

BOOK REVIEWS

Tahitians: Mind and Experience in the Society Islands.

Robert I. Levy. Illustrated by Pierre Heyman.

xxvii + 547pp. Chicago & London: University of Chicago

Press 1973.

Leenhardt once reported from Tahiti that the people had placed over the entrance to one of their primary schools, "as a sign of supreme beauty," the solitary inscription:

$$2 + 2 = 4$$

Whatever could have been in their minds to do something so austere and arresting?

The ethnographer writes of their enthusiasm for knowledge, and proposes that the Polynesians were seeking a religion that would revivify ancient mythical forms of experience and give these a new content. And doubtless they did find a beauty in this limpid paradigm of the new organisation of thought. But these suggested answers, as they stand, do not seem to meet the case. Naturally, we need to know far more about the circumstances, and we can readily conjecture the kinds of ethnographic detail that we should require in order to think deeper about the affair. Yet these too would probably not carry us far enough, through the avowed motives, into the premisses from which the Tahitians in question even began to think about the symbolic stand they were about to make. For we are starting from the wrong end, as it were; that is, from an everyday familiarity with arithmetical formulas and the entire apparatus of numerical calculation into which we have been drilled since we first learned the tables of addition and multiplication. What we need to understand, then, is what it can be like to be without this knowledge, and to see $2 + 2 = 4$ as an illumination, a new sign of the power of abstraction. More precisely, we need to know what it is in fact like for certain Tahitians in certain circumstances to frame their thinking in non-traditional categories—and we cannot hope to understand such particulars a priori, for we are ignorant of the terms even in which our questions should properly be couched. What we should seek, therefore, is what Leenhardt has termed the "structural elements of their mentality".

There has now been published an ethnographic monograph on Tahitians, the subtitle to which refers precisely, and excitingly, to mind and experiences in the Society Islands. The author, Robert Levy, is a professor of anthropology at the University of California at San Diego (La Jolla), and was formerly a practising psychiatrist. The work is dedicated to Gregory Bateson. Three encomia on the back of the jacket, by American anthropologists, describe the book as a classic, praise its "sensitivity for Tahitian thought," call it a major theoretical contribution, and give readers to expect that it will enable us to comprehend "what goes on behind those handsome visages." Even if we take duly into account (as a matter, not for disparagement, but simply of different national styles in academic prose) the hyperbole that characterises American public judgements, whether in reviews or in university testimonials,

these panegyric passages must encourage great hopes. It should be reported, too, that the University of Chicago Press has produced a distinctly handsome volume, attractively designed in a format fit indeed for an ethnographic classic, and graced with striking illustrations by Pierre Heyman.

Professor Levy worked in the Society Islands for a bit over two years, mainly in 1962-64. He evidently had a good command of Tahitian, and he was substantially aided with "copious marginalia" and otherwise by Ralph Gardener White, an expert on the language. Afterwards, and in a style that an English anthropologist can associate only with the astounding affluence and spaciousness of American academic life, he was able to reflect on his fieldwork during "some years of relative peace and quiet" as a senior fellow and then research associate at the University of Hawaii. Earlier versions of some sections of the book were read by a number of the author's colleagues, among whom the best recognisable here are Roy D'Andrade and Melford Spiro. And of course there was an immense fund of published and archival materials on the islands and their inhabitants, going back nearly two hundred years. So in practically every respect Tahitians has been as fortunately prepared as one could well look for.

In the event, there is indeed a great deal of patently sound ethnographic detail in Professor Levy's account, and it is plain that he has made a more than useful contribution to knowledge of Tahiti which will be of lasting value. He writes unpretentiously (his opening words are, disarmingly, "This is a first book ..."), and he succeeds throughout five hundred pages in sustaining an almost warm interest in those individuals whose lives he chiefly examines. The book is directed to two audiences: those who wish to learn about "the natural history of this sample of Polynesian life," and those more professionally concerned with problems of psychological anthropology and of "personality theory." A main thread of the exposition is provided by "psychodynamic" interviews with twenty individuals, recorded on tape. Centrally, the author is interested in his subjects' "experience as Tahitians" (his italics), and he says he believes his methods reveal much of this.

