

BOOK REVIEWS

JAMES J. FOX (ed.), *Inside Austronesian Houses: Perspectives on Domestic Designs for Living*, Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University in Association with the Comparative Austronesian Project 1993. ix, 237 pp., References, Figures, Photographs. Aus\$25.00.

The eight papers that comprise this volume share a common purpose, which is, in the words of the editor James Fox, 'to examine the spatial organization of a variety of Austronesian houses and to relate the domestic design of these houses to the social and ritual practices of the specific groups who reside in them'. The houses considered here include three types of longhouse from Borneo, traditional Minangkabau houses in west Sumatra, Maori meeting houses, and the domestic architecture of Roti in eastern Indonesia and Goodenough Island in the D'Entrecasteaux Group.

It is impossible to do justice to the ethnographic richness and diversity that this collection of essays represents in the space available, but some common themes and points of interest can be identified. First and foremost, the Austronesian house defines a social group. In the case of the Bornean longhouse, the entire community is housed beneath one roof, which makes for a singularly close, not to say intense, form of social interaction. Christine Helliwell characterizes the Gerai longhouse of Kalimantan Barat as a 'community of voices', where light and sound emanating from neighbouring family apartments draws the community together: flimsy partition walls between apartments ensure that neighbours are always conscious of one another's presence. In this respect, an unoccupied apartment interrupts this flow of light and sound along the length of the longhouse, and it is ritually prescribed that a fire must be lit by family representatives in the hearth of empty apartments every five or six days to ensure that the sense of communality stretching from one end of a longhouse to the other is not permanently ruptured. Helliwell writes: 'An apartment without light, without fire, is most essentially an apartment without human beings; it is this lack which dismays the members of neighbouring apartments.'

The house as a place of residence is perhaps the least important aspect of Austronesian architecture: the Austronesian house is a ritually ordered structure through which a number of key ideas and cultural concerns are refracted. Indeed, one might be forgiven for thinking that the function of the house as a dwelling-place is of almost secondary significance to its ritual and symbolic value for many of the societies discussed.

A concern with ancestral 'origins' constitutes a key epistemological orientation in Austronesian societies, legitimizing group membership, inheritance rights and succession to office. In the case of the Lahanan of Sarawak, East Malaysia, discussed by Jennifer Alexander, longhouse headmen derive their political authority by virtue of their being able to trace a direct genealogical link to a founding ancestor. In many

instances, the house itself is identified as an ancestral embodiment of the social group it represents. The Maori meeting houses described by Toon van Meijl actually represent the body of an eponymous ancestor, typically from the legendary Polynesian homeland Hawaiki.

The idea of origin is commonly expressed in terms of a botanical metaphor—the notion of organic growth provides a vehicle for the representation of a number of important Austronesian concepts, including notions of precedence, continuity and process. The method and manner of house construction readily lends itself to the expression of such ideas: house posts are ‘planted’ and other structural timbers arranged according to their direction of growth to create a ritually ordered space where ridgepoles, roof beams, the hearth, ladders and other house parts are imbued with symbolic or cosmological significance. There are also a common set of spatial coordinates: dichotomies between inside and outside, east and west, front and back, and upstream and downstream. Together these structural elements and spatial divisions provide a symbolic lexicon for the framing of cultural concerns; for Fox the Austronesian house is a rhetorical device through which key cultural ideas and values are conceptualized and articulated.

The Austronesian house, however, does more than simply signify; it is an instrument of that which it represents, in that as a physical structure it provides a means of actualizing these ideas on the ground, so to speak. Structural elements provide the foci of ritual action—what Fox calls ‘ritual attractors’—which together with the spatial divisions within the house constitute a symbolic framework for ritual action. In this respect, Fox suggests, the Austronesian house may be considered the ‘theatre of a specific culture, the temple of its ritual activities’.

The representational capacity of the Austronesian house is virtually unlimited and speaks for almost every aspect of human experience, literally from the cradle to the grave. Among the Tetum of Timor the house is identified as a womb, while in Roti the dead were traditionally buried under the house. Among the Minangkabau of western Sumatra, the house is very much identified as the domain of women, and Celia Ng describes how the organization of domestic space within the Minangkabau house in terms of sleeping, seating and eating arrangements charts the social trajectory of women from childhood, through marriage and motherhood, to old age in this matrilineal and matrifocal society.

An important concept in Austronesian architecture is the house as microcosm. Among the Iban of Sarawak, the longhouse and its immediate environs are ritually identified with the mythical geography of the spirit world. Clifford Sather describes how ‘longhouse space is transformed by Iban rituals of birth and death from the familiar mundane setting of everyday social life to a symbolically organized landscape, displaying basic social distinctions and mirroring a series of superimposed realities, both seen and unseen’. He adds: ‘Everyday social space is merged with unseen “spiritual” space, and through the ritual organization of the longhouse, the underlying Iban social experience is given explicit form, while at the same time this order is transformed to conjoin the seen realities of everyday social life with the invisible realities of the soul, spirits and gods.’

While the symbolism of the Austronesian house rests on esoteric knowledge, conversely the house may itself be considered a mnemonic device for recalling and

structuring this knowledge. In the case of the domestic architecture of Goodenough Island, the house is also a place for concealing knowledge—the hidden interior is the repository for magic and magical paraphernalia, which are inheritable property. Michael Young characterises the Kalauna house as a ‘house of secrets’.

Although one finds a common repertoire of symbolic elements in traditional Austronesian architecture, the significance or meaning of these elements differs between societies and even within the same society according to context. In this last respect one should be careful to note that the house as a model for cultural values and social orientations is not a total system: one should not conflate different levels of significance and contexts of meaning. In Sather’s words, the Iban longhouse represents a ‘plurality of symbolic orders’ which are constantly ‘created and re-created in ritual’.

Roxana Waterson’s concluding essay draws together many of the themes in this collection and questions some of the more entrenched analytical categories and past tendencies towards rigid and over-systematized structural analyses. Waterson provides a number of contrasting examples and stresses instead ‘contextual relativity’.

In conclusion, this collection of essays represents the best kind of comparative anthropology, that is, a close examination of a clearly defined field of study within a single language-group. The fascination lies partly in the richness of the subject-matter and partly in the way one sees a set of common, or related, ideas and elements transformed and developed in response to local situations and specific cultural histories. Not all of the contributions have the same degree of engagement with the subject as Sather’s richly textured study of the Iban longhouse, but in their way they all have something to offer and interest the reader.

JULIAN DAVISON

JONATHAN WEBBER (ed.), *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization; eds. Philip Alexander, Nicholas de Lange and Jonathan Israel), London and Washington, DC: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, for the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies 1994. xix, 307 pp., Index, Figures, Tables. £16.95.

This volume brings to publication the proceedings of the conference ‘Jewish Identities in the New Europe’, held at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies in July 1992. Twenty-five essays and an introduction by Jonathan Webber face the task of unravelling, delineating or simply presenting the problems encountered by Jews and non-Jews in seeking to understand the meaning of Jewishness in post-Soviet Union Europe. The book is divided into seven sections, which break the study of Jewish identity into component parts reflecting the intellectual and geographical diversity of the topic.

In his introduction, Webber speaks to the volume both as a vehicle for documenting the ‘remarkable diversity of Jewish life’ and as a testament to the diversity of

frameworks in which Jewishness can be conceptualized. He proposes an overall framework for understanding Jewish identity as a dialectical process that unfolds between continuous and discontinuous conceptions of Jewish tradition. Hence, the introduction posits a solution to the Herculean challenge faced by anthropologists wishing to privilege neither orthodox or heterodox structures of opinion, while at the same time seeking to establish a working model which inevitably violates the authority of one or more of the identities which it objectifies. Admirably, Webber attempts a definitive statement neither on Jews nor on Europe and acknowledges the obvious lacunae in the book ('There is no essay devoted to Greece, or to Switzerland, Belgium or Holland...Jewish youth culture, the *ba'al teshuvah* (Jewish revivalist) movement, the Jewish *yeshiva* world of talmudic seminaries, Jewish fundamentalism, Jewish secularism, the impact of Lubavitch Hasidim..., the role of women' [p. 31]).

