

BOOK REVIEWS

RODNEY NEEDHAM, *Against the Tranquility of Axioms*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1983. xiv, 166pp., Bibliography, Tables, Figures, Index. £21.25.

RODNEY NEEDHAM, *Exemplars*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1985. xvii, 218pp., Plates, Bibliographies, Index. £20.95.

A degree of scepticism is no doubt a healthy attribute of any scholar, but few anthropologists have cultivated it to such an extent as Rodney Needham, who on occasion has even been led to doubt the future viability of the subject as a unified discipline. Not content with critically examining substantive issues, especially in kinship, throughout the earlier part of his career, in the last fifteen years or so he has increasingly questioned the validity and usefulness of such standard, monothetically defined categories as descent or belief in comparative studies in anthropology. Inspired principally by the philosopher Wittgenstein and a number of natural scientists, he has suggested replacing them with a polythetic or serial type of classification, while fully appreciating that this would greatly complicate the task of comparison. But this has not simply made Needham an extreme relativist: instead, his dissatisfaction has led to a search for universals at a logically prior or more fundamental stage of human experience than that denoted by the conventional categories. These fundamentals owe much to the Jungian archetype and occur either as images (the half-man, the witch) or else as properties (symmetry, transitivity, analogical classification). Clearly, his work presents a contrast with those approaches which simply cast fresh light on what are treated as essentially stable categories and concepts. And it also has continuity, since many of the ideas involved and the resort to principles rather than types were first worked out in the kinship studies of his earlier career.

His two most recent collections of essays continue this general trend, though the second is in part a new departure in terms of the sort of evidence presented. *Against the Tranquility of Axioms* contains a rather mixed bag of essays, two of which have been published before, namely 'Polythetic Classification' (*Man* 1975) and 'Skulls and Causality' (*Man* 1976). Two others deal respectively with the fundamental and widespread properties of reversal and of alternation in the ordering of human experience. The first is shown to constitute another polythetic class, despite being treated monothetically by most authors; the second is assessed

to be a fundamental and discrete monothetic concept - an aspect of duality, though a more complex one than, say, symmetry. One of the two remaining essays shows the difficulty of distinguishing fact from value, real from ideal, while the other, very short, points to some inconsistencies in the use of the arrow as a diagrammatic device. Despite their diversity, they all have in common the author's explosion of some of the take-for-granted certainties - 'axioms' - he considers burden the profession.

Exemplars pursues similar themes within an equal variety of topics, but some of the evidence invoked is radically different. In order to demonstrate further the validity of his ideas, Needham leaves ethnography aside in four essays and concentrates instead on the mental processes of particular individuals in circumstances where they may be deemed to have been either isolated from or resistant to the usual impulsions provided by their cultural surroundings. Thus we have a classical scholar who adds extraneous matter to a text in the course of translating it; a confessedly fraudulent ethnographer; and a mystic, possibly mad but certainly sincere, who records the impressions of heaven and hell brought to him by angels in a series of visions. The concentration of the first and last of these three individuals can be supposed to have been directed firmly away from the experiences of their own social world, the former by respect for his text, the latter by awe of the angels and their message; while the second had both the opportunity and the motive (his deceit) to be as outlandish but at the same time as vague as possible in its execution. Nonetheless, all three betrayed their membership of wider humanity by exploiting one of the primary factors alluded to above, namely a propensity for analogical classification. A similar theme - though it is left more implicit - appears in the essay on Castaneda, whose writings are compared with a previously unsuspected possible influence on them, the imputation being that in fact both may be fictitious. Once again, the message is clearly that the undeniable correspondences between the two arise not from the parallel yet suspect facts they record, but from mental properties common to all humanity. Were it not for the possibility of influence that Needham accepts at the outset, this essay would provide the most impressive evidence for his contention that certain characters of thought are innate, and that they may be found in societies lacking historical or geographical connections: at least in this case the two texts come from widely differing and geographically remote cultural traditions. However, the other examples are all located in and, as the author himself admits, at least partly derivable from the European tradition, and in the last resort he does not make it at all clear why this should not be their origin, rather than any more widely occurring attributes of the human mind.

Other essays in this volume deal with the lessons provided by the early ethnography of the Greek Sceptics and Robert Knox, the former developing into a defence of anthropology, despite the observation that 'anthropological theory over the past century and more...has traced a sequence of failures...' (p. 41); with Dumézil, in defence of his treatment of dual sovereignty; and with Locke's

An Essay concerning Human Understanding, which gives Needham an opportunity to counter possible arguments against the notion of primary factors and is, in fact, a good summary of his general position.

The remaining essay attacks the concept of ritual in the same way that those of descent and belief were attacked earlier. The starting point for this, however, comes from outside anthropology, in the form of a critique of *The Golden Bough* by the very philosopher whose work has been so influential on Needham's own. In it, Wittgenstein had made the common observation that in the search for universal explanations for the propensity towards ritual action (as in much else, one might say) no help is to be expected from the 'explanations' offered by the participants, which invariably are either patent rationalizations or else refer the enquirer to the ancestors, the society's tradition, etc. In other words, while it need not be difficult to determine the meaning of a particular rite for its participants in terms of its place in their own culture, the reason behind this general human impulsion remains obscure. Wittgenstein's solution - a polythetic classification of ritual - simply releases it from the possibility and necessity of having any single explanation justify its existence: 'Ritual can be self-sufficient, self-sustaining, and self-justifying' (*Exemplars*, p. 177) and is innately present in the human mind. The example of Wittgenstein's that Needham finds most illuminating is of the distribution of pieces of Schubert's scores to his pupils by his brother after the composer's death (p. 164). This is an example of what must be an exceedingly common occurrence among small groups of friends and colleagues - a limited and largely spontaneous gesture whose content has meaning just to them, free from any compulsion coming directly from the wider society, and simply manifesting the seemingly universal human propensity to use ritual and symbolism to mark the significant with significance.

