

## BOOK REVIEWS

EDWARD PETERS, *Torture*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1985. ix, 199pp., Index. £5.95.

*Torture* appears in a series of historical studies of general topics - opened by Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*, and including *The Family* and *Markets* among several more political titles - under the rubric *New Perspectives on the Past*. The editors aim to encourage wider reception of the results of modern historical research, and this book provides a wealth of well-presented data relating to the past of a practise, the present and future of which are of extremely general interest. Its closing chapter, incorporating material from Amnesty International's 1984 report, *Torture in the Eighties*, makes distressing reading - both the pathology of the victims' pain, including the chronic or permanent 'sequelae', and the process of the recruitment and making of torturers, are described in a detail possible only because of the great volume of documentary material available.

Peters defines the scope of his enquiry narrowly, to the use of pain, by public powers, upon people's bodies, for the purposes of eliciting information, confessions, or other statements. We have before us a historical chronicle: chapters on torture in Ancient Greece and Rome, and in medieval and early modern Europe, based on the primary material of juridical debates, legal codes and court records; chapters on torture in late 18th- and 19th-century Europe, the period of 'abolition', on its reappearance in 20th-century Europe, and finally on its present global ubiquity. There is a brief excursion into comparison with the place of torture in the written legal procedures of the Ottoman Empire, Japan and Czarist Russia (pp.92-7) and a too-brief discussion of the importance, among the factors enabling the return of torture in the modern period, of its use in European colonies (pp.137-8). Torture of prisoners of war and of captured spies in time of war was never effectively abolished, and it was from this autonomous military-political judiciary, and as a result of the emergence of ideologies of the transcendent Party/Revolution/Volk/Nation/State or other Supreme Interest, that torture - now rarely codified - reappeared.

The book's greatest strength lies in the lucid exposition of the mix of continuity and discontinuity marking the history of torture in the grand European legal tradition. As might be expected from a specialist in medieval history, the first chapters are demandingly detailed accounts. Evidently, torture was routinely used in Classical Antiquity - not, in Greece, on free citizens, but on slaves, whose evidence was not to be relied upon unless they had been tortured. Jurists debated the difficulty of

using such evidence, well aware that torture does not guarantee truthfulness of testimony, but they showed no sign of moral scruple. A succession of Roman emperors, elaborating the concept of the crime of treason, weakened the immunity of free citizens in this respect. Treason became the focus of a category of 'extraordinary crimes' in the prosecution of which torture was deemed appropriate, as it often still is. In medieval and early modern Europe, the fluid category of people considered to be, for legal purposes, 'infamous', were liable to be tortured, not only in 'extraordinary cases' (witchcraft and heresy being the ecclesiastical equivalents of secular treason) but wherever the dictates of the complex, but flexible algebra of Romano-Canonical law of proof required it: for where the value in points (*indicia*) of other testimony was not sufficient to establish guilt, torture was called for to secure a confession. Its abuses, and the need for specialist skills in applying it, were the subject of learned treatises by experts in the system of prosecutorial justice.

In the Enlightenment, torture became the epitome of everything superstitious, barbaric, irrational and contrary to human dignity in the old social order. More than moral revolution, though, it was transformations internal to legal practice - in the law of proof and in the adoption of new sanctions - that enabled torture to be denounced, eloquently and rightly enough, when it had already become unnecessary. 'A number of aspects of the abolition were shaped by doctrines and reforms that in other circumstances would be and have been condemned as sternly as torture itself.' (p.86). This narrative - as well as the evidence of your daily paper - corrects the historiography of the 19th century, which saw in the history of torture a vindication of a progressive view of the history of civilisation in general.

In the military, and in the state security police, torture returned to Europe in the early 20th century, in Russia, Italy, Spain, Germany, etc. The United Nations abolished it again, but in 1957 there was news that the French army and colonial police were torturing Algerian prisoners. In 1961 Amnesty International was founded. Torture is now being used by one state in three.

The crucial Enlightenment doctrine of the dignity of human beings is the focus of Peters' last chapter. He describes it as a programmatic 'anthropology', threatened by those of nationalist and internationalist political ideologies which make individual rights secondary to ideal interests. 'The human capacity for intra-specific violence', he suggests, referring to Koestler, derives from the prior 'capacity to place supreme values upon transcendental ideas and to deduce an anthropology from them' (p.164). Perhaps the famous Milgram experiments on obedience to authority prove that such ideas can include 'science'. He provides a history of changing concepts of political crime in the 20th century in relation to anti-humanitarian 'anthropologies', indicating also that a thread of tradition links the paranoia of Nero and the contemporary situation, described in the Introduction: 'In an age of vast state strength, ability to mobilize resources, and possession of virtually infinite means of coercion, much of

state policy has been based upon the concept of extreme state vulnerability to enemies, external and internal' (p.7).

There are issues that Peters cannot explore fully in a book dense with information and richly suggestive of possible side-tracks. There is no mention of animal rights, but he does see the possibility of a history that would integrate torture more fully with other aspects of the relations between 'legal' powers and subjects. The significance of confession in early modern Europe is one complex which unites the domains of religion, polity and the law as these were thoroughly interwoven in practise, if less so in contemporary theory. In many cases, the distinction between torture and forms of physical sanction is hard to draw. Though most modern torture remains rudimentary in technique, more grey areas appear where it draws on advances in medical science. Truth-serums, the sterilisation of sexual offenders, Soviet psychiatry, the forcible feeding of hunger strikers, are described as 'existing along the ambiguous edge between torture and legitimate state treatment of prisoners' (p.182).