The monograph is divided into four parts. The first, "Orientations," sets the scene and introduces some of the actors. The second, "Shared Privacy," deals (chapter by chapter) with bodies, souls, and aspects of personal relationships. "Psychological Abstractions" treats of self and identity, thinking, feeling, and moral behaviour. The final section, "Organisation and Disorganisation," covers fantasy, adjustment and readjustment, aspects of growing up, the question of maintenance, and aspects of personal organisation. Two appendices record the check sheet used for psychodynamic interviews and a sample interview (about a dream). There is a useful glossary, followed by a bibliography and a good general index.

As a whole, and taken not too exigently, the work creates such an instructive, rewarding, and generally pleasing impression that one is rather reluctant to turn critical. And perhaps one

might not be much inclined to do so if only it were not for the crucial words "mind and experience" in the subtitle. For in the end it must be said somehow that Tahitians does not really make the kind of contextual analysis of exotic categories which these words encourage the reader to look for. A large proportion of the book presents descriptions of customs in very much the fashion of Both Sides of Buka Passage. (This is a compliment equally to Miss Blackwood and to Dr. Levy.) Take the chapter on bodies in Part II. It deals in succession with cleanliness, eating, exposure, masturbation, supercision, sexual intercourse, homosexuality, conception, pregnancy, childbirth, menstruation. This is all good solid information, and interesting enough as far as it goes, but by this point we are well over a hundred pages through the text and we are still hardly in contact with what goes on inside the Tahitians. Certainly there is no critical comparison of the Tahitian psychological vocabulary with that of western discourse and psychiatry. Actually, the author's prologue to this part makes clear that this is an expectation that we must be prepared to forego:

I have sliced up behaviour, or rather abstractions at varying distances from behaviour (generalities about 'cleanliness' are less abstract than generalities about 'moral controls'), into gross categories - 'bodies', 'souls', 'feelings', 'thinking' - purposely naive categories which are natural for me. Within these gross categories there are finer ones which take some account of native categories.

There we have it. The ethnographer relies on naive categories, he says, which are "natural" for him - and he ventures to take no more than "some account" of the categories of the Tahitians themselves. Now this would be entirely unexceptionable if it alone were simply what he decided to do. Anthropological readers in a certain intellectual tradition would still be considerably disappointed, but they could not rightly complain that the author had written the kind of book he wished and not what they would have preferred. Yet the issue is not so clear-cut. Mind and experience, deliberately chosen as indicators of the essential subject matter, have certain established connotations which here make it necessary to go deeper than commonplace descriptive categories permit; and to convey the distinctive characteristics of the Tahitian conception of experience demands an exposition which is itself premised on those psychological and cognitive categories which for the Tahitians themselves define, articulate, and in some regards even constitute that experience.

Professor Levy, however, is admittedly on a quite different tack. For instance, he does not state his own premisses when he writes of mind and experience, and (as is confirmed by the paucity of references under these words in the index) he does not attempt to convey what, if any, are the equivalent concepts by which the Tahitians discriminate among their apprehensions. The nearest he comes to procuring us this interior view is in the chapters on the self and on thinking, but although these accounts open promisingly with grammatical considerations they prove to lead hardly

any distance into these fundamental notions. Instead of providing the reader with a grasp of exotic concepts with which he can then learn to acquire further categorical distinctions, as these are effected in Tahitian collective thought, and eventually gain a critical comprehension of alien modes of existence in Polynesia, the author quickly reverts to his more usual manner of description. Instead of becoming more abstract, as is the explicit intention, the exposition changes vocabulary as it proceeds but stays at much the same level of behavioural anecdote, reminiscence by the subjects, and more or less pertinent replies to the ethnographer's questions. Taken in a repertorial sense, this style of presentation contributes effectively enough (even if in a rather rambling and slightly repetitious way) to a rounded picture of Tahitian life, but in general by a process of factual accumulation rather than by analysis.