Webber's introduction constitutes a much-needed sociological perspective on Modern Jewish Studies by bringing the volume itself within the discourse of contemporary Jewishness. This transforms the book into a meaningful primary resource for a reflexive sociology concerned with discursive expressions of identity in literate societies. Thus, the book should concern a readership far beyond the communal boundaries of Jewish Studies. Furthermore, the tension between Webber's opening essay and the volume it introduces should be of general interest not only to ethnographers of Jewish communities, but also to social anthropologists interested in the relationship between ethnicity and objectifying structures of analysis.

For example, many of the essays juxtapose the clarity of diachronic studies of Jewish society with the mystery of synchronic readings of the experience of European Jews, including essays by Beloff, Schweid, Kovacs, Schnapper, Trigano, Alderman and Wistrich, as well as Webber's own essay, 'Modern Jewish Identities'. Similarly, discussion of the past gives way to speculations on the future. Several contributors discuss the future of interfaith relations, including an essay on Jewish-Catholic relations by Pier Francesco Fumagalli, and an essay on the implications of the New Age Movement for Jews by Margaret Brearley. Even discussions of the future, however, are rooted in analyses of the past. Theological postulations on the future of Jewish law and leadership, for example, are contingent upon institutionally recognized proficiency in Jewish historiography, symbolized by the theological-humanistic title 'Rabbi Dr', connected with essays by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks; the President of Yeshiva University (New York), Norman Lamm; and the Principal of Leo Baeck College (London).

Taken together, therefore, individual essays in *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* constitute a broader articulation of Jewish identity, one for which the synthesis of past and future constitutes authority in contemporary Modern Jewish Studies, Jewish communal identity, and Jewish transnational politics. Although the degree to which knowledge of the past constitutes intellectual and political authority in the modern Jewish world is never addressed by the contributors, such awareness would only be revealed through reflexive ethnographic analysis. Essays which focus on the present choose instead to re-examine internal questions concerning the relationship between synagogue affiliation in comparison to religious confession, as discussed in the essay by Stephen Miller; or developments in Holocaust commemoration by Evyatar Freisel, including an assessment of 'museumania' amongst North American, European and

Israeli Jews (p. 229). One can only conclude that the lack of analyses of the Jewish present testifies to the glut of European historians situated within North American, Israeli and European Jewish Studies when compared to the dearth of social anthropologists, particularly those whose ethnographic interests transcend the anthropological imperative for the exotic and focus on Western and Central Europe.

In what is one of the most poignant statements of the book, Julius Carlebach suggests that 'the future of the Jewish people is in its history' (p. 205). Undoubtedly, the devastating impact of the Holocaust on Modern Jewish Studies resonates in this paradoxical statement. Could it be that one long-term effect of the Holocaust on transnational Jewish communities with ties to Europe is an obsession with history? It is difficult to dismiss this possibility, yet a Jewish concern for history undoubtedly predates Auschwitz. Authority within public and private social spaces within the European Jewish intelligentsia has always been predicated on a mastery of ancient texts, languages and rituals. Among other losses, however, the Holocaust signified the destruction of these social spaces, thus bringing about a total collapse in the structures of authority on which identities were made manifest. The Jewish historian is just one of the figures who, since 1945, has stood up to fill the lacunae of authority in the United States, Israel and Europe.

Since the Oxford conference of 1992, the implications of the role of the Jewish historian within Jewish history have begun to unfold under the impact of post-structuralism on modern Jewish thinkers. Writers such as James Young and Jonathan Webber have juxtaposed the history of memory and commemoration, thus questioning the whole idea of a manageable, pre-Auschwitz, Jewish reality.

Webber's introduction, however—together with a brief discussion of 'invented identities' by Norman Solomon (pp. 86–98)—is the only essay in the volume to question the objectifying structures through which analysts of Jewish culture seek to understand ideational concepts of Jewishness. *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* therefore lays the groundwork for sociological questioning of the basic classifications of Jewish history. Speaking directly to this impetus in their 1993 essay 'Diasporas: Generational Ground of Jewish Identity' (*Critical Inquiry*, Vol. XIX, no. 4, pp. 693–725), Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin—although a continent away in North America—suggest that 'Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these in dialectical tension with one another' (p. 721). Jewishness, in this reading, must be addressed by social anthropologists who seek to analyse collective identities and yet fail to question the subjective limits of their objectifying structures. Yet, if Jewishness disrupts, then all identities disrupt. Indeed, the problems encountered and embodied in *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* strike deep at a core of assumptions present, for example, in 'identity' as a guiding metaphor. Most prominent among these assumptions is the alienation of subject and object imposed by theories which, in their insistence on measuring the present against a monolithic, ideological representation of the past, overlook the full range of practices whereby individuals negotiate authority and reinvent culture to their own benefit.

JEFFREY FELDMAN

TAKIE SUGIYAMA LEBRA, *Above the Clouds: Status Culture of the Modern Japanese Nobility*, Berkeley etc.: The University of California Press 1993. xvii, 430 pp., Glossary, References, Index, Tables, Figures, Photographs. No price given.

The research for this book on Japanese nobility was conducted over a period of fifteen years, including fieldwork in 1982, 1984–5 and 1991. The author was in a unique position, being of Japanese descent and having access to a group that is generally believed to be difficult to approach. Lebra's in-depth interviewing has provided a large number of oral histories, or 'stories', as she calls them. The reliability of these stories is greatly enhanced by the fact that the lives of many of the informants are intertwined, facilitating cross-checking, and by the fact that a number of events are well recorded in historical sources.

Lebra concentrates on the nobility before the Second World War rather than on the life they have been leading since, and she advises those readers who are familiar with the history of Japanese nobility up to the Meiji era, which started with the opening of Japan to the West in 1868, to skip two chapters altogether. Her book provides many insights into the changes the nobility lived through during this period of Japanese history. Her informants felt that they were Westernized sooner than the rest of Japan. Interestingly, the term 'Westernization' was used to refer both to the adoption of ways of life thought to be similar to those of the British nobility, and to the adoption of American egalitarian values. This illustrates very well the inadequacy of the word itself, which can refer to changes that are diverse to the point of being opposed to one another.

The deprivation felt by many members of the nobility just after the Second World War is reminiscent of Chekhov's description of Russian nobility in *The Cherry Orchard*. Dependence on servants existed to such an extent that getting used to life without them posed major problems. Many of Lebra's informants never even saw money until the end of the war, and in some cases servants took advantage of their master's inability to cope with worldly matters. Other nobles, however, relished going out without an escort and doing what ordinary people do: shopping, riding on trains, going to coffee shops, and so forth.

Although Lebra stresses that she was looking for the particular rather than the average, her informants did not include those who were totally ostracized by their families as a result of their behaviour, and the subject of homosexuality only turns up in a short discussion of the historical figure Tokugawa Iemitsu. This failure to deal with those one does not speak of in many circles in Japan is a shortcoming that can be found in almost every anthropological work on Japan. Special methods of recruiting informants would probably have been necessary to find such cases. What Lebra did find were problems caused by the discrepancy between feelings and duty, which in some cases led to women running off with the man they loved against the wishes of her family. Once it was too late to prevent their daughter from marrying whom they saw as an unsuitable partner, the family had no choice but to reconcile themselves to him.

Above the Clouds offers an enormous amount of information on a specific group of Japanese, on a range of topics from education and socialization to marriage, career and lifestyle, and the changes that took place in these fields in a relatively short space

of time. It discusses how the Japanese nobility used to live and how they responded to the changes confronting them from the Meiji restoration, which nominally restored the imperial line to power, to the democratization of the Showa period after the Second World War. This book offers much to discuss and think about, for which reason I recommend it to scholars of Japanese society and history and to all those who are interested in social outsiders, because to live 'above the clouds' implies that one stands outside one's own society, even while being in some sort of central position, as this book very adequately demonstrates.