Peters rightly disparages a 'thinning out' of the content of political discourse into sentimentalities as he describes (pp. 148-55) how 'torture' has become, in casual parlance, the semantic marker of a particular 'threshold of outrage', and he makes excellent use of George Orwell's work on this general process. But even in the restricted context of crime and politics, there is a dialectic of understanding of 'legitimacy' and 'dignity': many forms of mere incarceration are torture, and a grey area he does not refer to is that in which it seems reasonable to many Argentinians to call the Junta's policy of 'disappearing' people a deliberate torture of those remaining at liberty', a policy intended - like much modern torture - to traumatize and destroy the will to resist, and which has had damaging psychological effects on many individuals who were never actually taken away. The defence of the concept of human dignity, the embattled will to realise the 'anthropology' it entails, can and should be furthered by continuing to increase the demands the concept makes on the existing order of things, particularly as states - including our own, which daily strip-searches women in Ulster jails - become ever more powerful, ingenious, and terrified of people.

TOM CHEESMAN

DENISE O'BRIEN and SHARON W. TIFFANY (eds.), *Rethinking Women's Roles: Perspectives from the Pacific*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1984. xiii, 200pp., References, Index. £26.25.

Is feminist anthropology a form of special pleading, a brand of restrictive practice designed to help women get jobs in an ever-shrinking marketplace? Or is it of legitimate concern to us all, an intellectual pursuit that will lead to greater attention to all muted groups? Happily, it is the second question to which we can answer 'Yes'. For, as this collection of essays shows, the anthropology of women promises a finer-grained sociology of knowledge, plus a heightened, critical sensitivity to our predecessors' biases and (by reflection) to our position - both in the field and in the discipline.

Tiffany introduces the book, setting out the intellectual history of feminist anthropology, its claimed centrality within the subject, and its subversive potential. McDowell details the interrelated contexts where female/male complementarity in Bun (East Sepik) is relevant: subsistence, values, world view and the definition of human being, and the social domain. O'Brien, in a review of how Melanesianists have portrayed women, shows that until very recently, women were either invisible or denigrated by male ethnographers and their male informants; male anthropologists ignored women's economic roles and exaggerated the importance of motherhood. Counts describes how revenge suicide is a recognized political strategy for powerless, shamed, angry Lusi (New Britain) women 'who cannot otherwise alter the balance of power or relieve an intolerable situation' (p.88). So threat of suicide can deter male coercion of women. Nash criticises the Marxist notion that kin-based (normally domestic) work is a source of women's devaluation. She shows that Nagovisi (Bougainville) women are the recognized skilled authorities in gardening (husbands merely provide elbow grease) and that no sharp distinction between public and domestic domains can be drawn. Since a Nagovisi husband can best provide for his children by cultivating land of his wife's matriline, the introduction of cash-cropping has led, not to a strengthening of men's position, but to an increased adherence to matrilineality and uxorilocality. Sexton details the remarkable development of Wok Meri, a twenty-year-old exchange system and network of savings associations run by, and for, women of the East Highlands. Wok Meri is their successful attempt to correct the decline in their economic rights - a fall-off that began in the '50s. The last two papers of the volume are both by historians - both men, for the anthropology of women is not, of course, restricted to women anthropologists. Forman surveys the changes in the role of women in the churches in Oceania since their foundation in the last century. Boutilier contributes a fine article on white women in the Solomons in the first half of this century: their background and class, their life (whether on missions, on plantations, or as members of the capital's 'Society'), how they coped with 'booze, boredom, and adultery', how they aggravated

racial division by disapproving of 'island mistresses' and by trying to 'civilise' their peers, and how they perpetuated traditional female roles in the backward-looking, racialist society that the Solomons expatriate community then was.

Perhaps the most exciting paper is Marilyn Strathern's rich but concise piece. She demonstrates that criticism by Feil and Weiner of her earlier work tells us more about *their* modes of thought than it does about those of Mount Hagen women. Nature/Culture, that distinctive opposition so frequently used by anthropologists, does not apply in Mount Hagen, nor is domesticity denigrated by Hagen women. Rather, it is a domain within which a woman can display her achievement of adulthood and her successful candidacy of the role of 'full person'.

Strathern's paper highlights the best in the anthropology of women, for it is sensitive, reflexive and illuminating. The other papers exhibit the variety of concerns of feminist anthropology, needed correctives in a discipline still dominated by men. But, a final worry: will studies in geographical areas where the sexual division is not so sharply scored provide similarly rewarding ethnography? I wonder.

JEREMY MacCLANCY

JOHN L. CAUGHEY, *Imaginary Social Worlds: A Cultural Approach*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1984. viii, 273pp., Index. £16.00.

Few readers of *JASO* have not presumably at one time or another wondered whether they were awake or asleep and dreaming; or, when deeply in love, have not often thought long and hard about their friend; or have not been watching a film or reading a story or a poem and become so engrossed in what they were watching or reading that they have been transported into the realm of the fantastic. *Imaginary Social Worlds* is about these and comparable mental operations.

This book consists of a short Prologue, a brief theoretical Introduction, and six chapters which consider in turn social relations with media figures, social relations in dreams, in the stream of consciousness, in fantasy, and in hallucinations and delusions. The concluding chapter, Chapter 7, addresses the cultural significance of imaginary social worlds. Full references are contained in the notes; the index is useful.

The analytical focus of *Imaginary Social Worlds* is 'the patterns governing social interactions in imaginary worlds' (p.29). These imaginary worlds involve a person in social relations with three main classes of imaginary figures: media figures, i.e. 'all

those beings with which the individual is "familiar" through television, movies, books, newspapers, magazines, and other forms of the media'; 'purely imaginary figures produced by the individual's own consciousness'; and 'imaginary replicas of friends, kin, and lovers [who] play important roles in all forms of inner experience ...' (pp.21-2). The data upon which Caughey focuses his attention are based largely on 'introspective self-reports', i.e. published autobiographical accounts; on 'ethnographic interviews' among Sufis in Pakistan and among the people of Fáánakkar (in the Truk group of the Caroline Islands, Micronesia) in 1968 and 1976-77 respectively; and on his own imaginary experiences. The data also include information collected during a field study of an urban American psychiatric ward from 1972 to 1975, although the majority of data about American imaginary relationships is derived from some 500 people within the author's own social circles - that is, from his personal acquaintances and from interviews and survey work with faculty, staff, and students at two eastern American universities where he worked.