It will be unnecessary by this point to protest that none of these observations is to be taken as derogatory, but only as hinting at the respects in which Professor Levy has departed from his own declared ambitions. In view particularly of the modesty of his approach, moreover, it may be in place to suggest certain comparisons and recourses by which his argument could better have been made to reflect Tahitian ideas and apprehensions. The chapter on the self recalls an example which for an Oxford social anthropologist makes a classical beginning to such a study: Mauss's "Une catégorie de l'esprit humain: la notion de personne, celle de 'moi'" (1938). This essay in turn links directly to another work of the same period: Lévy-Bruhl's perturbing Carnets, edited by Leenhardt (1949). Then there is Leenhardt's own work Do Kamo: la personne et le mythe dans le monde mélanésien (1947). This magnificent but ill-recognised investigation into the meanings of two words in New Caledonia presents itself indeed as the very pattern of an enquiry into mind and experience in an alien tradition, and it is genuinely a pity that Professor Levy should appear to have been unacquainted with it. And subtending such invaluable paradigms there is of course the fact that what Professor Levy ultimately confronts are problems of comparative epistemology. On this score the standard concepts of clinical psychiatry and academic psychology, though doubtless apt enough to the undertakings for which they were contrived, are not unquestionably serviceable in the critical treatment of Tahitian categories. To this end, given the pertinence of language and the emphasis on inner experience, the Philosophical Investigations could have given Professor Levy's investigation a far more probing and revelatory character. Also, as a final example of a kind, it would be hard not to mention a recent enquiry, inspired largely by Wittgenstein and by Lévy-Bruhl, into the question whether belief is an experience; for this deals precisely with what is taken for a fundamental faculty of mind in its connexions with language, alternative psychologies, and alien modes of experience.

The point of these comparisons is by no means to claim that one intellectual tradition (or, more trivially, one national style of anthropology) is simply better than another, or to maintain that the linguistic analysis of collective representations is in principle more profitable than one carried out in the terms

of a western psychology. Professor Levy's dedication to Gregory Bateson shows in itself that he is not so parochial or so partisan as to merit a blunt admonition. But he has devoted a fair part of his life and a deal of earnest thought to the understanding of Tahitians, and unless he becomes irrevocably distracted by his current research in Nepal he may continue to publish about them. It would be unprofessional at least, therefore, not to allude to that scholarly tradition which once characterised Oxford social anthropology and which, in the works of the late Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard, showed its distinctive power to reveal certain radical features of exotic forms of thought and action.

Rodney Needham.

I.A. Richards. Essays In His Honour. Edited by Reuben Brower, Helen Vendler, and John Hollander. New York, Oxford University Press, 1973. viii, 368pp., illus. \$5.75.

Fifty years on from the first publication of The Meaning of Meaning, Richards' colleagues, students, and friends have seen fit to offer him this mark of their esteem. There are two ways in which a contributor to a Festschrift may offer his respects to the subject: either he chooses simple praise with the description--perhaps elucidation--of the subject's thought; or he attempts to push ahead with theories in the direction and manner of his predecessor. Most of the authors in this volume have chosen the former approach. There is a good deal of biographical detail, and with the notable exception of Hartman's essay on psychoesthetics, the essays are very much about Richards rather than inspired by him. While this approach may seem less adventurous, the essays produced are often more interesting or more useful.

This is certainly true in the case of this volume. Hartman's and Cleanth Brooks' essay (on the concept of tension) may make greater contributions, in the long run, to the theory of literary criticism; but the essays which stay in the mind are Reuben Brower's skilfully conducted interview with Richards, and Janet Adam Smith's enticing and beautifully written piece on Ivor and Dorothy Richards as mountaineers.

But apart from these more personal themes, and the largely uninspiring dedicatory poems, the volume lacks a certain breadth compared with Richards' own wide-ranging interests. Particularly disappointing from an anthropological point of view is the failure to treat in any serious way Richards' approach to problems of translation, best exemplified in Mencius on the Mind. This is a fault of the editors, who are all professors of English at American universities. A survey of the list of contributors reveals that three-quarters of them are or have been academic literary critics. But one then realises that nearly all of these are distinguished ex-students of Richards', so that one can understand this editorial weakness.

In terms of what the book aims to be, rather than what it might have been, however, the book is a complete success. All the essays repay reading and pay true credit to Richards' greatness. They are the very least that he deserves.

Martin Cantor.

Women in Between. Marilyn Stratherne. London. Seminar Press. 1972.