WIM LUNSING

ELEANOR HOLLENBERG CHASDI (ed.), *Culture and Human Development: The Selected Papers of John Whiting* (Publications of the Society for Psychological Anthropology 6, eds. Robert A. Paul and Richard A. Shweder), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994. xiv, 358 pp., Bibliographies, Index, Figures, Tables. £40.00/\$59.95.

ALLISON JAMES, *Childhood Identities: Self and Social Relationships in the Experience of the Child*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1993. viii, 246 pp., Bibliography, Index. £35.00.

Recent work in the anthropology of learning showing that cultural transmission is a complex and active process rooted in everyday activity has led to important changes in the way we conceptualize cultural continuity. Current assumptions about culture as an accumulation of factual knowledge which can be passed on from generation to generation are being challenged, as are those which take the internalization of collective representations as essential for cultural continuity. Theories of learning-in-practice state instead that processes of learning and understanding are socially embedded and take place in the course of everyday activity. Such developments have led to the growth of interdisciplinary research on cognition and child psychology. While cognitive psychologists are recognizing the importance of the phenomenological experience of perception and embodiment on the one hand and of social interaction and intersubjectivity on the other, a growing number of anthropologists stress the relevance of a cognitive framework to the study of symbolic meanings and cultural knowledge. It offers, they argue, more plausible hypotheses of how cultural knowledge is acquired, represented, stored and transmitted than does linguistic theory. Whatever anthropologists' primary interest in psychological processes (which they include in their analyses in order to distinguish religious representations from the representations of practical domains of knowledge, to explore the phenomenological conditions of social life, and to define the social constraints under which people use their cognitive abilities), most of those interested in the cultural transmission of knowledge and in learning are turning to the study of children. While some study cognitive development, particularly 'spontaneous learning', the part of human knowledge which is not socially transmitted, others study the acquisition of norms and values by children. John Whiting's life

interest has been the study of how children are emotionally compelled to become part of their culture, while Allison James studies the social relationships that develop between English children and their sense of identity.

The collection of Whiting's selected papers, admirably edited by Eleanor Hollenberg Chasdi, convey well both his interest in the process by which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next and his search for general principles of human behaviour across cultures. This edited volume includes a very useful introduction by Roy D'Andrade, an insightful autobiographical essay, five thematic sections introduced by Hollenberg Chasdi, and a complete bibliography of Whiting's writings. While D'Andrade locates Whiting's vision of anthropology as a natural science in the context of current developments in psychological anthropology, Whiting's autobiographical notes give the reader a feel for what it was like to be a student of Murdock (as well as, for a brief period, of Malinowski), and to work in the Yale Institute of Human Relations and Harvard's Department of Social Relations during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. These were decades when Boasian ideas about environmental factors and historical variables, as reformulated by Julian Steward and others, had reached their zenith. It was also a time when American anthropologists like Whiting, fascinated by psychoanalysis, undertook to test cross-culturally Freud's theory that childhood experiences are a powerful force in shaping adult cognition, personality and behaviour. As Whiting was primarily concerned with promoting an integrated science of human behaviour (of which anthropology would form part), his methodology for establishing scientific laws depended more on Murdock's Human Relations Area Files (pp. 87–8) than on first-hand field-research.

There is no need to elaborate here on the flaws of a method which assumes, in a typically Boasian way, that culture is essentially symbolic, and divisible into discrete units called 'customs' (pp. 78–9, 84). Customs, or social habits, are regarded as hard facts which allow for the scientific cross-cultural comparison of child-rearing practices, sex-identity conflicts, or the internalization of moral values. The method, in calling for causal explanations of cultural variations, leads more than often to questionable conclusions—for example, that rites of passage are therapeutic, that religious beliefs directly reflect the impact of carrying devices on personality development (Chapters 4 and 9), or that abortion is an alternative to male circumcision and that the long postpartum sex taboo is an adjustment to protein deficiency (p. 234). Despite such outmoded environmental determinism, which no doubt reflects a theoretical eagerness to find a balance between biological and socio-cultural explanations of human action by taking *both* sociogenic and psychogenic factors into account, some of Whiting's work, focused on the social and interactional aspects of infancy and childhood and concerned to document the deep effect of experience on human behaviour, is still of interest today. This is especially true of the research projects based on fieldwork which stress the importance of sleeping arrangements during infancy and provide detailed analyses of the cultural settings (including dwelling organization, parents' economic activities and household composition) in which children acquire the values central to the socio-cultural order in which they grow up. 'The learning of values' (Chapter 5), written in collaboration with, among others, Hollenberg Chasdi, is a particularly good example of a successful cross-cultural comparative study combining fieldwork data, historical facts and psychological insights.

While sharing Whiting's conviction that the process by which children become adults is of prime interest for anthropology and that, more generally, social and cultural phenomena cannot be fully understood without psychology, Allison James approaches the study of childhood experiences using an interpretative framework which completely repudiates Whiting's scientific method of hypothesis testing. Her theoretical goal is to conceptualize children as individuals and, despite their marginality and lack of status in modern English society, as social persons. For this she uses an individual-centred form of ethnographic research inspired mainly by Anthony Cohen's and Nigel Rapport's interpretations of Geertz' hermeneutics. Her ethnographic data thus comprise not only direct observations of four- to nine-year-old children (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) and verbal exchanges between them and the ethnographer, but also analyses of dominant discourses that construct childhood as a liminal category set apart from the rest of society and, more significantly, from the productive world of adults (Chapters 3 and 4). A large place is also given to childhood memories, including those of the researcher herself (Chapter 1), as well as to parents' accounts.

In a previous book she edited with Alan Prout (*Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, London: The Falmer Press 1990), James proposed a new paradigm for the sociology of childhood which considered age to be a structuring principle in society and identified the time dimension—i.e. the chronologization of the life-process—as central to the analysis. In this book, James and Prout recommend the use of critical theory—in particular, of Foucault's theory of discursive practices and power—to uncover the ways in which childhood and other age categories, based on the definition of what is normal and abnormal, create identities of exclusion and cultures of marginalization. After presenting a processual theoretical framework to grasp how childhood is continuously experienced and created as a social phenomenon (p. 231), James and Prout conclude that transitions into, during and out of childhood are the most important moments to document (p. 234).

However, this agenda is not quite followed by James in *Childhood Identities*. Although the reader finds the same critique of the Western ideology of childhood and the same concern with portraying the complexity of children's social lives, there is no clearly articulated theory, nor are any of the author's central points thoroughly illuminated by the ethnographic material. This is due to the overly ambitious scope of the book. Too many topics are addressed, and none is dealt with as thoroughly as might be expected. The book is an attempt to summarize and analyse critically (in small sections at the beginning of various chapters) one hundred and fifty years or more of child policies and laws, the creation of a child consumer market, and the rise of multiple discourses on the nature of childhood—an impossible task which limits the depth of the analysis. The review of the sociological and anthropological literature on childhood (pp. 75–91) is somewhat cursory in character, and although James's fieldwork is almost entirely located in a primary school, there is no mention of research on schooling as such.

Her discussion of ethnographic data suffers from the same lack of thoroughness and depth. Using narratives of parents with mildly disabled children to explore the ways in which normality is constructed is an excellent idea, but James fails to show how the negotiated discourses coming from the family, the medical world and the

school system end up shaping the disabled child's sense of identity. In order to prove convincingly that social categories are merely ideological and have no sociological relevance outside the individual and heterogeneous lived experiences which they conceal, James would need to focus on a few life-histories as told by children, their friends, siblings, neighbours, therapists and teachers, instead of confining herself to accounts from parents. For this same reason of the lack of fit between ethnographic observations and theoretical claims, the crucial question addressed on page 67—'How might an ideology of childhood feed and sustain children's own image and self-identity?'—remains unanswered.