The original treatment of some of the essays in *Exemplars* saves this latest volume of Needham's from being just one more in the series of books he has brought out in recent years offering essentially the same arguments and supported by the same ethnographic examples. This slight change in direction should be pursued in any future work if an impression of staleness is to be avoided. The more general critical response to these volumes has ranged from the adulatory (e.g. Pocock in *Man* XX, 4) to the dismissive (e.g. Crick in *Man* XVI, 2), and some points of detail have attracted the criticism of Dumont and others. Thus far, their actual application to specific problems by the profession at large has not been very marked, though there have been a number of passing comments on what a good idea polythetic classification is, for example (one exception as far as Needham's own contemporaries are concerned is Martin Southwold, who has tried out p.c., approvingly, on religion, in *Man* XIII, 2).

This, no doubt, is the fate of many 'good ideas' in anthropology, whose practitioners are ever concerned to plough furrows of their own; but in the present case it is possible to suggest some

special reasons for it. One is that there have always been other ways of circumventing the insufficiencies of monothetic classification - above all, perhaps, the Weberian 'ideal type'. Indeed, there are precedents (under different names) for the polythetic idea itself in Leach's well-known definition of marriage as 'a bundle of rights' and Kroeber's suggestion of a serial classification for *couvade*, which date back to 1955 and 1948 respectively. Nor can it be claimed that such concepts as reversal, alternation, dual sovereignty or analogical classification had gone unnoticed previously. Adherents of Needham's approach seem to be outnumbered by those who sympathise but who nonetheless find polythetic classification, say, too complicated as a practical device, and by those who remain unimpressed with either the remedy itself or the necessity for it.

There are signs, however, that a younger generation is more prepared to incorporate these aspects of Needham's work into their own. Many, naturally enough, come from the ranks of his own students, starting with Rivière, whose well-known essay on marriage (1967) was as deconstructionist as Needham's own contributions to the same volume (ASA 11), and who was to go on to do something very similar for *couvade* (1974). More recently, there have been Endicott, Napier, Howell, Duff-Cooper and Crocker (the last really a student of a student), some of whom have applied polythetic classification in ethnographic analysis rather than as a comparative device. Outside this circle there is Anthony Good, co-author of a book likely to become influential as the new standard introduction to kinship (and which I hope to review shortly for *JASO*). Through it, Needham's ideas should reach a wider and still younger audience.

ROBERT PARKIN

GILBERT ROUGET, *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations Between Music and Possession* (transl. and revised by Brunhilde Biebuyck), London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1985. xix, 326pp., Notes, Bibliography, Discography, Filmography, Indexes, Plates. £50.95/£16.95.

Both musicians and non-musicians alike readily credit music with mysterious powers, and it seems natural to assume that these powers and their supposed drug-like effect on the remoter recesses of the human brain are directly responsible for inducing states of trance or possession. Gilbert Rouget devotes most of *Music and Trance* to the crushing of this assumption, which is taken for granted in most of the anthropological literature on these phenomena, an assumption to which 'even the best minds are not always immune' (p. 240) - including those of Melville Herskovits, Bastide,

Ioan Lewis and Eliade. Dismantling the theory is a relatively simple matter given the impressive range of historical and ethnographic material that Rouget uses, ranging from the *Book of Kings* to his own fieldwork in Benin: there are simply no common denominators in the kinds of music that supposedly induce trance states to allow us to draw any conclusions of the kind. Given the opening quote from Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*,

As long as we continue to consider sounds only through the commotions they stir in our nerves, we will never have the true principles of music and its power over our hearts,

Rouget's conclusion that the effect of music derives from its cultural and symbolic role comes as no great shock.

Music and Trance has little to offer simply as a structuralist critique of physiological explanations of musically induced trance. One wonders indeed why he uses so weighty a sledgehammer to crack such a small nut. But the wide range of material, both anthropological and musicological, that he draws together in the process is ultimately of greater value. He begins with a useful review of the large quantity of French work on altered states of consciousness, a quantity that is not surprising in view of the continuing importance of Freud for French intellectuals. In picking his way carefully through the debris of misused terminology, Rouget makes important distinctions between individual cases of hysteria and ecstasy and socially motivated trance states, of which he singles out possession cults and shamanic trances for special treatment. Structural differences in the nature of the two experiences are related to two structurally opposed uses of music. Having defined his field of operations - what he means by trance and indeed music, and the grounds on which an analysis can bring them together - Rouget plunges into a re-reading of well-known texts on music theory from the Ancient World, the French Renaissance and medieval Arab philosophy. Set beside ethnographic data on trance from the Brazilian *condomblé* to shamanic trance among the Tungus of Siberia, Rouget's account of the vocabulary of trance and musical enchantment in the work of Plato, Baif and Al-Ghazzali makes interesting reading, showing amongst other things that Plato and Aristotle at least cannot be counted among the 'best minds' who confuse the symbolic relation of music to trance with an inductive relationship.

Brunhilde Biebyck's translation and revision of the text (done in collaboration with Rouget) evidently retains the style and pace of the French, in spite of an almost Derridean penchant for coining words that the Anglophone reader may occasionally find hard to swallow. What are more striking are some of Rouget's omissions from the second, musicological, part of the book. Why, for example, does Orpheus - surely a prototype shaman - get such brief coverage in his account of music and trance in the Ancient World? The Orpheus myth also played an important role in the development of monodic opera in the Florentine *camerata*

and the Mantuan court in the early seventeenth century. One wonders why his account of opera in the Renaissance is, apart from obvious reasons, so heavily biased against the Italian material in favour of the French. And yet he criticises the achievements of French Renaissance opera as being literary and watered down (p. 241), an accusation which could hardly be levelled against the bold musical experiments of Wert, Gesualdo and Monteverdi.