Dr. Stratherne's title is intriguing. At the outset one wonders whether her use of the preposition and the implied spatial image would introduce the notion of women as agents of cultural transformation; a description of the role of women one might have wished for from Lévi-Strauss. His lengthy writing on the subject of food would seem to have demanded some such treatment of the subject of women, but in Stratherne's work, like Lévi-Strauss', no such considerations were forthcoming. The title was taken from a sub-heading of a chapter entitled 'Judicial Status', but this reviewer did not think the title represents a real theme of the book, nor an idea which was fully developed in the work.

Women in Between, to Stratherne, simply means women between two kin groups. But, for women, there is an unevenness, an inequality in the arrangement (of mutual transactions) for although she is a 'road' for men, she has no road; she is powerless to act on her own. She has limited contacts, her prestige derives from her dependence on men. Paradoxically, Stratherne mentions Hagenese categories which might show that Hagen women see their situation somewhat differently from men, as they are able, we are told, to claim and achieve a degree of autonomy.

I use the word 'paradox' because in my view, Stratherne does not develop any of her ideas on women in a clear and precise manner, because nowhere does she treat kinship, or any other aspect of Hagen society, as a linguistically oriented subject. The result is that her views on Hagen women, explained in a totally functionalist theoretical context, are given without the benefit of detailed explanation of the Hagen meanings of kin relations or any other aspect of their society.

This point is crucial, for Stratherne concentrates on marital relations of the Hagenese for several reasons; inter-group and inter-sexual relations and the domestic roles of women are at the centre of her thesis. One would have thought, therefore, that Hagen linguistic categories, classifications and cosmology would be of supreme importance as evidence for such central role definitions. However, the indigenous modes of thought only occasionally (and then partially) manage to struggle through. Why? Too often the heavy-handed imposition of western marital categories is apparent and it is simply frustrating, because in other sections, it is equally clear that these categories have little or nothing to do with the way the Hagenese view life. Some insights into this are provided in a section entitled 'Husband and Wife: the supernatural dimension'. Here, we are told that ties between men and women extend beyond physical death in many ways. We are told, for example, that women say that after death the spirits of husband and wife find each other again. As in her lifetime, a woman's 'min' (spirit) may wander around and visit her clansmen, but it always returns to the abode of her husband's 'min'. Claims spouses have over each other thus persist after death. Indeed, most of the disputes, prestations, compensation payments, etc. surrounding arguments between Hagen men and women seem to have something to do with the claims of dead kin. I think it obvious that there is a cosmology indicated here, but it remains unexplained, hence un-understood.

We are told firstly, that Hagen notions of sexual relations, co-habitation, mutual domiciles, kin alliances, shells, pigs, etc.

are tied up with an intricate classificatory terminology which differs greatly from ours, mainly because there is a strong distinction made between men's usage and women's usage of the same terms (p.34); and secondly, that most of these terms are in some unexplained way intricately connected with Hagen notions of life and death. Unfortunately, Stratherne leaves these realities of Hagen thought to the reader's imagination. It appears that this is so because throughout her book, Stratherne uses what Hilary Henson (British Social Anthropologists and Language. Oxford University Press, 1974) has called 'associationally treacherous terms such as Father's Sister and Mother's Brother's Daughter' (p.102). Analytical categories such as 'clan', 'tribe', etc. are imposed 'carte blanche'.

I find many paragraphs utterly confusing. The perplexity can be summed up in two questions: If it is true that in many cases the agnatic model is irrelevant, then why use it? If there is no comprehensive genealogical framework for the whole clan, then why bring it up in the first place?

It is clear that, to Stratherne, function -- defined as her assigned categories -- is obviously what the Hagen terms sprinkled throughout the book are taken to mean. This is made plain in the last sentence of her note on case histories at the beginning of the book:

"Cases" based on informants' accounts alone are distinguished by an asterisk. I take these as revealing about attitudes even if they are not accurate as to behaviour.

Doubts also arise as to the meaningfulness of the statistical samples given in the Appendices. The main problems are:

- (i) the paradox which exists in the functionalist paradigm, i.e. that of dogged adherence to an empirical base without sophisticated quantification techniques for that base to rest on.
- (ii) an obsessive preoccupation on an ideological level with 'typicality' and with 'normative' behaviour'. Out of 75,000 people, speaking at least two languages, from knowledge of how many were these 'norms' derived? How many people did Stratherne meet in eighteen months? Fifty? Two hundred? Five hundred?
- (iii) a selection of inadequate samples with what seems to amount to an accompanying refusal to recognise that quantification of a people also means quantification of linguistic categories. The selection of a sample in the first place depends on non-quantifiable decisions.