However, the book contains very rich ethnography of children's social relations in the school playground. James proves to be an insightful observer of childhood's dilemmas in the chapters on embodiment (Chapter 4), play (Chapter 6) and friendship (Chapter 7), which make for engaging reading. Again, the reader would like to see the same children dealing with their bodies, playing and having friends in other settings and contexts than the playground, but the information provided is rich enough to confirm that children's social relations—rather than personal experiences—have a lot to bring to anthropology. James's fascinating discussion of the power relations that sustain children's friendships and frame interaction between girls and boys, as well as her perceptive remarks on learning identity through play, would have been strengthened had she chosen a theoretical framework more concerned with social dynamics. The theory of social practice, and more particularly Jean Lave's and Etienne Wenger's theory of situated learning, powerfully underline the importance of active participation and the desire to belong through joining in. Children form communities of practice structured by relationships between 'newcomers' and 'old-timers' in which identities are learned through on-going participation. Childhood, therefore, is not merely the artificial product of Western ideology, but a social category created from within, the product of children's social practices.

Laura Rival

C. M. HANN (ed.), *Socialism: Ideals, Ideologies, and Local Practice* (ASA Monographs 31), London and New York: Routledge 1993. xiv, 271 pp., References, Indexes, Tables. £15.99.

This is an interesting ASA monograph, which unlike some of its predecessors is free both of lame-duck papers and modish abstractions. However, its treatment of world socialism is arguably rather partial. For instance, there is no real discussion of national variations in socialist ideas and practice; from Laos to Romania, socialist projects are described so briefly that they leave a sense of monolithic unity, with the socialist regimes everywhere promoting rapid modernization, and attacking religion and family farming. There are no comparative papers. Far more ethnographic richness is brought to bear, however, on counter-ideals and the local practices of resistance to and accommodation with the state. Five broad types of relationship between centre and periphery emerge.

First, there is the situation of diverging views of the status and needs of a local community. Thus Pat Caplan (Tanzania) and Susan Wright (Teesside, UK) highlight the disparities between the grandiose plans of socialist regimes, which see a local community as but part of the wider modernization programme, and the needs perceived by the locals, who focus on the utility of proposed projects to themselves and their neighbours. Secondly, there are cases where the regime deploys a particular vision of local communities for its own ends. Angela Cheater describes how, in the face of economic setback, Mugabe's ailing regime in Zimbabwe has resorted to appeals to authoritarian aspects of 'tribal tradition' and to an overtly nationalist and sexist emphasis on putative traditional culture. Thirdly, there are the contexts in which a local community is able to utilize aspects of the socialist system deliberately in order to sustain its own values and structures. Thus Michael Stewart on Hungarian gypsies and Frances Pine on Polish farmers show how family members were deployed to take advantage of the flexible employment conditions and shortages existing in their countries, thus sustaining their traditional lifestyles, in contrast to government hopes that socialist wage labour would undermine their petty-bourgeois inclinations. Fourthly, it seems that structural features of socialism can preserve or reinvigorate local phenomena that have ostensibly been weakened. Thus, Katherine Verdery traces the way in which older ethnic tensions in Romania were unwittingly exacerbated by the economics of shortage and erratic supply, with the micro-economics of favour and goods exchange passing down ethnic lines of inter-personal friendship. Lastly, there are situations in which some surface features of local life remain, though their essence has been altered under the impact of the socialist state. Thus, Grant Evans shows that despite the Laotian regime's tolerance of religion, the demise of private property has largely undermined the 'potlatch' style of merit-making that was so central to Laotian vernacular Buddhism.

In his forceful introduction, Chris Hann argues that the variety of inter-relationships between local community and socialist state portrayed in this volume ought to encourage anthropologists to move away from the unhelpful dichotomies of society/state or private/public. In this, however, he seems to be somewhat at odds with his contributors. While showing the *de facto* links with the state, they nevertheless give the virtually uniform impression that socialist ideas and ideals have had little impact on people's consciousness and private lives. The volume contains little discussion of agitprop, political re-education, cults of personality, policing, socialist ritual or participation in forms of socialist democracy, such as workers' councils. This leaves an implausible, or at least perhaps unduly taken-for-granted image of populations wholly alienated from their regimes (though this theme is more successfully treated in several of the contributors' own full-length monographs). In short, as Hann observes, in future a far more nuanced approach to the successes and failures of socialist regimes in popularly legitimating themselves will be required. In the present volume, Jonathan Spencer on Sri Lanka and Ladislav Holy on Czechoslovakia deal with this question most extensively.

In short, this is a book of much interest, not least because it will highlight for a wider audience some excellent monographs. The feeling remains, however, that on the whole the questions considered here are fundamentally questions of centre-periphery relations in modernizing states rather than those of the phenomenology of socialist life

that Ernest Gellner broaches in his 'Introduction', though this is perhaps not wholly unreasonable given socialism's status as the archetypal modernizing discourse.

JULIAN WATTS

DECLAN QUIGLEY, *The Interpretation of Caste*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1993. ix, 169 pp., Bibliography, Index, Figures. £30.00.

Since the mid-1960s, Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (1966), the standard account of Indian caste, has often been challenged but never seriously threatened. Of all those who have subsequently tried to substitute the Kshatriya for the Brahman as the linchpin of the system, Quigley is the most radical. Equally, he displays scant awareness of what is most crucial in Dumont's thought. Not unreasonably declaring that neither idealist nor materialist approaches are adequate on their own (Dumont supposedly being the supreme example of the former), he goes a long way towards achieving an equivalent degree of inadequacy in the mixed approach he himself pursues.

Quigley's first task is to attempt yet another deconstruction of Dumont based on a critique of the latter's disjunction of status and power. His argument that status cannot be superior to power, because it depends upon it, is simply naive and, moreover, entirely disregards the notion of encompassment which characterizes this and all other distinctions in Dumont's thought. In fact, Quigley only deals with encompassment once (pp. 30–1), and in such an inadequate fashion as to make one wonder whether he really understands either it or its significance. For one thing, Dumont's explanation for caste cannot be reduced wholly to ideology: material factors are recognized to be present, but they are encompassed, and appear only at an inferior level of the ideology. Similarly, the claim that Dumont errs in 'reducing the whole to one of its parts [namely] hierarchy (or status)' (p. 161) ignores both his definition of hierarchy, to which the notion of encompassment is vital, and the fact that hierarchy is not a 'part' of the system but its very explanation. The accusation of Dumont's hidden substantialism when talking about castes neglects his clear reference to structure in the passage cited by Quigley (pp. 32–3). Quigley also charges (p. 51) that Dumont confuses power with authority: 'He is left claiming that power is authority in relation to force but something less than authority in relation to authority *par excellence*.' In fact, this is a perfectly acceptable hierarchy of values: temporal authority *is* authority, not merely power, but for Dumont it is a lesser authority than the spiritual authority represented by the Brahman. Further, renunciation is confused with the rejection of caste as oppressive by low-status groups (p. 42): 'medieval mass conversions to Islam and Sikhism' are hardly the same as renunciation, which is sociologically within the Hindu tradition, has personal salvation as its goal, and is largely identified with the Brahman.

Quigley is certainly correct in pointing out that the conventional identification of Brahman and priest is not absolute in India: not all Brahmans are priests, nor all priests Brahmans. But although there are indeed grounds for arguing that it is the Brahman,

not the Kshatriya, who is the real problem in Dumont's account, Heesterman showed long ago how this could be overcome by taking the renouncer fully into account (*The Inner Conflict of Tradition*, 1985). For Quigley, Heesterman is simply one example among many of a writer who continues to treat the Brahman as supreme, despite his or her own evidence. This critique even goes to the lengths of denying hierarchy in order to topple the Brahman from his pedestal, the varna scheme being represented as a matter of separation alone. Yet the functions, colours and body parts associated with each varna clearly indicate hierarchy. Nor does disrespect for the Brahman as a person amount to a denial of the values he represents, any more than Christian anti-clericalism necessarily signals irreligion.

Quigley's own solution leads him to Hocart, from whom he takes not only the ritual centrality of the king but also the notion of caste as lineage. Indeed, his most radical suggestion would up-end the usual idea of caste completely: we should be talking not of castes, each of which may indulge in farming or administration as well as their more specialized occupations, but of kin groups, each of which performs some specialized task in addition to its more usual farming or administration (the latter appears to be the real, i.e. empirical Brahmanical task for Quigley). This links up with kingship on the one hand and forms of marriage on the other. Modifying Gellner's view of how nationalism developed out of agrarian polities, Quigley suggests that caste instead was the outcome in India, where centralizing powers attempted to counter the fissiparous tendencies of pre-modern Indian kingdoms—their tendency to decay into localized kin-based units—by ossifying kinship boundaries. However, the resulting endogamy had to be tempered with hypergamy, which Quigley sees as a way of integrating such units through the transfer of women upwards as tribute. This, in its turn, threatened the caste structure, since the accumulation of unmarried men at the bottom of each stretch of the hierarchy encouraged breaches of endogamy.