The most important criticism relates partly to Rouget's comparative and structural approach and partly to the sheer density of material that Rouget brings together to make his point. If, in each case examined, ideas of trance and music are so differently constituted, on what basis can they be compared? Is there a single logic which connects the two? If in one case music is used to prepare the recipient of spirit possession, in another to accompany its progress, in a third to bring the possessee out of his trance, while in a fourth (the Bori cult of Niger, or the Brazilian *condomblé*) music may not play *any* part at all, it is clear that Rouget cannot be proposing a theory of the relations between music and trance. What he is effectively proposing is a structuralist theory of trance and a variety of logics by which music may, or may not, be fitted into the process. One feels that if he were not a distinguished ethnomusicologist, he would be happier simply to drop the whole idea of music from his account. Indeed, when he admits that dance should be regarded as 'doubly more important than music' (p. 114), it is almost as if he resents having to drag music into it at all.

In spite of this, his fundamental premise, that music can only be interpreted in terms of culture, not nature, is one that should be borne in mind by all those working in musicological and ethnomusicological theory, as well as providing a cue at least for an anthropological account of musical thought and behaviour, an account which has begun but which is still in its infancy.

MARTIN STOKES

RICHARD FARDON (ed.), *Power and Knowledge: Anthropological and Sociological Approaches*, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press 1985. 213pp., Index. £12.50.

The emergence of feminist and Marxist anthropologies in the 1970s helped problematise the notion of power in anthropological inquiry. Work by Bourdieu further aggravated concerned anthropologists' interest in this troublesome topic. So by the 1980s many had come to regard studying the manifold, complex relations between power and knowledge as a central pursuit. The stimulating, often testing papers in Fardon's collection indicate how far anthropologists have been affected by this continuing investigation. In their

variety, they show how diversely this continuing discussion invades our subject.

In a spirited introduction Fardon claims that 'political anthropology' no longer exists as a discrete sub-discipline and that, thanks above all to Marxist and feminist influences, many now seek a 'relevant anthropology' - one which inquires into the notion of ideology and the efficacy of knowledge, one in which our concept of power is not so broad that it invites an infinite regression of questions about the ultimate 'source' of power. Bloch, furthering his interests in where to site and how to identify the production of ideology, distinguishes between cognition - a culturally modified universal form of infant learning - and ideology, which is constructed and transmitted through ritual. Ideology persists because it is so adaptable. Essentially vague, it is powerful because it provides an all-encompassing explanatory scheme and because it is enforced by the powers whose authority it legitimates. (Parkin has already attacked Bloch's dichotomy in his 'Political Language', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 1984.) Parkin, analysing the relations between language and power in a formal speech before an audience, shows that while speakers control and are controlled by knowledge, knowledge can be constituted in the act of speaking; the power of oration lies not in itself but derives from participants' attitudes to the connexions between speech and knowledge. Marilyn Strathern, concerned with the notion of agent within any investigation of power, highlights our own ethnocentric bias by reporting the different ways attributes are attached to persons in three Melanesian societies. Holy argues that in the Middle East the symbolic capital of groups is logically articulated by their concepts of FBD marriage, agnatic descent, and the prestige of the descent group, and that it is the marriage strategies which are the crux in accumulating capital and validating claims to power. Riches argues that unless 'power' is used as part of an interactionist approach, it is merely a metaphorical device devoid of explanatory potential. Fardon explains the institutional change undergone by the Chamba of Nigeria/Cameroon since the eighteenth century by deducing two opposed forms of sociability: change is a product of the change in relation between these 'competing modes of intentionality'.

Three papers, each by an eminent sociologist, end the collection. Kreckel, discussing ideology as a theoretical concept in sociology, proposes the view that only a restricted definition of ideology, one historically limited to the study of advanced capitalist and socialist societies, can be both explanatory and critical. Hirst demonstrates how Foucaultian formulations illuminate our understanding of constructed space (specifically, temples and prisons) in Western society. Finally, Turner, in a highly critical piece, lays bare the (sometimes very large) omissions in Foucault's approach: he doesn't investigate whether discourse is effective and 'there is an almost wilful disregard for evidence' (p. 211); he avoids economic explanations and class analysis, and so cannot ask how knowledge is accumulated and transmitted institutionally. These last two contributors form a complementary couple, as a suitably critical introduction to Foucault for ignorant academics.

These papers proceed from a conference held in St Andrews in December 1982. But unlike most such collections, the papers Fardon has edited are of a uniformly high quality. In my summary I have not revealed the subtlety and informed richness of many of their arguments. Fardon brought anthropologists and sociologists together because he thinks their merging interests in power and knowledge signal the end of the disciplinary division. Though none of the anthropologists (other than Fardon himself) refers to Foucault or quotes more than one or two sociologists, Fardon suggests that anthropologists interested in power and ideology must acquaint themselves with what sociologists are saying on these topics. Whether or not the merger he heralds will come to pass (I doubt it), this edition of thought-provoking papers is still well worth reading for any anthropologist. And at its price, it's even worth buying.

JEREMY MACCLIANCY

GEORGE W. STOCKING Jr. (ed.), *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork* (*History of Anthropology*, Vol.1), Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press 1983. vi, 234pp., Index.

History and Anthropology (Volume 1, part 1: *Gestures*, edited by Jean-Claude Schmitt, 1984, 237pp., \$47.00; Volume 1, part 2: *The Discourse of Law*, edited by Sally Humphreys, 1985, 224pp., \$62.00), Chur etc.: Harwood Academic Publishers.

These two similarly titled but fundamentally different serials mark exciting additions to our discipline. They simultaneously define and fill a neglected niche. Each opens new doors in historiography and epistemology. These volumes should not, however, be confused, since the different connecting words in their respective titles indicate their alternate foci. Certainly, as the discipline of anthropology enters its second century the time for informed reflection on our antecedents has arrived.