Caughey is a relativist who thinks (as this reviewer thinks) that many interpretations and theories of anthropological and of psychological data are 'outside schemes' which often tell us more about the interpreter's theory than about the data under consideration; he also thinks (as does this reviewer) that such interpretations and theories very often involve 'scanty attention to the text itself - that is, the internal structure...' of the data (p.82). Thus Caughey is most interested in grasping 'the inner view' and thereby explicating the logic of the data (p.86). The upshot of this approach to his data is that Caughey can maintain, most plausibly, that 'intense imaginary relationships through fantasy, media, dreams, and the stream of consciousness are characteristic of contemporary American society' (p.7). However, 'in passing much of our lives in imaginary social worlds, we are engaging not in private but in *social* experiences'. 'Cultural aspects of social organization have regulated a fundamental aspect of our subjective experience' - our 'pervasive involvement' in imaginary relationships (p.241).

*Imaginary Social Worlds* makes many interesting points. Caughey suggests (not entirely originally, of course, though unfashionably these days) that psychotherapy, for instance, is a form of social control. 'It involves procedures designed to remove deviants from society and/or to bring deviants back into conformity with the current beliefs and perceptions of society' (p.199). He also suggests that it is mistaken to imply that 'the inner world of mental illness is not "social" (p.201), and that 'our understanding of many basic aspects of culture can be enhanced through systematic attention to imaginary experiences. Studies of values, for example, can clearly benefit from a careful examination of the ways in which people play out conceptions of the desirable in fantasies, dreams, and anticipations' (p.244). As concerns this last point, attention to the imaginary worlds (in the form of sexual fantasies, for example) of some young married and unmarried Balinese men on Lombok does indeed highlight the relative standing of men and women in that form of life.

The social function of fantasy - what is unrealistic because it is impossible or improbable that it will ever be realizable - is twofold. On the one hand, 'Fantasy, like religion, is an inexpensive opium for the people' (p.186); on the other hand, fantasy may provide the basis for social change by, for instance, providing 'the visionary image' for revolutionary and utopian movements (p.187). Caughey suggests finally that an examination of our own imaginary relationships

is a potentially rich source for increasing self-understanding. In part, one is learning here about the shape of one's own personality, but the process also reveals social and cultural influences. By paying attention to imaginary systems, the individual can increase significantly awareness of cultural conditioning. If a person is happy with what he or she finds here, no action is necessary, but in some cases it may be appropriate to try and alter passive uncontrolled use of imaginary experience. People have the power to become aware of their own imaginary worlds, they also have the ability to modify these experiences (p.251).

*Imaginary Social Worlds* is an optimistic and encouraging book, which will probably interest anyone who is concerned seriously to explicate the nature of humankind. It makes the general point that it is wrong to think that most people cogitate and most of the time. Indeed, the opposite appears to be the case, which must have implications for political philosophies and programmes of action which assume the reverse. It also suggests that Waismann, for instance, was right when he maintained (in *How I See Philosophy*, edited by Rom Harré, London: Macmillan, 1958, pp.57ff.) that the evidence that a domain of 'the real' exists is very slender. *Imaginary Social Worlds* in some ways, indeed, raises more questions than it answers; but this reviewer takes that to be a point in the book's favour. He is pleased to be able to recommend it to *JASO* readers, though they would do well (in his judgement) to consult Rodney Needham's *Primordial Characters* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1978) again as well.

ANDREW DUFF-COOPER

NIGEL BARLEY, *Symbolic Structures: An Exploration of the Culture of the Dowayos*, Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press and Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme 1983. viii, 120pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index. £15.00.

NIGEL BARLEY, *The Innocent Anthropologist: Notes from a Mud Hut*, London: Colonnade and British Museum Publications 1983. 189pp., Illustrations, Map. £9.95.

The first of these books by Nigel Barley is both an investigation into the nature of symbolism, in which he shows the limitations of existing theories and proposes an alternative approach to this topic, and an account of aspects of Dowayo culture of the Cameroons, West Africa. This book, then, has an obvious appeal to scholars involved in the study of West African societies as well as to those anthropologists concerned with the study of symbolism. Indeed, it is probably more to this last audience that the book is addressed. Barley attempts to construct an analytical framework that is not only applicable to Dowayo culture, but which also provides the basis for the study of symbolic processes in cross-cultural comparison.

This relatively short work (98 pages of text, 13 pages of appendixes and 7 of notes) is divided into eight chapters. The author introduces us to the Dowayo in Chapter 1, situating them historically and geographically and briefly covering the main areas of social organisation - politics, economy, residence patterns, marriage, kinship and rites of passage. In Chapter 2, he addresses the problem of the nature of symbolism. He dispatches Sperber's approach to this problem as one based on irrationality ('This looks crazy. It must be symbolism', p.10) and is wary of structural-functionalist views of ritual in that they treat it in terms of its effects, which results in crudely representational interpretations. Instead, he draws on Needham and Lévi-Strauss in order to investigate the nature of diverse cultural forms and the transformational processes that allow structures to be detected in various areas of social and cultural life. Thus 'structuralism', for Barley, 'offers a third way out' of this apparent dilemma between irrationality and representational interpretations.