The similarities of this oscillatory model to Leach's account of the Kachin polity (*Political Systems of Highland Burma*, 1954) and Parry's account of caste in Kangra (*Caste and Kinship in Kangra*, 1979), with their conditions of instability within an overall equilibrium, are obvious. This is the outcome of preferring empiricism to ideology. It cannot, however, explain the conjunction of kinship (in the form of caste) with the distinction of ritual functions, nor their allocation to groups—which Quigley admits requires conditions of *stability*—nor the extreme micro-differentiation of status that the caste system entails. Nor can it account for either the uniqueness of caste, nor the significance of Hinduism, which frequently appears as something disembodied in Quigley's account. As for the king, allowing him ritual centrality and his own ritual status does not entail denying supreme value to the Brahman (Dumont) or the renouncer (Heesterman): he still represents primarily power, which in India as elsewhere is regarded as a thing of this world, not a transcendent ideal. Such naivety characterizes an account which is often ingeniously argued and productive of insights, preventing it from being at all persuasive in the last resort.

ROBERT PARKIN

PETER GOSE, *Deathly Waters and Hungry Mountains: Agrarian Land Ritual and Class Formation in an Andean Town*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1994. £39.00/£15.00.

SARAH LUND SKAR, *Lives Together—Worlds Apart: Quechua Colonization in Jungle and City*, Oslo etc.: Scandinavian University Press 1994.

Andean peoples are renowned for the intricate use of duality throughout their socio-economic and cosmological relations, and so it is fitting that these two books approach peoples of the Peruvian highlands from complementary angles. Peter Gose's book integrates the political economy of a small Andean town with the yearly cycle of agrarian rituals, connecting fertility, production and consumption, while Sarah Skar's book looks at the effects of separation on people moving from an Andean community to the urban capital of Lima and to the rainforest area of Chanchamayo.

Both books look at the dynamics of community life, but where Gose digs into the ritual organization of labour, Skar moves outwards, encompassing a geographical cross-section of Peru within community organization. The wealth of material in these two studies underlines the complexities of highland life and draws the reader inexorably towards the often contradictory relationships between Andean peoples and the nation-state.

Gose describes Huaquirca as a small Andean town which shares characteristics with many other Quechua-speaking communities. Agriculture is divided vertically into lower maize- and upper potato-growing areas, while the town also has upper and lower areas inhabited largely by 'commoners' and 'notables' respectively. The book distinguishes two types of relations of production. *Ayni*, preferred by commoners, takes place during the growing wet season (October to March) and consists of collective male groups who exchange days of labour by working on each other's crops, thus defining household claims to common lands. In contrast, during the dry season (April to September) the commoners work for the notables, mostly bringing in the harvest from the lands to which the latter have claims as individuals. This male work is known as *mink'a* and consists of labour which the notable landowners repay with food and drink for immediate consumption. The distinction between the symmetry and asymmetry of these work arrangements pervades the whole book.

Throughout the year, the people of Huaquirca carry out agrarian rituals which Gose describes in fascinating detail. Rituals performed during *ayni* work are designed to parallel events surrounding a death. When a body is buried and clothes of the deceased are washed, energy is released from the soul of the dead person, which travels to the mountains, where it provides water enabling crops to grow. In a similar way, men work physically, and through the 'death' of soul-loss which arises from hard labour, they provide the energy to plant or bury seeds irrigated by water from the mountains.

The collective work activities of the rainy season are contrasted with the dry season, when production comes to be eclipsed by appropriation and consumption. During this period the farmers carry out a series of rituals called *t'inka*, which involve men and women in a series of offerings ranging from libations to sacrifices to the spirits of the mountains (*apu*). The purpose of these offerings is to recognize the

hierarchical relationship with the mountain spirits and so ensure fertility and water for the next year.

The symmetric *ayni* work relationship between men is contrasted with an asymmetric totalizing hierarchy which relates women to men and the mountain spirits to all people. The relationship consists of a system in which life is perpetually renewed and symmetrical hierarchy fits with symmetrical equality through an annual alternating cycle.

The mountain spirits are portrayed by the commoners as 'Hispanic' forms of authority. A similar imagery of hierarchy is used by the 'notables' who, consisting of ten per cent of the population, make a class distinction between themselves and the 'Indian' commoners, who make up ninety per cent of the population of the town. Notables are distinguished from commoners because they have been further through the educational system, take the lead in national day parades, and have their own conspicuous consumption ceremony of banqueting during the Carnival celebrations in February. The greatest distinction, however, is that they do not participate in *ayni* work.

Gose describes the relationship between the commoners and notables as a class relationship. He argues that the agrarian rituals connected with *ayni* not only define cultural identity but also class identity because, by organizing labour relations, they distinguish commoners from notables. He argues convincingly that where the totalizing asymmetrical aspect of ritual breaks down, exploitation occurs and discontent can quickly turn into violent conflict. The fact that communication with mountain spirits has been an intimate part of highland rebellions shows how often rebellion is an attempt to restore the mutually reciprocal relationship with hierarchy, rather than getting rid of it.

The theoretical approach which Gose advances is that class should not be separated from ethnicity, because the concepts 'derive from a common, or at least, overlapping, set of practices' (p. 16). He sets himself against authors who would separate the two, thus committing himself to defending what he calls a 'culturalist' approach to class. This line defines class with reference to internal factors, in particular the *ayni* and *mink'a* relations. However, by concentrating on 'culture' he fails to give any social information as to who actually participates in these work groups. The external imagery for defining ethnic relations is also subsumed in the discussion. Thus the racial ideology of *mestizo*/Indian may be a 'myth of the conquest', as he says, but, as with the distinction *runa* (Quechua people) and *misti* (non-Quechua), these terms exist and refer to contemporary perspectives of hierarchies which can be seen as other ways of expressing class relations.

Even though Gose's text is about class, his theoretical approach removes three elements commonly connected with that notion. Ideology is normally connected with class relations, yet Gose tries to separate the ideology of the racial 'myth of conquest' from the class-connected mountain spirits which 'are not just an ideology' (p. 254). The second aspect of class which Gose avoids is history. He advocates a synchronic view of class to avoid historiography and concentrates on the 'experience of class relations' (p. 297). This connects up with the third feature of class which Gose avoids, namely the distinction between class 'in' and 'for' itself. He considers that this contrast separates social being from social consciousness, and he uses his material to

transcend the separation (p. 27). Whereas this approach enables class and culture to embrace each other without contradiction, the decision not to tackle these areas is disappointing, because the question of race, history and the dynamics of social relations emerge regularly in the text.

The question of ethnicity is more apparent in Sarah Lund Skar's book, in which class is not the main theme. This work is an excellent study drawing together the coast and rainforest of Peru into one highland framework. Matapuquio is a community of Quechua people (*runa*) who are distinguished from the towns where *mestizos* live. The community has been influenced by the history of a *hacienda* which was collectivized in the Agrarian Reform of the 1970s and destroyed by the guerrilla activities of Sendero Luminoso ten years later. In contrast to the *ayni/mink'a* distinction, used by Gose but not described sociologically, Skar's analysis sees the distinction between *ayllu* (related group with a spiritual tie to a territory) and *mitma* (part of the *ayllu* which is separated from the central entity) as fundamental.

The book follows the Matapuqueños as they take leave of the community and, armed with bundles of food and talismans, make their way to the city or to the rainforest to seek a new life or escape tensions at home. All people moving from highland villages need to arrange identity documents which establish within the migrant an external, state-imposed image of an individual. Moving to Lima involves a *t'inka* libation which ensures the continuation of a tie with the community and the mountain spirits. To the rainforest, however, there is often no leave-taking, as young people are tricked into working as virtual slave-labourers of colonists in Chanchamayo.