Superficial similarities between the volumes include comparable length, format and presentation, and prestigious editorial panels (of the two, H&A has a more international flavour, being primarily a Franco-American co-production with Italian, Polish and Danish leavening agents: HoA is more provincial, with mostly scholars from the USA and a Canadian and a British anthropologist thrown in; also, both are produced to exceptionally high standards. Although both publications address themselves to a dualistic audience, they differ in their subject-matter. H&A explicitly 'aims to bring together scholars from both disciplines in a way

that will cause both groups to view their scholarly ideas in a new light' (editorial statement of aims and scope). It is a symbiosis which applies anthropological methods to the study of history. In effect, it presents a new way of doing history. By way of contrast, HoA looks not at what one discipline has to offer the other, but rather more narrowly at the history of the discipline of anthropology itself. HoA uses what historians can tell us about our own discipline, using their methods to illuminate the process of anthropology. Both serials are interesting and provocative. Neither is without a precursor (which, perhaps, betrays its culture area). HoA continues the now well-founded American tradition of books-that-look-like-journals begun by the *Biennial Reviews* of Bernard Seigal *et al.*; H&A belies its Continental origin as a rather more tightly reined version of *Contemporary Studies in Society and History*. Neither is any the worse for following such admirable models.

HoA is excellently produced by the University of Wisconsin Press. These excellent volumes contain articles of a consistently high standard rigorously edited by the founder of the series, George Stocking. Each annual volume has a theme ('Fieldwork', 'Functionalism') around which most of the contributions revolve (although room is left for the maverick 'miscellaneous' study). Stocking begins the first volume of his series with an essay explaining its genesis. The volume then continues with seven original and thought-provoking articles about the discipline's earliest fieldworkers. The articles present a reasonably good geographical spread covering the three major centres of anthropological tradition, with the US, UK and France all represented.

Douglas Cole opens the volume with a translation of Boas's diary from his earliest fieldwork in Baffinland - an altogether fitting introduction for this American volume, published exactly a hundred years after Boas, the father of American anthropology, made his first expedition to the field. Through it, we get a better understanding of Boas the man and the route that led him to anthropology than we could through any amount of reading Kwakiutl tales.

Curtis Hinsley contrasts the charismatic approach of Frank Cushing with the scientific approach of Jesse Fewkes in the early study of the Indians of the American Southwest.

The editor's contribution is the centrepiece of the volume. This formidable essay (by far the longest in the book) surveys the place of fieldwork in British anthropology *before* Malinowski rewrote the rules. It discusses the contributions of Haddon, the Cambridge School (Rivers, Myers, Seligman) and Spencer, before moving on to a more detailed treatment of Malinowski's own evolution as a fieldworker.

James Clifford follows up his recently published and masterful biography of Maurice Leenhardt (reviewed later in HoA 1) with a fascinating perspective of Marcel Griaule. He is especially to be applauded for continuing his excellent efforts at making that lost age-set of French anthropologists - i.e. those falling between the *Année Sociologique* and the modern structuralist schools - more accessible to the English-speaking world.

Homer Barnett introduces the first of the autobiographical elements into the volume with a discussion of his role as ethnographer and later as administrator. Joan Larcom continues the autobiographical vein in her elliptical article about the work of Bernard Deacon and how it affected her own work when she followed in his footsteps to the New Hebrides.

Paul Rabinow's contribution is rather different. His 'Facts Are a Word of God' is an extended review essay of another contributor's (Clifford's) recent biography of Maurice Leenhardt. But the maverick article in the first volume of HoA is Richard Handler's 'The Dainty and the Hungry Man'. This looks at how Edward Sapir used literature (in particular his own poetry) to explicate his anthropology.

History and Anthropology is an even more innovative departure from the usual restrictions of serial publication. Each annual volume is intended to be approximately four hundred pages in length. The publication schedule is flexible, however, in that each volume will be published in an irregular number of parts, each part containing articles on a single theme; thus Volume 1 has been published as two separate numbers. The series editors bring in guest editors for each number, who for Volume 1 are members of the H&A editorial board.

Schmitt's 'Gestures' is a bilingual volume with eight articles in English and two in French (although all but two of the contributors are French). In addition to Schmitt's broad introduction, with its useful bibliography, there is a symmetry to the issue, with three articles each on the subjects of 'Gesture in Ancient Greece', 'Gesture in the Christian Church' and 'Gesture in Art'. Readers will be struck by the imaginative use that the contributors make of anthropological method. The volume is copiously illustrated and excellently produced.

'The Discourse of Law', edited by Sally Humphreys, is, perhaps, of greater interest to the anthropologist. Indeed, there is an all too neat bifurcation between Part 1 and Part 2, with the former being overwhelmingly historical and the latter overwhelmingly anthropological. As yet, the institutional lines that the series editors hope to cross remain quite distinctly drawn.

Although its entire contents are in English, Humphrey's volume is much the more international of the two, since it contains articles from authors in Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Brazil and the USA. The articles cover a wide range - from classical Athens to ninth-century Brittany, the medieval Middle East, eighteenth-century England, nineteenth-century Brazil and contemporary Lebanon. Unlike Part 1, however, there is a balance on disciplinary lines: anthropologists here have at least as much space as historians. In common with 'Gestures', this number begins with a strong introductory essay by the guest editor and, also like Part 1, its content is separated into three distinct sections: 'Law and Local Knowledge', 'Law and Local Power' and 'The Legal Discourse'. Editorial standards are high, and its articles set a high standard for future issues, which will be eagerly awaited.

STEVEN SEIDENBERG

BRUCE M. KNAUFT, *Good Company and Violence: Sorcery and Social Action in a Lowland New Guinea Society*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1985. x, 367pp., Maps, Figures, Tables, Plates, Appendixes, References, Index. £33.95.