From this beginning, the author starts his journey into a symbolic analysis, his aim being 'a description of the ways in which Dowayo culture is punctuated and divided into spheres and domains' (p.12). In Chapter 3, Barley attempts to move away from purely linguistic models of symbolic analysis. First, he criticises the type of approach which relies on naive notions of word-meaning as elements in their analysis, treating only those elements which appeal to sense qualities. He cites the work of Victor Turner as exemplary of this perspective. From Saussure, Barley draws on the notions of analogy and motivation, both internal and external; yet he uses these latter terms to denote specific areas of interest. Internal motivation relates to the more pervasive internal structuring, the purely structural rules that are encapsulated in the rules of generative grammar. He opposes this concept

to external motivation that makes appeal to the outside world; that is, representational symbolic interpretations. This distinction he sees reflected in the difference between the French 'structural' style of anthropology and the British 'word-oriented' style - perhaps a little harsh on, and a limited generalization of aspects of, British anthropology. Moreover, he points to weaknesses in regarding either approach as exclusive, in that one may confuse structure for meaning, whilst the other is inherently *ad hoc* by nature. Thus he seeks both forms of motivation in his analysis, not expecting to find either in isolation in these matters. Yet it soon becomes apparent that he falls on the side of internal motivation, explicitly stating its predominance over the other form on p.96.

In the course of the following chapters, the author casts a wide net to provide some rich ethnographic data for his analysis. He must be applauded for his attempt to broaden the scope of symbolic analysis to include oral literature, material culture, festivals, ritual and belief. His object is the search for themes of Dwayo culture, often expressed in terms of binary oppositions or tripartite classificatory schemata. These themes are located in specific instances, but are 'extended gratuitously' into other areas of social and cultural life, where they are unearched by the analyst. Nonetheless, sophisticated though this analysis is, and lucid though the arguments may be, this reviewer is left wondering at times about the methods and results of this symbolic exegesis.

First, Barley's uncritical adoption of a structuralist position may appear somewhat strange in this post-structuralist era. It might be thought that his battle cries of structuralism offering 'a third way out' sound decidedly hollow, and that his banners look peculiarly pale. Moreover, in places, his rather idiosyncratic literary style sometimes stretches our credulity as to the seriousness of his thesis. For instance, Dwayos seem to be a particularly unfortunate lot who suffer from a number of astonishing complaints probably new to medical science. Through excessive contact with the implements of smithing and potting, men can be afflicted by 'prolapsed anus (piles)' and women by 'ingrowing vagina'. However, Dr Barley puts our minds at rest by placing these two strange complaints in a recognizable relation to each other:

The first thing to note is that we are in the presence of a basic binary opposition between the two terms 'ingrowing vagina' and 'outgrowing anus', i.e. internal motivation is also structuring the system in play (p.24).

Staying with this theme of sexuality, the author states: 'For any post-Freudian Westerner, it is impossible not to see the circumcised penis in the blacksmith's bellows (illustrated in figure 14). One may surely ask whether the pre-Freudian Dwayo have a similar perception or not. The question which returned to the reviewer while reading the book was how much of the analysis is true to the Dwayo perception of the world and how much to that of

the analyst. In the nature of symbolic analysis we will probably never know, since the assumption is that these structures are unconscious.

At times, Barley seems to display a strange attitude to his ethnography, rich and interesting though it is. In the Preface, he states of the customary general ethnographic background that precedes most anthropological works: 'This serves the useful function of locating the people firmly in space and time and separating them from the undifferentiated mass of "primitive man"' (p. viii). And again on the same page he justifies his inclusion of some ethnographic material in the five and a half pages of Chapter 1 by saying that his data 'would otherwise have to be introduced piecemeal throughout the work in the form of footnotes, unnecessarily impeding and clogging the flow of the analysis'. This is a genuine problem, namely the combination of narrative and analysis in a text. However, his aim that 'the serious student will wish to check the analysis for himself' (hence the inclusion of appendixes) is precluded by the lack of some key information. One cannot ask Barley to have written a book he did not set out to write, but more ethnographic data would have been helpful. For instance, by p.15 he has isolated a tripartite classificatory schema of ordinary Dowayo/blacksmith/rain-chief; but what of the 'special class' of 'true cultivator' he mentions on p.7? We are not in any position to judge.

This symbolic analysis is a synchronic study of the Dowayo of northern Cameroon. Barley treats the subjects of his analysis in isolation, both spatial and temporal. Yet in the introductory chapter we are told that Fulani penetration and dominance of the area forced the Dowayo into marginal lands, and that the French colonial administration introduced chiefs into a once acephalous society. These past transformations and the modern influences of schooling and education are mentioned occasionally, but we do not receive any impression of how these aspects of social life are assimilated into the Dowayo symbolic universe - if indeed they are. Yet we are told that their 'traditional enemies, the Fulani', introduced circumcision (a central issue in the analysis, the 'joker in the pack' of Chapter 8), and indeed, 'older Dowayos deck themselves with the trappings of Fulani chieftains to claim status' and 'rich men wear Fulani robes and swords, carry umbrellas etc.' (p.9). Indeed, some of them even refuse to speak their mother tongue, solely adopting Fulani. This lack of historical perspective and the sense given of cultural exclusiveness must leave doubts as to the validity of the analysis. Only once is the subject of adaptation or change brought up, and that on pp.97-8 - the last two pages of the text.

Unfortunately, at £15.00 for 98 pages of text and 27 pages of appendixes and notes, etc., this volume cannot be recommended to students by the present reviewer. Moreover, for that price one might have expected better reproduction of photographs (and texts to accompany them) and at least an acute accent for Lévi-Strauss.

In an altogether different vein is *The Innocent Anthropologist*. Nigel Barley returns home from fieldwork in the Cameroons, his wounds of initiation barely healed, the experience still vivid

in his mind. Dressed only in the meagre costume of an initiate still smarting from his ordeal, this newly-integrated member of the community runs through the anthropological village screaming the secrets of the bush encampment to all and sundry. Whilst more primitive peoples would surely punish such renegades, we must congratulate Barley on the writing of this book.