After describing the arrival and re-establishment of the self in the new territory, Skar goes on to deal with life in Lima, where people are organized into seventeen clubs working to support themselves and their community. The collectivity and competition encountered in the city by the men in the clubs reflects the *ayni* relationships discussed by Gose. Skar also refers to the support they send home as 'tribute', a reflection of the asymmetrical relationships in the community.

The rainforest is completely different. Matapuqueños who are not tricked into servitude move down to the east, where they reach the 'depository of ancestral knowledge'. Skar's description explains the desire of the colonists to clear the dangerous areas of forest trees and reproduce highland agricultural patterns. The killing of trees to cultivate plants relates to the connection between death and planting discussed by Gose during the rainy season in the highlands. Meanwhile a clear asymmetry emerges in the rainforest, where men go to towns to work and women remain alone organizing and controlling landholdings. Skar clearly analyses the ambivalence of highland colonists for lowland indigenous peoples in Peru, which anyone who has lived in the area must have encountered. While lowland peoples are respected for their primordial knowledge, the highland colonists have a conviction that forest dwellers are inferior and have no rights to land. This perspective explains some of the major confrontations which regularly occur throughout the western Amazon.

The contrast between solidarity in Lima and isolation in Chanchamayo continues when looking at space and time. The collective urban land occupations form small townships in Lima and contrast with the scattered homesteads of the Amazon, which are connected by roads and tracks. The lack of mountains in the rainforest means that the *apu* spirits are not so apparent, which causes spiritual power to become diffused

and each person's soul to become weak within the body, resulting in sickness. In Lima, on the other hand, the lack of agriculture means that wealth is measured in money which becomes linked to the moral progress of the individual person. The focus of those in Lima is to the future and to upward social mobility. Population movement to the 'primordial' rainforest thus looks back in time, while that to Lima looks forward.

The notion of absence in the highlands implies a return, and at some time in their lives the people come home, either temporarily or permanently. The return has its own rites, and often problems arise, as migrants try to find their position back in the community. The book ends with a discussion of the millenarian sect, the Israelitas, which is based on the notion of sacrifice and claims that Israel will return from the eastern rainforest and restore the original Peru. Thus between the sacrifice at the leaving and sacrifice for the return of Israel, the Matapuqueños complete a cycle of separation and reunion which embraces not only the lives of members of the community but the whole cosmos.

Interestingly, although Skar's study does not deal with class, it shows its importance. The 'myth of conquest' is not seen to be such a myth at all but a vibrant expression of asserting identity as a people in the face of ethnic mixing (*mestisaje*) (pp. 23-4). Throughout the book, the history of Matapuquio returns constantly, and violent events in the community cause waves which are felt in both Lima and Chanchamayo. The question of 'in' and 'for' itself is not addressed from a class perspective but appears from the perspective of the process of objectification of Matapuquio by those who move to Lima as they enter class relations. In this way, without discussing class, Skar raises the very aspects of class analysis that Gose has jettisoned.

These two books are welcome additions to the rich ethnography of the Andean area and together provide a fascinating complementary focus. Although Skar does not mention *ayni* or *mink'a*, and Gose does not mention *ayllu* or *mitma* (which could be because they are dealing with different communities in the Peruvian Andes), the detailed descriptions enable the reader to see several parallels. The people who move to Lima or the rainforest leave the agrarian ritual life described by Gose and turn to non-collective pursuits for survival. Yet it is possible to see reformulations of the *ayni* material described by Gose in the solidarity and collective work of the Lima clubs and in the 'death-for-growth' principle in the deforestation carried out by highland colonists in the rainforest, as well as in the libations and sacrifices connected with departure and return.

However, as already indicated, there are also strong contrasts. Gose draws class and ethnicity closer by 'culturalizing' the subject (p. 257) and thus losing some features associated with class analysis, while Skar historicizes Quechua cosmology by placing it in time and space and objectifying it through the eyes of the Matapuqueños themselves—an aspect of class analysis. What is so arresting about the complicated sociocultural systems of Andean peoples is that the dynamics of their worlds take the investigator and (thanks to these authors) their readers through a journey which draws you in the very direction you thought you were leaving.

Clearly, ethnicity and class sometimes fit together, sometimes not. In a highland town such as Huaquirca, class relations are far more dominant than in a smaller community such as Matapuquio, where ethnic distinctions cross-cut class divisions. In

fact, the relationship between the two rests on political activity and historical context as much as on analytical distinction. However, there is one area where both books demonstrate clearly that class and ethnicity can only be tied down in local perspectives and indigenous political activities: the Andean peoples of Peru have retained a distinct identity from the state which has not resulted in their inevitable integration into a wider hegemonic body. On the contrary, both books show that Andean peoples are perfectly capable of incorporating the state into their own cosmivision.

ANDREW GRAY

JACK GOODY, *The Culture of Flowers*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1993. xvii, 462 pp., Bibliography, Index, Plates, Tables. £40.00/£13.95.

Jack Goody is obviously enjoying his retirement and at the same time putting it to strenuous and entertaining good use in exploring a most attractive topic. This latest work has allowed him to travel widely and interestingly; we find him counting the number of graves with flowers in cemeteries from North Carolina to Berlin, attending New Year celebrations in southern China, and visiting the flower market in Ahmabada. We are introduced to the secret language of flowers in nineteenth-century France, the place of flowers in European popular culture, and the garland—as opposed to cut-flower—culture of India. It is, however, the travelling rather than the arriving that is the attraction of this book, because those who have journeyed with him previously will find that the destination is much the same as before. Nor is there any attempt to make it a mystery tour, for the route is well signposted from the outset.

The question addressed (also the title of Chapter I) is ‘No flowers in Africa?’ In other words, why in sub-Saharan Africa, other than those parts that are heavily Islamized, do flowers play such an insignificant role, not simply in themselves but representationally in literature, art and decoration? In general, peoples of this region do not grow domesticated flowers, make little use of wild ones, and rarely portray them in graphic and verbal arts. This contrasts with the great importance of flowers in many areas of life in Europe and Asia. Because there is little that can be written about what is not there, most of the book is taken up with the cultures of the two northern continents.

As hinted at above, the answer to the question is fairly predictable: along with the absence of dowries, ploughs and haute cuisine in Africa, that of flowers is associated with the lack of a hierarchical class structure of the sort that characterizes European and Asian societies. The cultivation of flowers—plants that have neither great nutritional nor practical value—occupies time, space and effort that only societies with a surplus can afford. In other words they are a luxury which is the privilege of the ‘higher’ groups in a literate, stratified society. Even here the culture of flowers has no easy ride, as periodic waves of social or ideological puritanism—the upsurge of a critical position inherent in such societies—banishes it for longer or shorter periods, and to varying degrees. For example, Goody contrasts the almost total disappearance

of a flower culture in Europe during the Dark Ages, under the double influence of a Christianity intent on purging itself of any pagan relics and a barbarism with little time for such niceties as flower gardens and botanical knowledge, with the situation in Islam, where the banishment of flowers from religious practices was not matched by a similar fate in the secular sphere, where botanical practices and study continued to flourish. However, argues Goody, even under the most adverse conditions, the culture of flowers retains an extraordinary resilience, because even when their use is totally banned, that culture can survive through graphic and verbal representation to re-emerge when the social and economic climate improves, like seeds lying dormant in desert soil awaiting the rain.

All this is argued with Goody's normal force and clarity, but he has never been one to shy away from the broad canvas, either temporal and spatial. This work is no exception. For example, in 40 pages he tackles 35 centuries of Chinese cultural history, glancing ('looking' would be too strong a word) at agriculture, botanical knowledge, floral motifs and design, flower poetry and painting, flowers and women in poetry and painting, manuals on flower-painting, flower-arranging, the contextuality of the symbolism of flowers, and their social and religious uses (this section offers a comparison of Buddhist and Confucian attitudes to plants). The reader comes away from all this reeling from the sheer richness and density of the colour and scent that he has been asked to assimilate.