The Gebusi are a distinct linguistic group of just 450 persons living in a lowland environment well inland in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea. Although they have been subject to raiding from the more easterly Bedamini, they are little given to warfare. The principal orientation of Gebusi social life is an attitude which Knauft translates as 'good company'. Good company manifests itself as communal hospitality, relaxed friendship in gatherings, and elaborate etiquette and hospitality for visitors and affines. Knauft says that their social life is extremely pleasant to participate in. Rituals, narratives and spirit seances are 'rich and moving in the amity and enjoyment they engender'. The peaceful atmosphere of Gebusi life, however, is marred by sorcery accusations and a homicide rate that Knauft describes as being among the highest reported for any human society. Killings by physical violence accounted for 32.7 per cent of adult deaths between 1940 and 1982.

Knauft's study begins with the premise that the models of male aggressiveness, collective violence and kin-group antagonism that have been applied to other societies are inadequate to explain Gebusi violence. The great majority of Gebusi homicides result directly from attributions of sorcery, through the killing of the sorcery suspect. Gebusi attribute all natural deaths to sorcery. In an unhealthy environment, this dialectic of death through illness, sorcery accusation and resulting homicide, combined with an infant mortality rate of fifty per cent within the first year of life, has led to population decline. Only one in every six males who live to five years of age, and only one in every three females, reaches his or her fortieth year. At least sixty per cent of middle-aged men have committed sorcery-related homicides, usually within their own community. Combined with this grim pattern is the practice of the release of heterosexual frustrations through publicly condoned and recognised homosexual encounters.

Sorcery accusations tend to be directed towards the oldest members of the community, and they are especially likely to occur where there is an imbalance of women exchanged in marriages between patrilineal groups. Affinal ties based on sister exchange are immune. The anger felt but not acknowledged by the kinsmen of the supposed sorcery victim is rediscovered in the reactions of the accused sorcerer in a manner that excludes any effective defence. According to Knauft, violence does not merely co-exist with good company, but the two are necessarily related. Violence resulting from sorcery accusations is not only the antithesis of good company, but also its culmination. Despite their claims to goodwill, sorcerers are perceived as a lethal threat to the community. They must be killed so that the values of good company may be preserved.

Knauft has written not only an excellent ethnographic account of a small New Guinea community, but an important contribution to the comparative understanding of sorcery beliefs and the sociology of sorcery accusations. What is especially impressive is his ability to analyse and re-analyse his material from a variety of perspectives. He carefully relates the Gebusi situation to well-known explanations of similar material in other parts of the world and plainly differentiates Gebusi sociology from that of these other societies. He also situates the Gebusi within the range of New Guinea communities and explains how they are distinctive. His various discussions of method are generally helpful and unobtrusive. With his narratives of sorcery accusations, ritual feasts, spirit seances and myths, he has achieved a fine balance between ethnography and theory. His two maps, 22 figures and 36 tables are well laid out and informative. The 28 photographs are attractive and evocative. It is a shame that none of this material is listed in the table of contents. The book is further enhanced by seven appendixes. On the whole, it is well written and well structured. The printing, paper and binding are pleasant, though the dull grey cloth cover and violet lettering are an unfortunate combination. This is definitely a book to be recommended to a wide anthropological readership.

R.H. BARNES

COLIN BAKER, *Aspects of Bilingualism in Wales* (Multilingual Matters 19), Clevedon: Multilingual Matters 1985. xii, 181pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Indexes, Maps. £24.80/£9.90.

There are more Welshspeakers in industrial South Wales than in rural Gwynedd, but whereas in South Glamorgan Welsh speakers form less than six per cent of the population, in Gwynedd the proportion is over seventy per cent. This distinction between absolute numbers and proportions of Welsh speakers is vital in any discussion of bilingualism in Wales. Colin Baker's careful assessment of the state of the Welsh language, based on a computer analysis of the 1981 Welsh Language Census data, examines the value of statistical analysis in understanding the phenomenon of bilingualism in Wales. An educationalist, Baker concentrates on issues surrounding Welsh bilingual educational policy, including an assessment of recent curricular development projects aimed at providing materials suitable for Welsh schools and the role of microcomputers in education.

Although cautious in answering questions such as 'who speaks Welsh?' or 'Does bilingual education work?', Baker reaches some interesting but not altogether unexpected conclusions concerning the

relationship of Welsh language to culture (or 'cultures', taken to include the environment of the pub, home and sports field, as well as the *Urdd*, chapels and *eisteddfodau*). There has been a tendency to stress the importance of safeguarding the Welsh language so as to preserve the attendant distinctive and historic culture. Basing his conclusions on an analysis of the relationship between language background, attainment, preference and media influences, Baker turns the argument round, claiming that it is the culture which needs to be preserved in order to safeguard the language. The statistical data suggests that

At the onset of adolescence, language attitude and attainment flourish particularly when there exists the immersion in traditional Welsh culture. To protect the Welsh language may mean first protecting traditional Welsh culture (p. 150).

If this is so, it can be argued that policy objectives and finances should be directed at institutions, such as the Welsh League of Youth (*Yr Urdd*) and the Welsh Medium Nursery Schools and Playgroups Association (*Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin*), which play a vital role in mediating a Welsh cultural atmosphere to both first language Welsh speakers and learners.

Although a useful handbook for anyone interested in bilingualism in Wales, the limitations of a purely statistical analysis are recognised, and Baker points to the need for qualitative 'anthropological type' research in the area of language use. Without the knowledge that such detailed research could yield, analysis of bilingualism in Wales and of the 'state of the Welsh language' remains inevitably at the level of crude statistical generalizations which beg more questions than they can answer.

FIONA BOWIE

VIV EDWARDS, *Language in a Black Community* (Multilingual Matters 24), Clevedon: Multilingual Matters 1986. xii, 135pp., Figures, Tables, Appendixes, Bibliography, Index. £19.90/£7.95.

This is the first of two books which report the findings of an ESRC-funded study of the language of British-born Afro-Caribbeans. The study takes place in a hitherto sociolinguistically unresearched black community in the West Midlands. It deals with the determinants, social and psychological, of inter-situational speech variation among a judgement sample of forty-five 16 to 23 year olds. The frequency and pattern of Patois use as well as the degree of proficiency of speakers in the sample are established. Edwards' findings challenge aspects of conventional wisdom on the

role of Patois in a black minority community: for example, devaluing the simple equation of extensive use of 'black' language with hostility to or withdrawal from 'white' society.