This innocent anthropologist lays bare before us the vicissitudes of a fieldworker doing research in West Africa. Yet, far from the turgid preoccupations of Malinowski's diaries, this book is extremely funny. From the brusque encounters with bureaucrats and officials to the embarrassments of his first contacts with the Dowayo, the enigmatic Barley marched, limped and was carried through his field research. Indeed, it is a marvel that he recalls his memories in such good humour, given that he was almost killed in a car accident, lost his front teeth through the incompetence of a Cameroon dentist's assistant and suffered numerous complaints and diseases. Certainly, however, his depiction of the Dowayos is unflattering at times. Stuck in some sort of early Piagetian stage of perception, they seemed to have had great difficulty in recognising pictures he was using in an attempt to initiate discussion of the local fauna:

I tried using photographs of lions and leopards. Old men would stare at the cards, which were perfectly clear, turn them in all manner of directions and then say something like 'I do not know this man' (p.96).

He himself, though, does not escape ridicule. After being troubled by nocturnal sounds emanating from a hut behind his own, he assumed his neighbour had similar intestinal problems to himself:

One day I mentioned this to Matthieu who gave a loud scream of laughter and ran off to share my latest folly with Mariyo. About a minute later, a loud scream of laughter came from her hut, and thereafter I could chart the progress of the story round the village as hysteria hit one hut after another (p.130).

It was only later that he became aware that the inhabitants of this nearby hut were goats.

This is a useful and amusing book for anyone about to leave for the field or, indeed, as a reminder of the joys of fieldwork for those who have returned. Far from discouraging anyone by this warts-and-all view of research, it made me want to return to Africa.

ROY DILLEY

GLENN HAUSFATER and SARAH BLAFFER HRDY (eds.), *Infanticide: Comparative and Evolutionary Perspectives*, New York: Aldine Publishing Co. 1984. xxxi, 520pp., Bibliography, Index. \$34.95.

Infanticide is a phenomena which affects almost all living creatures. This highly stimulating volume contains papers discussing the practice among invertebrates, insects, spiders, fishes, birds, amphibians, rodents, carnivorous mammals, non-human primates and man, and is the end-product of the Wenner-Gren Symposium on 'Infanticide in Animals and Man' held at Cornell University during August 1982. Editors Dr Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, who in the 1970s was one of the first researchers to voice the opinion that infanticide might be a useful biological mechanism rather than simply violent, aberrant behaviour, and Dr Glenn Hausfater, a specialist in non-human primates, maintain that although there is no unitary mechanism for infanticide across species, the practice can be reduced to five functional categories of motivation: exploitation of the infant as a resource, usually food; competition for resources with the infant; improvement of breeding opportunity by eliminating dependant offspring of a prospective mate; parental manipulation of progeny for best reproductive success (the category used most frequently by man); and social pathology. This framework is followed in most of the papers, and provides a useful basis against which to discuss the many varied factors, for different species, which lead to infanticidal practices. One of the more fascinating aspects of the book is the attempt by most of the contributors to define a new and dynamic field: what is infanticide, what are the situations in which it occurs, who are the perpetrators, who are the victims, what are the motives, how do these factors vary between species, and how can the subject best be studied?

The volume contains twenty-five chapters divided into four sections. Section I, 'Background and Taxonomic Reviews', is the least coherent but most important section for specialist and non-specialist alike, as it contains a collection of review articles on specific aspects of the subject and background material for the later sections. Section II, 'Infanticide in Nonhuman Primates: A Topic for Continuing Debate', is the longest and most comprehensive section, being the area in which most of the research on infanticide has taken place. Anthropologists acquainted with the subject through the work of such people as Dian Fossey and the editors on non-human primate social behaviour will not be disappointed in the papers, and this section should not be missed by anyone interested in the theoretical and practical aspects of such research. Section III, 'Infanticide in Rodents: Questions of Proximate and Ultimate Causation', is less likely to be of interest to anthropologists, as it is more concerned with biological than with social factors affecting infanticide.

The most interesting section for anthropologists is Section IV, 'Infanticide in Humans: Ethnography, Demography, Sociobiology, and History'. Although it comprises only four chapters and an introduction, it is an exceptional and thorough treatment of a highly emotional and complicated topic. The introduction by M.

Dickemann reviews the subject in total and ties in with the rest of the book. The article by S.C.M. Scrimshaw reviews the ethnographic and historical data about human infanticide and discusses the motivations, decision-making processes and culturally sanctioned conditions under which it occurs in human populations. An apparently unique and subtle human infanticidal practice is discussed in S.R. Ryan's historical demographic study of the excess mortality rates of females between infancy and child-bearing age (deferred infanticide) in pre-modern Europe. Although these societies did not sanction female infanticide, the economic changes caused by the modernization of agriculture and the beginnings of industrialization led parents to devalue daughters and withhold family resources, such as food, from them in favour of sons. As a result, the mortality rates of females were excessively high, as they were more susceptible to nutritionally sensitive diseases such as tuberculosis, the major killer of the nineteenth century. Daly and Wilson compare data from modern Canada with traditional societies in their sociobiological analysis, which maintains that even pathological infanticide in societies which do not condone it is a product of natural selection. The section concludes with a fascinating case study by Bugos and McCarthy of the Ayoreo, a traditional tribal society in South America which practiced infanticide until recently. Such empirical data provides a good balance to the more theoretical papers. All the articles are worth reading separately, and together they form an excellent treatment of this frequently misunderstood and under-researched aspect of human behaviour.

Unusually for symposium proceedings, this volume is coherent, well organized and understandable to the non-specialist - in short, an excellent presentation of the current state of research on a highly controversial and dynamic subject of great importance. The papers are of consistently high quality and complement each other well, although they often present differing points of view. The overviews are invaluable in putting the more scientific papers into true perspective, as well as being very interesting in themselves. A bonus is the 68-page bibliography, which is comprehensive in its coverage of the widely disparate literature. The volume is to be highly recommended.

ALISON ROBERTS

DAVID HART, *The Ait 'Atta of Southern Morocco: Daily Life and Recent History*, Wisbech: Menas Press [MENAS Socio-Economic Studies] 1984. xxviii, 204pp., References, Plates, Maps, Glossary, Index. £21.50.