In conclusion, if Stratherne's book had been published in 1932, a reviewer might be able to find ample historical justification for the defects to which the reader's attention has been drawn. But Women in Between was published in 1972, although theoretically and methodologically it belongs to the generations of Richards, Malinowski, Radcliffe Brown and Fortes. The saddening thing is that I now know nothing more about the Hagenese and New Guinea than I did before reading the book, but I do feel I know a lot more about social anthropology circa 1930, through the writing of an anthropologist who is obviously a bright, competent and very articulate exponent of that period.

Man and Woman among the Azande. Edited by E.E. Evans-Pritchard, London. Faber and Faber. 1974. £4.50

This book avowedly aims to present what some Africans - to be precise some Azande - are really like, how they talk and think, with only the barest introduction and commentary. The editor states that in their writings anthropologists may have seemed to dehumanize Africans 'into systems and structures and lost the flesh and blood', and he here tries to let the Azande speak for themselves on a variety of topics concerned with relations between men and women, and domestic life. Most of the texts presented were recorded by the editor or his clerk Reuben Rikita between 1927 and 1930, but others written between 1961 and 1964 by Richard Mambia and Angelo Beda are also made available. Many of the texts, all of which have been translated from Azande, have already appeared in journals and books. It was a happy idea to bring them together in this way. They make refreshing reading, and will particularly interest would-be social anthropologists who have not yet had the opportunity to work in a field situation, illustrating as they do one kind of data from which general statements are often drawn by social anthropologists. They will also be a very useful resource for analysts for years to come.

Although Professor Evans-Pritchard, with his usual modesty, has attempted to avoid imposing his own views, a certain intrusion must have been inevitable. He notes that he 'did not elicit the texts', but it would be idle to conclude from this statement that the Azande would have spoken in the same manner, or indeed at all, if there had been no scribe present. He has also had the problem of choosing which texts to publish here, and some editorial bias must be assumed. Nevertheless he is sensitive to the need to include 'what may seem irrelevancies' because, as he says, 'they were not to the Azande who dictated them'. It is no doubt these 'irrelevancies' which will make this kind of contribution especially valuable for future scholars. Given the problem of observing without being observed, or without influencing the observation, we are probably in safer hands than in any others when Evans-Pritchard is concerned.

There are two small regrets: text follows text with only the occasional minimal attribution (Mambia and Beda excluded). How much more helpful these would have been if we could have known at least at which end of the age-range the commentator could be placed, let alone other biographical details. In this volume, which presents a series of distinct though anonymous items from different sources, where the editor has refrained from comment and left the readers to draw their own conclusions, less anonymity and more personalisation would have been particularly useful.

A more serious cause for concern is that since this is intended to be 'a presentation of an African way of reflecting on how men and women see one another' and 'get along together', and 'how and African people' look at these problems, more stress was not laid on the fact that this book only provides evidence of a possible male view of the relations between men and women. A book of texts by Azande women might, of course, carry exactly the same messages as this one: we have no way of knowing. It is, however, certainly inadequate for the editor, in view of his claims, merely to comment 'though I ought to add that all the texts in this collection were taken down from men, who naturally had a bias in their own favour'.

With such reservations in mind, the volume is very welcome and may set a precedent for others. It in no way replaces those books of 'system and structures' alluded to, but is a very valuable complement to them.

Shirley Ardener

Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter. Edited by Talal Asad. London: Ithaca Press. 1973. Library and paperback editions available (£5.50 and £1.00).

'[The Anthropologist Northcote-Thomas] was a recognised maniac in many ways. He wore sandals, even in this country, lived on vegetables, and was generally a rum person.