Although essentially a sociolinguistic study, the book will appeal to the wide-ranging audience for whom it was written. Anthropologists could be added to the author's list of interested parties, as there is much of mainstream anthropological relevance here. Linguistic variation has long been a theme of recurring interest for Caribbeanists, and that literature is reviewed. 'Careful ethnographic observation' provides the basis for the selection of the sample population. Social network analysis is preferred to class analysis as a more appropriate medium for the internal differentiation of the population. Excellent use is made of the potentially most problematic aspect of data collection where 'speakers' perceptions of the researcher and the research context are likely to affect the extent and character of Patois used. A team of black and white, male and female researchers of various ages, operating both formally and informally, provided the body of tape-recorded material on which the study is based.

Edwards' book is a welcome addition to the growing number of detailed accounts of Britain's Afro-Caribbean population. The inclusion of detailed accounts of the research methods used during the study is to be applauded. The book will be of particular benefit to those planning or undertaking fieldwork among Britain's black youth.

PHILIP HARDING

RICHARD A. KRAUSE, *The Clay Sleeps: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of Three African Potters*, Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press 1985. xii, 172pp., Illustrations, Map, Bibliog., Index. \$17.50.

The title of this book suggests that it is concerned with looking, both archaeologically and ethnographically, at the subject of African pottery - specifically at the craft practices and products of three contemporary Bantu women potters living in the Transvaal, South Africa, contrasting their work with their regional Iron Age predecessors. In fact, the book reveals itself to be a vessel containing a much wider than expected selection of ingredients. These other ingredients include material relating to North American Indian culture, as well as a formal archaeological assessment of Eskimo sherds excavated by Dr Edwin S. Hall at the Tukuto Lake sites on the north slope of the Brooks Range in Alaska in 1982. All this might seem at first to indicate a rather unlikely mixture. However (and here I end the analogy), the author does manage to blend his material purposefully inside a carefully considered and measured stock of ideas.

Indeed, this is a work in which factual substance and idea cling encouragingly to each other for mutual support. Once read, it is clear that Krause's intention is to present us with a systematic method, or formal procedure, for analysing artefact pottery - one which uses a species of rule-governed/mathematical-type notation to marshal ceramic data into a form suitable for quantitative and comparative purposes. He describes his method as analytic rather than taxonomic (p. 21).

Whatever may or may not be the overall classificatory designation of the system itself, his system is, in essence, a particularized scientific language designed with empirical purpose for precision analysis of ceramic vessels - taking into account both vessel morphology and decorative feature. The lexical and rule arrangements of his system allow for its definitions to be geared to the use of sample-specific iconographic models, such as one for Iron Age Bantu vessels (p. 40), for purposes of measurement. Potentially, such a sensitive, ordered system can enable even slight variations within traditional pottery types to be registered. Given a sufficient quantity of sherd material it would, in theory, at least, be possible to distinguish the work of individual potters with Krause's method. He sees this as being a feasible goal and in the book's conclusion expands on the contentious issue of post-nuptial residence among the Arikara, pointing out that an ability to discern an individual potter's work from sherd remains could on this score help to resolve some presently unanswerable questions, or at least lend strength or otherwise to particular existing theories.

What is certainly of special significance about Krause's system is that its descriptive definitions are logically structured to follow the actual processes of vessel manufacture, because any new alteration to the order in which an object-kind is regularly made will tend to make for a different object-kind or result. When, as with pottery vessels, one is dealing with conservative traditions where proven methods which minimize product loss are adhered to, it is possible, through the examination of archaeological material, to find consistent features which are likely to indicate how and in what sequence an object was manufactured. To test this over time is another question unless, as in this case, one can manage to find relatively intact continuations of ancient practices. Krause's system, it seems, efficiently incorporates the notion of predictability. He first (in America, in 1971) examined the analysed results of some 15,000 Bantu Iron Age sherd samples which spanned roughly a 1,000-year period (these samples were acquired from a survey undertaken by Nickolaas J. van der Merwe from sites in the Phalabowra district of the north-eastern Transvaal). Among other things, it was apparent from these samples that the widest central portion, the vessel shoulder, was thicker than either the vessel bottoms or body walls, implying that construction was started from the shoulder. In 1972, the ethnographic evidence collected by the author in fieldwork with three contemporary potters representing the Transvaal Ndebele, Tswana and Venda traditions verified this matter in all cases, as well as the predicted construction sequence which had been postulated by the author in the model

he derived originally from analysis of the archaeological material. Further, with a non-African sample of Alaskan sherds he demonstrates the cross-cultural adaptability of his formal method, for he is able to generate another model for the Eskimo material entirely within the method's strict panoply of descriptive and relational terms - this stated model reflects a quite different construction sequence and decorative approach.

The three chapters which detail the working practices of the potters Emma Rabalago (Ndebele), Mutshekwa Litshira (Venda) and Thelma Makwe (Tswana) are exemplary descriptions. Apart from their rich ethnological value they are enough to make any ethnologist or archaeologist scream for clay and imagine himself or herself an active adept at Bantu pot-making. Nevertheless, one must not assume from this that the book as a whole is easy to read. The nature of its content requires, particularly in the first sixty pages or so, considerable efforts of concentration. As an incidental point of criticism, I would like to see the bottom half of p. 56 respaced and made more understandable.

This book has no polemical thrust when proffering its author's formal method, and as such it is unsettlingly self-effacing for those like myself who enjoy some measure of the spice of disputational combat. I would have greatly appreciated having had just a short, slightly talkative preamble for claims and context to be announced together unequivocally. Obviously, though, there is an important need for a standardized formal method for ceramics analysis - and I would like to think that Krause ought not to fear striding into the ring on this issue.