This is a very boring book for anyone not desperately interested in the daily life and recent history of the Ait 'Atta of southern Morocco. It is a companion book to the author's previous MENAS publication, *Dadda 'Atta and his Forty Grandsons* (1981), which discussed the socio-political organization of the Ait 'Atta. The present book contains a variety of information on this transhumant, segmentary 'super-tribe', covering their ecological and economic situation, their way of life and beliefs, their relations with other peoples, and their twentieth-century history. This latter is, disappointingly, told very much from an external point of view and we are told very little of how the Ait 'Atta see their recent history.

There is also a chapter on 'Origins - Legend and Reality', but Hart seems quite confused about myth and legend. In the blurb, descriptions of 'myths of origin' are promised, but Hart claims that as only profane time is relevant for the Ait 'Atta, 'the real issue is one of legend and origin tradition...rather than myth' (p.40). At the end of the chapter, however, Hart remarks that 'No doubt many of these accounts are really myths' (p.74). This realisation is too late to prevent him ignoring such possibilities as considering the stories as charter myths or analysing their symbolic content. Perhaps if he had termed them myths he would not have thought it worth while commenting that the collective marriage ceremony of Dadda 'Atta's forty sons 'also seems unlikely, as does their unanimous impregnation, at first shot, so to speak, of their forty wives' (p.43). Still, perhaps this, and the reference to telepathy (p.47) are meant to be amusing. And so perhaps is the use of such metaphors as 'bowled over' (p.50), 'lip service' (p.91), and 'the backbone of the bridal party' (p.92) - though this latter might indeed be an Ait 'Atta, and not an ethnocentric, expression.

Trying to guess whether Hart is expressing his own views or those of the Ait 'Atta is one of the things that one can do to relieve the boredom of reading this book. Another way is to try and imagine how a bridal party can circumnavigate a groom's house in southern Morocco (p.92), how brides come to be 'automatically virgins' (also p.92), and how, in order to celebrate the '*Aid l-Kbir on Dhu l-Hijja 8-10*, the Ait 'Atta manage to 'come from as far away as they can' (p.103).

JEREMY COOTE

MALCOLM MCLEOD and JOHN MACK, *Ethnic Sculpture*, London: British Museum Publications 1985. 72pp., Map, Plate, Index. £4.95.

This is a well-illustrated introduction to the sculptural traditions outside of the Western, Oriental, archaeological and pre-Hispanic civilizations. It is the latest in a series of British Museum publications which has included *Assyrian Sculpture*, *Egyptian Sculpture* and *Clocks and Watches*. No doubt Assyriologists, Egyptologists and horologists would also feel that a single 72-page booklet is too small to do justice even as an introduction to their subject. Anthropologists can only be grateful that the authors of this booklet have managed to discuss African, Oceanic and American Indian sculptural traditions in a way understandable by the lay person, without any vague generalizations. Being a book for lay persons, the occasional explicit and the always implicit reference is to the lay person's conventional conceptions of illusionistic Western art. Non-Western art is different, that is, made clear. But the authors also manage at least to indicate how other sculptural traditions might be approached in their own terms.

The authors are the Keeper and an Assistant Keeper in the British Museum's Department of Ethnography - better known now as the Museum of Mankind - but this book is by no means a catalogue of the Museum's collection. The last such catalogue appeared in 1925, with a shorter updated version appearing in 1982.) Nor does it concentrate, as some recent publications have done, on a few individual pieces, but instead discusses specific traditions and illustrates particular works to further more general discussions. Questions of aesthetics are overtly ignored, and the authors concentrate their, and our, attention on anthropological and technical concerns.

An Introduction discusses the approaches of art history and anthropology, the range of what might be considered 'sculpture', and the 'discovery' of non-Western art by Picasso *et al.* Following this are detailed accounts of different methods of wood-carving, metal-working, terracotta and stone-working. These accounts provide insights into the problems and advantages of the different methods and lead into a discussion of the artists, their skills, position and status in various societies. The lack of figurative sculpture in non-Western art is posed as a problem, and then rejected, quite properly, as an ethnocentric question. A chapter on 'Masks and Masquerades' makes it clear how little we can know of a mask from seeing it devoid of any associated costume, out of context, static, in a museum. The final chapter makes the similar point that it is only very rarely that we can discover anything about the meaning of a sculpture from an assessment of its form.

The map of the world at the front of the booklet would have benefited from an attempt to locate on it not just some of the nation states and islands referred to in the text, but also all the peoples whose sculptural traditions are discussed. No indication is given of the locations of, amongst others, the Northwest Coast peoples, the Kipsigis, Makonde, or Pueblo Indians. There is

little cross-referencing between the hundred plates and the text, and it is unfortunate that some of the traditions discussed, for example the Asmat, are not illustrated at all. Though the anthropological discussions seem to be sound, the passages concerning the position of cattle among the Nilotic peoples of the Southern Sudan (p.10) are if not inaccurate, at least misleading. In particular, cattle are *not* bred to try to produce specific colours or configurations of colours, but to produce good milch cows. Preferences for cattle colour configurations are quite general, and particular clans do not have their own preferences. A Nilotic man will not commit suicide when his song-ox dies. And, most importantly, it is not *bulls* which are groomed, bedecked with tassels, and are the subject of aesthetic attention, but *oxen*.

JEREMY COOTE

KENNETH M. KENSINGER (ed.), *Marriage Practices in Lowland South America*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1984. x, 263pp., Bibliography, Index. £16.50.