The geographical coverage is just as wide as the historical is deep. Goody's investigations range from California to China via Europe, the Near East and India. He would have virtually encircled the globe had not his publishers declined, on grounds of space, to include completed chapters on Japan and Indonesia, although references to these areas, and to Mexico, are to be found. Goody also makes the interesting suggestion that the rise of the mass consumer society in the West, coupled with modern modes of communications, has had the tendency to replace the local, class-based production of flowers with one of global scale. In this new market, it is the poorer countries that are now growing the flowers for the richer, just as in the past it was the poorer people who cultivated flowers for the better off.

This brief account barely begins to do justice to a work that, like a luxuriant flower garden, is jammed with a fascinating and colourful assortment of facts and fancies. The book is well illustrated with both colour and black-and-white plates, and the paperback version is reasonably priced. My only grouse is the thinness of the index; four-and-a-half pages is totally inadequate for a book of this thickness (in both senses). Finally, it is almost worth having the book for the portrait on the back cover: a greenish gnomish Goody half-hidden in a flowering bush. [Postscript: Some months after writing this review I was having lunch with Olga Linares of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institution and learnt that she was the photographer. Furthermore it was not the photograph that Jack wanted used. On this occasion the publishers may have been right.]

PETER RIVIÈRE

JOHN D. KELLY, *A Politics of Virtue: Hinduism, Sexuality, and Countercolonial Discourse in Fiji*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1991. xvi, 266pp., References, Index. £31.95/£13.50.

In recent years, many anthropologists have attempted to incorporate history in their writing, or, more grandly, have sought a rapprochement between anthropology and history. But John Kelly has gone a step further: he seems to have spent a large part of his time in Fiji in the government archives, and his first book is a work of history. The story he puts together is a fascinating one. It begins with the Indians brought to Fiji as indentured labourers between 1879 and 1918 to work in the sugar-cane plantations. Indenture came to an end, in spite of the fact that Europeans in Fiji wished it to continue, because of the pressure brought to bear by India, where the indignities suffered by Indian women at the hands of European overseers had become a *cause célèbre* fuelled by the increasing influence of Indian nationalism. Within Fiji itself, there was a fierce debate involving missionaries, colonial administrators and doctors about the nature of Indian culture and its expectations of women: the position of women among the Indian population was particularly acute, because of the extreme sex imbalance.

With the end of their period of indenture very few Indians returned to India, and there thus emerged 'the Indian problem'. What rights were free Indians to be given? What laws should govern their social life? From the Indian point of view, there was also the crucial issue of how they were to define themselves, and which cultural and political leaders they should accept.

From here on, the story focuses largely on the efforts (and ultimate failure) of the reformist and Hindu fundamentalist Arya Samaj to speak for all Hindus, reform their religion or establish English-language schools which would both enable Indians to compete effectively in colonial Fiji and instil in them its own version of Hinduism. The Arya Samaj, as elsewhere, was eventually caught up in the contradictions of a Protestant-influenced Hindu fundamentalism: they rejected so much of what ordinary Hindus were attached to in their traditional religion that they generated an opposing Sanatan Dharm movement, which was more successful. As Kelly characterizes them, the Arya Samaj were, 'by their own lights, the Hindu enlightenment, the Hindu great awakening, Protestant Hinduism, and modern and scientific Hinduism. They were all of these, and also true Hinduism, reckoned by a particularly Christian search for the pristine essence of revelation. Rationalists and revivalists, they were also Hindu 'nationalists' above all, proponents of an 'Aryan' civilization' (p. 241).

The Arya Samaj alienated many Hindus by attacking all Hindu scriptures other than the Vedas in public debates with Sanatan Dharm pundits and by publicizing and pouring contempt on later scriptures' descriptions of the sexual activities of prominent Hindu gods. In this way, they destroyed the Hindu unity that they had previously succeeded in building up. These vitriolic disputes about religion and sexuality, and the inflammatory political consequences of the associated political pamphlets, both in Fiji and in India, show that the Salman Rushdie affair most certainly did not emerge out of a vacuum.

As far as possible, Kelly lets his sources speak for themselves. This produces some fascinating juxtapositions of radically different views of the same events: an

Australian overseer's memoirs, fifty years on, of his time in the 'lines'; Hindi tracts denouncing assaults on the virtue of indentured Indian women; fierce debates between different administrators over how best to govern the Indians; and even more vociferous exchanges of views between the Arya Samaj and its opponents.

Kelly's approach can be characterized as a form of discourse analysis. As such, it has to be said, it is strangely disembodied. He provides no map of Fiji. There are virtually no statistics. There are no photographs, except for the front cover, which dates from 1890, well before the period covered here. This is discourse about the body, without the body itself. More importantly, we are given virtually no description of the everyday life or social relationships which the Indians—most of whom became 'free' sugar-cane growers after their indenture was over-created in Fiji. There are no comparisons with other parts of the Indian indenture diaspora. This relative lack of emphasis on social relations or political economy makes it rather ironic that Kelly gives such prominence to Marx's aphorism, 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please', using it as an epigram at the very beginning of the book and returning to it, with an extended quotation, in the conclusion.

Thus *A Politics of Virtue* itself exemplifies the virtues of a discourse analysis approach, as well as the drawbacks of over-reliance on it. We remain bound within the circle of those whose voices happen to have survived. (Kelly recognizes that the voices of the women about whose virtue and sexual proclivities so much was so tendentiously said are absent from his text.) As the story moves on, we are given an up-dated version of traditional historiography's 'what happened next': who said what next to whom. Although we are told that the discourses generated in this period are still powerful, evidence from the present is not adduced to sully the historical picture. Presumably the larger picture will be provided by the forthcoming companion volume that Kelly promises, *Capitalism, Colonialism and Hindu Devotionalism in Fiji*.

In spite of these reservations, *A Politics of Virtue* succeeds in evoking the disparate voices of most of the participants in a dramatic clash of power, culture and religion. It is an important, vivid, highly readable book and deserves a prominent place in all reading lists on colonialism.

DAVID N. GELLNER

WILLIAM M. O'BARR and JOHN M. CONLEY, *Fortune and Folly: The Wealth and Power of Institutional Investing*, Homewood, Illinois: Business One Irwin 1992. xii, 245 pp., Index, Figures. \$30.00.

There may have been much talk in the last decade about doing anthropology 'at home', but remarkably little has been done on one of the most distinctive cultural arenas of the West—its major financial institutions. For instance, there has, to my knowledge, been no ethnographic study whatsoever of any part of the City of London: a few sociological papers on merchant-banking families, and some 'higher journalism' by gifted writers like Anthony Sampson and Jeremy Paxman, but nothing more. The usual excuse is

access. The busy bankers and brokers of the Square Mile and Wall Street aren't going to give mere academics the time of day. According to this conventional knowledge, privileged financiers see no reason to break their useful traditions of exclusivity and secrecy for the sake of an inquisitive anthropologist or two.

In fact, of course, this flimsy excuse is little more than a myth. Based on meagre factual evidence, its primary purpose is to justify anthropologists' inactivity or lack of interest in a cultural domain which is either insufficiently exotic or ideologically abhorrent to them. For, if (as is the case) resourceful, patient ethnographers have managed to do successful fieldwork among the Highlanders of Papua New Guinea or the crack dealers of the Bronx, are others of that ilk going to be stumped by a banker's reluctance to talk? They may not be able to participate, but they can still look, ask and listen.

O'Barr and Conley show how it should be done. They chose their subject—pension funds—well, as the funds are today the largest single group of institutional investors in the American market, with an enormous yet still unrealized potential to wield economic (and hence, to a certain extent, political) power. Once fund managers understood what the authors wanted to know, they appeared to open their minds to them. Access was only an initial hurdle, not an insurmountable barrier.

The core of the analysis demonstrates convincingly that, at least within pension funds, *homo economicus* is a myth. Even though the livelihoods of many millions of Americans depend ultimately on the correct management of these funds, their controllers frequently do not act in the most economically logical way. Instead, they persistently allow factors which are not strictly economic to sway their financially weighty decisions.