PETER STRONG

ROBERT SNOWDEN and BARBARA CHRISTIAN (eds.), *Patterns and Perceptions of Menstruation: A World Health Organisation International Study*, London: Croom Helm and New York: St Martin's Press 1983. x, 166pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index. £16.95.

JOYCELIN MASSIAH, *Women as Heads of Households in the Caribbean: Family Structure and Feminine Status*, Paris: UNESCO 1983. 61pp., Appendix, References. £3.75 (obtainable in the UK through HMSO).

The first of these two 'official' publications is based on an international study conducted by the WHO between 1973 and 1982 among fourteen socio-cultural groups in ten countries (Egypt, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, UK and Yugoslavia). The study is in three parts. The first is a survey of the views of the 'knowledgeable sources' - the local experts - on the experience and perception of menstrual bleeding among women

in their own country or region; this is compared with a survey of views gathered directly from women themselves. The second part involves the collection of menstrual data from illiterate women, while the third catalogues a general survey of over 5,000 women from different social and cultural groups.

The principal aim of the study was to elicit the ability of women to predict menstrual cycles and their attitudes to the management of menstrual bleeding in relation to the introduction of new methods of fertility regulation which have profound effects on bleeding patterns. This study was stimulated by reports that the most common reason given for discontinuation of a variety of contraceptive devices was unacceptable disturbance of menstrual cycles.

The social survey methods were adopted in the absence, it is claimed, of sufficient anthropological data. Ethnographic data have not been collected 'from a theoretical perspective which makes the systematic analysis of menstrual patterns explicit'. However, the editors do acknowledge that 'embedded in the literature are some clues and indications that societies not only acknowledge the menstrual event but impose social conventions in relation to it'.

While the editors claim that anthropologists do not have a theoretical perspective, one wonders about the value of the perspective which requires that respondents for the general survey be parous, non-pregnant, non-menopausal and not breast-feeding at the time of the interview. Any ethnographer familiar with conditions in most of the rural areas of the countries in which this study took place would be immediately sceptical of the possibility of obtaining such a sample. In the present reviewer's recent experience in a village in Central America with over seventy parous, fertile women, not one would have satisfied the criteria, for the simple reason that breast-feeding only ceases with the acknowledgement of another pregnancy. The editors do note that there were difficulties in obtaining the required sample in the rural areas of Mexico, but they seem satisfied that they were finally successful. In fact, the only women in the village who would have appeared to satisfy the criteria were parous women who were no longer breast-feeding but were *infertile*, although still menstruating. Such women would scarcely be representative of the group with whom the aims of the study were most concerned, i.e. those women who might experience difficulty in accepting new contraceptive technology because of its effect on the menstrual cycle.

Limitation of the survey method is apparent in many other areas of this study, and while a wealth of data has been collected and analysed, the anthropological reader is left wondering what can be made of these disparate and dubious statistics. The fact that menstrual bleeding may be part of a whole complex of ideas about not only the woman's body and her health but also social and cosmological events does not appear to have been taken into account. Varying ideas about conception and the role of menstrual blood in forming the foetus are not canvassed, although the anthropological literature contains many references to this in various societies.

The main conclusion of the study, following a brief and entirely inadequate review of the literature, is that in all societies menstruation is regarded negatively and that it is hoped that increased knowledge (the editors' knowledge, presumably) will ameliorate the situation. A second conclusion is that while women share cultural perceptions of menstrual bleeding, they can also differentiate their own personal patterns, and these two perceptions can and do interact in a woman's reporting of these phenomena. This is a valid and interesting point and one to which social anthropologists should be able to contribute valuable data. Anthropologists should demonstrate their ability to present data systematically on current issues of concern, and an alternative social anthropological volume addressed to the same issues would be a significant contribution to the current literature on this topic.

The second volume, Joycelin Massiah's Caribbean case study, forms part of the UNESCO Population Division's programme on 'Studies on the Status of Women in Relation to Development and Demographic Behaviour'. Three sources of data have been used: the 1970 Population Census, the basis of a demographic profile of women in the Caribbean who head households; data from a small pilot study concerned with the 'Role of Women in the Caribbean', used to demonstrate the kinds of problems and survival strategies adopted by these women in three territories (Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago); and data from National Assistance records from one territory, Barbados, used to demonstrate one type of governmental response to the plight of the poorest of these women.

It is not surprising that a sociological study based on such limited material should fail to do more than restate an already well-described phenomenon - the preponderance of female household heads in the Caribbean population.

Massiah does point to the difficulties in defining households, as well as household heads. She implies that there is inter-ethnic variation, claiming that countries with significantly larger black populations are those recording a high proportion of female-headed households, while the converse holds true for countries with significant proportions of East Indians (Trinidad and Guyana) or indigenous Indians (Belize). She does not give any figures to suggest the extent of the variation between ethnic groups within any one country, but female heads of households are invariably less educated and more often unemployed or not gainfully employed than male ones, and their pattern of occupation is markedly different.

Massiah's discussion of the strategies for survival adopted by Caribbean female household heads and their prospects for economic improvement is too superficial to merit comment. She fails to draw the obvious conclusion from her own data, namely that welfare systems based on the assumption that families consist of economically active and present male heads of households with female dependent wives and children will invariably prove inappropriate for populations where these assumptions do not hold, whether in the economically depressed territories of the Caribbean or in

the inner cities of Britain. Her recommendations contain an unfortunate bias. While no one would deny the need for child-care centres allowing women to work if they want to, societies suffering from the disadvantages of the Caribbean need economic development and programmes aimed at introducing marketable skills to both men and women equally, as well as stimulating the industries which would utilise these skills. Special programmes aimed at meeting the needs of female heads of households and discriminating against males could have exactly the same effect as those welfare policies which, as Massiah herself points out, encourage men to desert their families so that their wives can claim benefits. It is surely dangerous and irresponsible to recommend for any society policies which discriminate *against* men, even if they are aimed at enhancing the status of women.