This volume consists of a substantial Introduction by Judith Shapiro and ten ethnographic papers of varying length and interest assembled in two geographically defined sections: Brazil; and the western Amazonian parts of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. In many respects, it continues the process encapsulated in the volume *Dialectical Societies*, not only in demonstrating the unsuitability of models developed in the course of studies in other parts of the world to an area where it is difficult to find such familiar features as descent groups or brideprice marriage or a moiety structure that is part of the kinship domain; but also in giving further demonstration of the ways in which many of these societies resolve the contrasts provided by such antithetical notions as nature/culture, public/private and inside/outside found in cosmology and indigenous social philosophies. This latter point, however, applies mainly to the section on lowland Brazil (to which *Dialectical Societies* was exclusively devoted), and Joanna Kaplan usefully draws distinctions from the societies further west, which she sees as less ritualized and less highly structured (pp.127ff.).

However, the volume concentrates less on these wider issues than on indigenous conceptions of marriage. Although all of the essays have useful insights into their own data, in her Introduction Shapiro highlights two main anthropological concerns that the volume seeks to address. One is the old and still controversial question of the relationship between affinal alliance and kinship terminology - the extent to which the one reflects the other, and what is implied by the frequent examples in which the type of alliance does not behave in accordance with the logic of the term-

inology - and also, the extent to which an analytical approach which relies too heavily on a genealogical view obscures the true meaning of kin terms. Although the familiar arguments of this longstanding but now rather exhausted controversy are reiterated, little that is new emerges - not even the observation of the inappropriateness of both alliance theory and descent theory to this area. Appeal is finally made to the ethnographic context, hardly a novel idea, yet a wholly commendable one which all the contributors acquit admirably. However, one result of this emphasis on culture-specific interpretation is, as Shapiro admits, to make cross-cultural comparisons difficult to conceive or execute, especially, it would seem, in the circumstances of South America.

This leads to the second main concern dealt with in the Introduction, namely the formulation of an adequate cross-cultural definition of marriage itself. In fact, we are told that '...the relationships that have been labeled "marriage" in the societies of lowland South America have seemed familiar enough not to have occasioned any problems in the application of the term' (p.27). One wonders, therefore, to what extent this discussion is really necessary, in the absence of anything as problematic as Nayar marriage, or the woman-woman marriage found in parts of Africa. Be that as it may, Dole, Shapiro and Kensinger all attempt a comprehensive definition of marriage, the first yet another monothetic one of the type criticised by Riviere in ASA 11, the other two offering solutions little different in essence from the polythetic approach advocated by Needham in the same volume. Needham's initial suggestion was not taken up by the profession at large with any noticeable enthusiasm, and it is doubtful whether Kensinger's wish for something similar, but along the lines of the International Phonetic Alphabet, will fare any better.

So much for the Introduction. All the essays are determinedly 'emic' in approach, but not so much as to prevent their authors from drawing inferences that might be concealed from the social actors themselves. A number of the essays deal with changes in the alliance system brought about for the most part by obviously external factors - mainly missionizing, but also a smallpox epidemic in one case (the Wachiperi). Yet particularly interesting is Kracke's evidence of internal change among the Kagwahiv, and his demonstration that this has allowed individuals to manipulate at least some of the traditional rules to their material advantage or emotional satisfaction.

Thus although we are not given much in the way theoretical advance, the volume is very valuable and interesting for its ethnographic insights. Personally, I was yet again struck by the parallels between my own area of Middle India and certain groups in Amazonia (the Quichua and Cashinahua in particular) - especially in marriage rules, kinship terminology, and the transmission of soul substance between alternating generations.

## OTHER NOTES AND NOTICES

### INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM

School of Oriental and African Studies, London  
24-26 October, 1985

This Festival, the first of its kind in Britain, was jointly organised by the Royal Anthropological Institute and the National Film and Television School. Its official purpose was 'to encourage greater international awareness of the achievements to date and the future potential of documentary ethnographic film-making.' In effect, it provided an occasion for over one hundred participants from Europe, the United States and developing countries to view a wide variety of new ethnographic films and to discuss the issues involved in their making.

In addition to the main session of film-viewing and discussions, there was a pre-festival educational conference and a supporting programme of films at SOAS, the NFT, the ICA, BAFTA and the French Institute.

Visual anthropology, and film-making in particular, is still a relatively new and largely mistrusted feature in the anthropological repertoire. Previously, the making of ethnographic films by anthropologists was to a large extent dictated by cost, and the finished product was directed towards an academic audience. Nowadays, in contrast, there are a number of film makers working with or without the collaboration of anthropologists and producing ethnographic films for television. The making of these films is not so much dictated by cost as by the television audience. The danger is, of course, that of emphasising the 'exoticism' of the people in order to snare the audience's undependable attention, but at the risk of misrepresenting the total way of life. The high technical quality of many television films, however pleasing to the eye and captivating to one's sense of adventure, does not in any way make up for the lack of depth of meaning. Some of the most revealing and perceptive ethnographic films have been made on very low budgets, such as David McDougall's 'To Live With Herds' (1969) and Attiat El-Abnoudi's 'Seas of Thirst' (1982). An example of careful collaboration between film-maker Leslie Woodhead and anthropologist David Turton is the Granada Television film 'The Migrants' (1985), about the migration of the Mursi in Ethiopia.

Each day's viewing in the main session of the Festival was structured along a certain theme:

- 1) Life crises, and how films dealing with universals in human experience, such as death, can bring about cross-cultural understanding;
- 2) Change and development, and how films can advocate a discriminating approach to modernization;

- 3) Cultural self-expression, and the films made by indigenous film makers.

The common ground shared by all the films was their makers' intention of portraying their understanding of given aspects of another or their own culture. The perspective chosen, as well as the filming techniques employed, differed greatly from one film to another. One of the issues discussed during the Festival was that seeing does not necessarily equate with understanding, especially if one is viewing a culture other than one's own. Various techniques have arisen to supplement the visual content of films, namely commentaries and sub-titles. The use of narrative by the commentator or by 'characters' in the film also serves to make the film coherent. Melissa Llewelyn-Davies, in her 'Masai Diary' (1982), has employed a highly effective technique of ordering the sequence of events in her films into the form of a diary.

