. Too much contact with the outside world, however, meant inevitable disruption within the villages. Throughout the chapter it is shown that belief in ancestors played an important role in the resistance to this disruption.

The role played by this belief in ancestors comes to the fore in MacAllister's chapter on 'Work, Homestead and the *Shades*'. Here we are told that the Gcaleka, in order to cope with the ineluctable disruption caused by labour migration, interpret it as a rite of passage: the ancestors are told of the departure of their child to go to work and are asked to protect him. The boy is strongly advised not to misbehave and not to waste his earnings since they belong to the ancestors. On his return the ancestors are ritually told of the event. Girls also see labour migration as a rite of passage: they will encourage

their boyfriends to go, and are reluctant to marry one who has not been through the process.

The impact of labour migration on marriage and family life is dealt with by Manona. His research shows that as a result of the long absences at work and the brief visits on leave, elopement has become the most frequent form of marriage, and that infidelity and divorce have become more common.

O'Connell, in his chapter on 'Xesibe Reds, Rascals and Gentlemen at Home and at Work', shows the complex interaction between the classes among the Xesibe of Transkei in relation to the problem of migratory labour. He establishes that among Xesibe villagers there is a conflict in integrating migration prestige and class, since the traditional criteria of status no longer apply.

McNamara studies the migrants during their stay in hostels. He shows that ethnicity plays an important role in forming groups for socialisation purposes, and in the possibility of promotion.

The merit of this book lies in the fact that a team of anthropologists has come together to examine closely the effects of migratory labour on Black villagers' lives. The conclusion is that the effects are disruptive. Although it was not the authors' intention to provide any solution to the problem, they nevertheless set forth premises which governments could take into account. Because it is the first attempt to look closely at 'those left behind', *Black Villagers in an Industrial Society* may well be considered a pioneering work, one that would strongly encourage further research extended to the whole of southern Africa.

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BEN WHITAKER (ed.), *Teaching about Prejudice*, Minority Rights Group Report No.59, July 1983. 24pp., Appendix, Bibliography. £1.20.

This Report was instigated by the Conference on Teaching about Prejudice and Stereotyping held at Cumberland Lodge in 1983 and organised by the Royal Anthropological Institute in conjunction with the Minority Rights Group. It consists of two papers from the conference, a summary of the conference and further contributions commissioned afterwards. The Report's composition gives it a somewhat lopsided feel as the contributions are of differing length, the conference-based material being more expansive than the retrospective works.

Michael Banton and William Stubbs were the major contributors to the conference and their papers are reproduced in full. Banton explores the philosophies behind the various educational programmes which have been introduced in Britain to overcome racial prejudice and assesses the aspirations in this field since the 1950s. He

finds wanting the terminology used to describe such educational programmes - a terminology which reflects the ideological standpoint of its proponents - and points out the resultant difficulties with the programmes themselves. He suggests that less emphasis should be placed upon trying to formulate a positive approach which he feels is impossible to do in what he describes as a transitional phase. Rather he favours an approach which clearly sets out the negative features which we should seek to avoid. 'We can agree on the need to diminish error and combat prejudice.'

William Stubbs, the Chief Education Officer for the Inner London Education Authority, presents two examples of how material on prejudice is being introduced into schools in his area. He emphasises that children should be exposed to de-stereotyping policies at an early age and that what Jonathan Benthall, in his summary of the conference, describes as 'whole school policies' should be adopted. This means that incumbents of positions throughout the school hierarchy 'from cleaner to head teacher' should be involved in the task of combatting racism.

Jonathan Benthall notes that there was no great discussion at the conference as to whether 'race' constitutes a special category of difference, more divisive than others, or whether it is just one of a number of different forms that can generate prejudice. For me this is a crucial question and the Report suffers somewhat from not having dwelt upon its consideration. What is clear from the papers assembled is that racial prejudice and stereotyping are the major concerns of the contributors.

Nadine Peppard details recent developments in race relations training and calls for greater professionalisation and sophistication in this field of endeavour. David Hicks emphasises the enduring parochial nature of the British population as a whole and highlights the enormity of the task that is needed if ingrained attitudes are to be changed. Anthony Rampton emphasises the general view of the contributors that teachers can do a great deal to help provide for the educational needs and promote the educational achievement of children from ethnic minority groups. He advocates the introduction of more Local Education Authority advisers on teaching ethnic minorities not only in areas of great concentration of population but also in areas where there are few members of ethnic minorities.

Alan Little dissents from the general view that the curriculum and the material taught is of greatest importance in controlling racist attitudes and beliefs. He sees the presence of more teachers from ethnic minorities as doing more to counteract racialism and create the conditions of equal opportunity than explicit campaigns to tackle prejudice head on. However, Trevor Hall points out that prejudice is not the monopoly of white people and Jonathan Benthall takes Little to task, pointing out that many Asian teachers are anxious about 'black' prejudice against Asians. More senior 'black' teachers would not, he feels, necessarily improve ethnic relations in a multi-ethnic school.

Tessa Blackstone's article is the only contribution to deal specifically with prejudice and stereotyping of a non-racist nature. She discusses the recent concern about equality of opportunity for

both girls and boys in the education system. She feels that gender stereotypes need to be challenged at an early age if the clear trend towards under-achievement for girls towards the end of their secondary education is to be reversed. The gender association of certain subjects can then be broken down in secondary school, career guidance can broaden the horizons of pupils beyond the traditional limits, and parents can be encouraged to consider a wider range of opportunities for their children.

The prevailing message of the Report is expressed by Ben Whitaker in his Introduction where he exhorts the reader not to regard prejudice as something which other people possess and to recognise that negative stereotyping is operative not only in the more talked-about areas of race and sex. He points out that a start has been made in educating the young against racial prejudice but he feels that similar education among adults is long overdue. Such education should not be limited to those groups in society apparently most affected by any particular type of prejudice or stereotyping. All groups in society should be exposed to such ideas. Anthropologists should not regard themselves above such self-examination and enlightenment, for as Banton points out, many of the misconceptions about racial types which endure have found legitimation in the work of our anthropological forbears.

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