ANN E. FINK

JAMES M. TAGGART, *Nahuat Myth and Social Structure*, Austin: University of Texas Press 1983. x, 204pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index. £18.75.

Nahuat Myth and Social Structure is an elegant, if not particularly adventurous, exposition of the relationship between these two domains among contemporary communities in the Sierra del Puebla, Mexico. The monograph, based on various periods of fieldwork carried out over eleven years, readily recommends itself by the attention it focuses on indigenous categories and classifications and is thus related to a growing American tradition already represented by works by such authors as Hunt, Bricker, Blaffer and Gossen. The monograph has twelve chapters, including a conclusion, which are divided into three sections. Two useful appendixes provide summaries of the narratives collected and biographical details of the story tellers. The first section opens with a general geographical and historical introduction to the area. After acknowledging certain historical experiences shared by the Nahuat communities of the Sierra, Taggart contrasts the different experiences which have influenced two closely situated municipalities, producing within one, Huitzilán, a biethnic society, while Santiago Yaonáhuac remained indigenous. The difference in social structure occasioned by particular historical transformations between the two have produced distinct styles of narrative which reflect the distinct world views of their inhabitants.

The second section opens with an exposition of the conceptual categories which have been abstracted from all 280 of the narratives collected from both communities. Their common cultural heritage consists of spatial and temporal preconceptions and certain mechanisms to provide the transposition of one into the other

which act as a template by which a geography of time and a history of space are developed in different ways according to the specificities of historical process. The second chapter of this section develops this by describing how the rules for the transposition of temporal categories into spatial categories introduce additional qualitative elements by their association with an invariable moral classification. Thus to give but one example, temporally the past is to the present what the centre is to the periphery (p. 56), and in each case the former is given a moral ascendancy over the latter. This moral classification then incorporates ethnic and gender differences which take their significance from their spatial association. There is nothing new in this which has not been noted by Durkheim and Mauss and commented on and attested to by Needham and many ethnographers, but the careful description of the structure and exposition of its rules of transformation provides an eloquent model at a level of abstraction which will allow useful comparison with other Mesoamerican groups.

The third and final section describes how this basic template has responded in generating different codifications of narrative determined by historical incidence and by an identical underlying structural logic which has its origin in pre-conquest society.

In five of the chapters Taggart compares narratives from Huitzilán with those of Yaonáhuac and describes their variations as reflecting their different social structural conditions. Succinctly, the narrative structure from the more traditional Yaonáhuac community uses natural categories as intermediaries between classes organised by a binary code, while the ethnically more polarised Huitzilán story-tellers stress unmediated oppositions. These variations are related to the position held by the Nahuatl in the distribution of power within their communities. In Huitzilán, pronounced asymmetry between the mestizo and the indigenous groups is reflected in the sets of relations which transpose ethnic groups to other categories in their narrative. And also, as a result of social stratification, they show less egalitarian gender relationships than are found in Yaonáhuac. Taggart argues that in this latter monoethnic community, the breakdown of the hierarchically structured pre-Hispanic society, combined with the land reforms of the turn of the century, actually levelled out gender relations and formalised bilateral inheritance. These tendencies are illustrated in the narratives discussed by him.

Taggart has produced an excellent addition to Mesoamerican ethnography within the terms he has set himself. However, the monograph leaves the impression of an uncompromising determinism which subordinates cultural productions to social structural constraints. Stories which contain episodes not reflecting material conditions are left as a residual category while the process of cultural reproduction and its relation to social reproduction is not discussed.

The comparative ethnography of Mesoamerica is notoriously variable in its details and must be used with the greatest of caution. The principles underlying the spatialization of temporal and historical periods and their association with moral valuations may be similar throughout the region but not to the extent that the author

assumes (pp. 58, 64-5). In pre-Hispanic times variations existed between communities, and these are reflected in the lack of agreement reached by Spanish chroniclers on this point. Beyer and Hunt have argued that the Aztec associated the south with the day and the north with the night, giving positive moral values to the first and negative values to the second. That this continues to be the case in some areas of the Republic is verified by the Huichol, who associate positive qualities with the south and east quadrants of space and negative values to the north and west. This is in conflict with the position of the authors quoted by Taggart and which he finds in the Sierra del Puebla; they are basic points which must be resolved before one is seduced into accepting a common proto-classificatory logic for this area as a whole, no matter how probable and alluring this position may be.

Despite these reservations, *Nahuat Myth and Social Structure* is an eloquent and valuable work, which, as with the others mentioned previously, constitutes a welcome stepping stone for a more sensitive and less dogmatic understanding than this highly impassioned area has received during the past few decades.

ANTHONY SHELTON

SERGE BOUEZ, *Réciprocité et Hiérarchie: l'alliance chez les Ho et les Santal de l'Inde* (Recherches sur la Haute Asie 7), Paris: Société d'Ethnographie 1985. 232pp., Appendixes, Maps, Tables, Figures, Plates. No price.

Réciprocité et Hiérarchie combines three elements: a general treatment of tribes in India; some first-hand ethnography on the kinship systems of two central Indian tribes and their Hinduized neighbours; and a discussion of general issues in kinship theory. The introductory essay on tribes might have put more emphasis on the various distinctions that need to be made: for instance, tribe as an administrative category and as a sociological one, tribes of the interior and tribes on the borders, tribe as ideal type and as observed phenomenon, tribe versus caste and tribe versus caste system. As for the ethnography, any new information from an area for which research permits are now virtually unobtainable is very welcome, though one would like to know how long Bouez spent there. It is a pity too that he could not take account of related but simultaneous work on Munda kinship by Georg Pfeffer, then of Heidelberg, and Robert Parkin at Oxford. The theoretical discussion draws on analyses from elsewhere in India and on the longstanding debate between Lévi-Straussian and American cognitive approaches. The book is not always easy to follow.

N.J. ALLEN

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