A 'new wave' in ethnographic film-making has tried to dispense with both commentary and sub-titles, thereby freeing the images to convey the meaning. Obviously, this is a difficult technique and open to much criticism, and this type of film is rarely successful. However, one of the most powerfully evocative films shown at the festival, in the words of its maker, Robert Gardner, 'stands as an exclusively visual statement resorting to neither voiced commentary nor sub-titles'. The film is entitled 'Forest of Bliss' (1985) and follows the life of the people of Benares on the banks of the Ganges from one sunrise to the next. Produced in collaboration with Akos Östör, an anthropologist from Harvard, the images in the film bring out the composite layers of the Hindu experience of life and death. A book is also being produced which will explain the finer details of the ceremonies and rituals in the film.

The custom of taking the finished film back to the people, be it the government or the actual group about whom the film has been made, is becoming increasingly widespread. Often, valuable feedback is obtained. Take, for example, the films 'A Balinese Trance Seance' and 'Jero on Jero' (Linda Connor, Timothy and Patsy Asch, 1982). In the first film, clients come to contact the spirit of a recently deceased son. In the second, the reactions of the medium to watching the first film are shown. She is prompted to provide a wealth of additional information and explanation on seeing herself performing the ritual.

Another area in which ethnographic films can make an impact is that of modernization and nation-building in developing countries and the effects on tribal populations. Potentially, ethnographic films concerned with these issues can be useful when shown to indigenous government agencies and may positively influence their policy making. Films of this genre generally embrace the 'Disappearing World' concept and emphasise the destruction of tribal life.

Nowadays, a relatively small number of indigenous film makers are making films about their own societies. Rather than emphasising the 'Disappearing World' theme, there seems to be a focus on 'cultural revival' or on change due to modernization or industrialization. Take, for example, Mariama Hima's 'Falow' (1985) and

'Baabu Banza' (1984). These two films show how scrap metal and old rubber tyres are recycled in Niamey, Niger.

The question now is that, given the wealth of material available, why are ethnographic films rarely used as a tool for teaching anthropology? Such films are sometimes used as an illustrative medium for the written word. Rarely are they used as a representation or interpretation of a given aspect of a society or culture. Also, with camera equipment (i.e. video camera and smaller and less technical cine cameras) becoming more easily accessible to the layman, the potential for making and using ethnographic films is becoming greater.

KRYSTYNA CECH

M.M. BURU, S.M. GHANEM and K.S. McLACHLAN (eds.), *Planning and Development in Modern Libya*, London: Society for Libyan Studies/Wisbech: Menas Press (MENAS Socio-Economic Studies) 1985. x, 229 pp., Tables, Figures, Maps, References, Index. £19.00.

Some of the fifteen papers in this volume were originally given at the symposium on 'Libya: research papers into economic development' held at SOAS in 1984; others were especially commissioned for this volume. Eight are by Europeans, some of them directly involved in development planning in Libya, and seven by Libyan academics. Together, they give a very detailed and quite comprehensive account of the history of commerce, trade and development in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Libya and an assessment, or rather assessments, of the potential for further development as the oil revenues peak and fall off in the years to come. Ironically, as the oil gluts, a major restriction on agricultural and industrial development is lack of water, and several papers focus on this problem. The book as a whole manages to achieve an informed objectivity with in encouraging lack of wishful thinking.

J.C.

KATHLEEN GOUGH, *Rural Society in Southeast India*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1981 [Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology, no. 38]. xiv, 432pp., Maps, Plates, Glossary, Index, Bibliography. £32.50.

This excellent addition to the Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology series has been a long time coming. Based on the author's 1951-3 fieldwork in Tamil Nadu, it is nevertheless well worth the

wait. In it, Gough presents in comprehensive form analysis that was only suggested in her contributions to Srinivas' and Marriott's 1955 surveys of Indian villages. The influence of both Evans-Pritchard and Max Gluckman is clearly apparent in this volume. Unusually for a 'village study' monograph the author casts her argument firmly in a historical framework, tracing the impact of 200 years of colonialism on the politics and economics of two Thanjavur (Tanjore) villages. In the process, she addresses herself to some of the most bedevilling issues (e.g. questions of problems of modes of production, agrarian relations, changing class and caste structure) that have long challenged anthropologists of India. The book may be read on two levels. It begins and ends with a theoretical analysis of the utility and applicability of Marxist categories to the understanding of the Indian society. The core of the volume is, however, an extended ethnography of two villages. Here, Gough marshalls an enormous amount of data to great effect. Either aspect would make the volume an invaluable contribution to the field. That they are available together makes it well worth the hefty price. We can only eagerly anticipate the publication of the proposed companion volume, which takes the story through her 1976 return to the field.

S.S.

PAUL CHAO, *Chinese Kinship*, London etc.: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1983. xvi, 190pp., Glossary, Bibliography, Index. £15.00.

This book claims attention through having been written by one who belongs to the culture he is describing (Chao was born in Hopei) and who is familiar with the literary and historical texts he uses as data. Sadly, however, its virtues cease at this point, for despite having some value as raw data, there are none of the characteristic insights of a comparative or analytical nature that most outsiders manage to bring to their ethnographic accounts. Theoretically, too, the book is outmoded and derivative, being pervaded by the functionalist ideas of Radcliffe-Brown, Fortes and early Goody and interspersed with occasional appeals to personal sentiment as an explanatory device - including, in one case (p. 173), Freudian projections of guilt. Also, the first chapter is largely and irritatingly taken up with standard, text-book, *Notes and Queries*-type definitions of clans, lineages, households, nuclear families, etc., whose applicability to the Chinese situation is rarely clarified. Compared to the work of Freedman and Baker, then - or even of Fêng Han-yi, first published nearly fifty years ago - this book represents a retrograde step in our understanding of Chinese society, despite being one of those rare cases of the anthropologist being his own informant.

R.J.P.

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