The authors discovered, for instance, that most funds do not have a corporate vision and that there was consequently a lack of institutional coherence within each fund. More worryingly, most fund executives' and employees do not justify the particular culture of their institution primarily in economic but in historical terms: things are the way they are not because that's the way things should be, but because that's the way they've always been. Even worse, in discussions about evaluating and deciding whether or not to retain outside managers, fund executives admit that the fostering of personal relationships is often a more important consideration than the bottom line. Quite frankly, is this the way such a very significant sector of America's (the world's largest) capital market should run itself?

O'Barr and Conley's book is full of such anxiety-creating details. What it shows, in unpretentious prose, is that the revelatory potential of anthropology when applied to the very heights of Western capitalism is great. And in times like these, when a country's longest established bank can disappear over the course of a weekend, the potential benefits of such work for the financial institutions themselves are not to be sniffed at either. The main feeling I had on finishing this book was, 'More, please!'

JEREMY MACCLANCY

GLORIA GOODWIN RAHEJA and ANN GRODZINS GOLD, *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1994. xxxvii, 234 pp., Glossary, Bibliography, Photographs, Figures. \$45.00/\$17.00.

This book, jointly authored by two already well-known anthropologists of Indian society, is a welcome addition to the body of work on South Asian oral traditions, which in part has grown out of the fruitful merging of the interests and approaches of folklorists and cultural anthropologists working in this area. There is a series of chapters analyzing women's songs and stories which are performed at various life-cycle rituals and other festivals in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. These ethnographically specific chapters are individually authored, by Gold on Rajasthan and by Raheja on Uttar Pradesh. Raheja also provides a framing introduction entitled 'Gender Representation and the Problem of Language and Resistance in India', and the book concludes with a jointly authored chapter providing 'Some Reflections on Narrative Potency and the Politics of Women's Expressive Traditions'. There is also a jointly written preface which sets the scene with a brief outline of the fieldwork contexts and the experiences and developments in the authors' thinking which led to the writing of this book.

The ethnographic chapters go some way towards conveying the contexts and atmosphere of the 'complex and arresting beauties' (p. xii) of women's expressive genres, but the main point of the book is rather to single out from these texts material showing that women hold views on gender and kinship relations which profoundly differ from and challenge the dominant patriarchal ideology. This fundamental theme is encapsulated in the symbolism of the heron of the book's title. In predominantly male performance genres, the heron symbolises predatory hypocrisy and the dichotomous split between purity and corruption. In women's texts, however, 'Heron's act as narrators, inviting listeners to consider tales of illicit encounters, resistance to dominating power, or both' (p. xi). The heron thus introduces us to alternative views of gender, sexuality and kinship, which are 'shaped by women but are sometimes shared by men' (p. xii).

The theoretical introduction in Chapter One provides a very useful and tightly packed review of the issues, in relation to which the authors intend to pursue their aim of showing how women's traditions comprise a moral discourse 'in which gender identities are constructed, represented, negotiated, and contested in everyday life' (p. 1). They argue that their work will require a rethinking of established views of marriage and patrilineality in South Asia. They also link their arguments to a fundamental shift away from anthropological notions of culture as a homogeneous and coherent totality towards a view of culture as made up of a plurality of competing discourses and practices. Linked to this shift is their further aim of providing a constructive critique of the work of the *Subaltern Studies* historians, who share the authors' general concerns with interpreting power relations and recovering the voices of those who have been subordinated. The *Subaltern Studies* scholars' approaches to 'resistance' are criticized as being based on too crude and essentializing a dichotomy between a fixed hegemonic tradition on the one hand and a total and radical social transformation on the other. Instead it is argued that tradition and resistance

interpenetrate and co-exist. The more fine-grained ethnographic approach to women's oral traditions is here intended to 'recover' the plurality of subaltern voices and reveal contextual creativity in shifts between tradition and subversion, as well as the 'strategic deployment of varying discourses by particularly positioned actors' (p. 25).

The main dimensions of women's alternative and subversive views are covered in subsequent chapters. All revolve around splits in the images of women in North Indian gender ideologies. Thus Chapter Two, on Rajasthani women's songs, finds that these undermine and resist the split between the destructive sexual potency of women as wives and the more positive capacities of women as mothers by expressing a positive view of sexuality and a 'conjoining of eroticism and birth' (p. 27). Chapter Three tackles the contradiction inherent in women's transfer from their natal to their marital homes. The evidence of songs and women's manipulation of ambiguous kinship relations points to women as providing a critical and ironic commentary on this split, which renders them simultaneously 'foreign' to their natal kin and alien to their husbands' kin. More subversive, however, are the songs discussed in Chapter Four, which examines women speaking specifically as wives. These songs point to a woman's need to build close conjugal ties with her husband, while countering the authority of the husband's senior kin and undermining the overarching emphasis on patrilineal solidarity. In Chapter Five, the analysis of a story shows women challenging the assumption that 'independent and powerful women are intrinsically dangerous and destructive' (p. 29).

The authors tell us that they are less interested in what they call the positivist enterprise of seeing how speech 'reflects' gender differences than with how gender identities are constructed and negotiated in discourse. In a broad sense, then, they are concerned with how women speak about and 'imagine' themselves. They are, however, also concerned with what women do with words. They specifically raise the crucial but very difficult question, does their power reside only in imagination or do these textual worlds 'flow into lived worlds' (p. 182)? Although there are some interesting and worthwhile discussions of the power of discourse, this question is not convincingly answered. It is noticeable here that, at various points where this link is discussed, the authors are suggestive and provisional in their language. Thus, for example, they say, 'those self-perceptions, and the discourses in which they are constructed and negotiated, *may* subtly but distinctly alter the widely ramified networks of relationships in which both women and men live their lives' (pp. 20–1, my emphasis). It is striking too that the main section of the book which does convincingly address this issue does not deal with oral traditions as such but with the language of kinship. This comes in the latter part of Chapter Three, where Raheja cites a series of specific cases to show how women are able to manipulate ambiguous kinship relationships in strategic ways to strengthen their position and further their interests in their marital villages, where they lack their natal kin support networks.

One of the ways, perhaps, of beginning to tackle the problem of the actual or potential power of women's songs and stories would be to include analyses of women's own views about these genres. For a book which is so sensitive to the plurality of voices in a culture and to issues of reflexivity in general, it is odd that this dimension is lacking. Similarly, we are also given little idea of the total range or repertoire of oral genres from which the examples in the book have been selected. Fuller

ethnographic contextualization of this sort would help the reader assess the significance of the texts used. It may be that this kind of ethnographic depth and context is limited because, as the authors tell us, neither went to India 'intending to study women, gender, or oral traditions' (p. xii).

Despite these problems, however, the book is a valuable contribution to the study of gender and of women's oral traditions in North India. It is fluently written and very enjoyable to read, making it readily accessible to a wide range of readers.

CHRISTIAN MCDONAUGH

ANTHROPOLOGICAL JOURNAL ON EUROPEAN CULTURES, edited by Christian Giordano and Ina-Maria Greverus, Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie, Frankfurt. Two issues a year, SFr 52 (institutions). SFr 35 (individuals).

The burgeoning interest in the anthropology of Europe means new journals to meet the rising need. *AJEC* is the latest. It attempts to stimulate interdisciplinary discourse (i.e. within the social sciences) and to transcend the discrepancies between theory and practice from an anthropological perspective. It concentrates on current European dynamics, those resulting from fundamental structural changes, increasing complexity and individualization on the one hand, and from forced homogenization on the other.

The themes it intends to tackle include social, regional and ethnic movements, migration, urbanization and multi-culturalization, development in political culture, and environmental and ecological perspectives. The ultimate aim of the editors is that discussion of these themes will 'enlighten contemporary European experiences and expressions of cultural identities and cultural differences'.

Each issue deals with a specific theme. For instance, the contributors to Volume III no. 2 (1994) discuss the tortured ethical problem of doing fieldwork in a variety of European settings. The list of contributors is impressive (and genuinely pan-European), the quality of their articles high. If the editors can maintain this standard, *AJEC* will become an invaluable addition to the anthropology of Europe.

JEREMY MACCLANCY

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