'[Clearly, Residents] did not want to have an object like that going about ... partly because he was calculated to bring a certain amount of discredit on the white man's prestige.' (Colonial Office file, 1930)

It is at first sight curious how relatively long it has taken for social anthropologists to see themselves as part of the colonial period - less so, perhaps, when it is realized how alien to the colonial system they always succeeded in seeming to be - even in their most respectable phases. At least two quite unradical present-day professors had their difficulties in those days - reports suppressed, or entry permits blocked. Other social anthropologists were closely in touch with the colonial independence parties, and remained persona grata in the successor states. It is surprisingly difficult to think of an anthropologist who has been barred from his field save by a militaristic or repressive regime. A few reflections of this sort might lead some to feel that there may after all be something about the subject that does help to moderate the ordinary ethnic or class features of individual social anthropologists. We certainly have to account for the contradiction between the marked conservatism of ideas within social anthropology itself and the destructuring effect its writings have on other conservatisms - an example, Talal Asad suggests, of 'bourgeois consciousness' transcending itself.

The contributors to this volume are essentially all puzzling over this problem. Wendy James points out in some detail the highly critical nature of some pre-war anthropology. As she reminds us, Kenyatta was regarded as a particularly dangerous product of the Malinowski seminar (it may be added that he changed his name from colonial 'Johnson' to 'Jomo' during that time). Generally, however, the volume attempts a broadly Marxist accommodation of the fact that there were possibly liberal, even left-wing, individual social anthropologists with the undoubted fact of their colonial context. There are useful accounts and resumé's of the nineteenth century origins (the Aborigines Protection Society and the rest), and of the complicated relationship with Indirect Rule in the twentieth century. Lackner uses official documents to good effect for Eastern Nigeria on the latter subject.

The special cases of Nadel (Faris) and Godfrey Wilson (Brown) are examined. Others (Asad & Clammer in particular) deal with the political perceptions shared by administrators and anthropologists about exotic peoples. Feuchtwang and Forster take us into recent Marxist analyses, including, in some detail, the 'New Left critique'. Papers from the 'indigenous' side come from Willis and Ahmed. A bibliographical digest is supplied by Marfleet. Asad's introduction takes a middle view of the central problem, but perhaps all the writers feel somewhat uncomfortable with it. The stamina required for a treatment of knowledge as ideology, and their relationship to action, must lead to some kind of questioning of the very structure in which studies occur.

Since the writers hope for a Marxist solution, it is worth noting how recent any awareness of the relevant, mainly French, literature has been in social anthropology. This Journal itself pioneered such discussions.

It is not easy to recollect much serious mention of Althusser, even of Godelier, Terray or Meillassoux, in other British anthropological journals before 1971 - least of all from the one or two then acknowledged senior Marxists in the subject. The story of the New Left critique, which is referred to so often in this volume, should be mentioned, first of all, to clear away the odd charge sometimes sporadically made (from surprisingly conservative quarters) that the newer movements in social anthropology are in some way 'elitist' and non-Marxist by definition. The truth is rather that the newer Marxism was itself in part introduced to favour among British social anthropologists by the same intellectual currents that made vulgar functionalism untenable in other ways.

Thus it was our student Jairus Banaji who, in his second term of the Diploma, created the so-called 'New Left' Critique. Until then there had been no 'critique', merely an article by Goddard, defective in coverage, and clearly ignorant of many developments in social anthropology since 1960. Banaji's response, based on the now fashionable authors, was composed extremely rapidly - for this was the period when the underdeveloped nature of much British anthropology made many contributions from students more interesting than those available in the standard literature. None will be more amused than Banaji that a definitive milestone in anthropological Marxist criticism should have been so quickly and so easily established, and should be cited so soberly for so many years afterwards. It is an irony that the 'New Left' Critique should stem from the world of this Journal to which he was a founder contributor, as part of that 'new anthropology' to which his critique is now sometimes cited as an alternative. It was not a traditional Marxist approach that gave this early critique its edge, but rather its hints at the grinding effect of structuralism and Marxism upon each other. To understand French anthropological Marxism a knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the Structuralist period is required.

In taking the matter so far I move beyond the volume under review to remark that there are high levels of ordinary functionalism in much of the supposedly Marxist British work, as some of the discussion at the 1973 Decennial Conference session on Marxism showed. This is not surprising, as it was through economic anthropology that many have come to the writings of French Marxists. Yet it is difficult to believe that the implications of some of the latter are understood. In purely theoretical terms Godelier and his followers have outstripped British economic anthropologists. They have modernized a field which had remained unreconstructed since the sterile substantivist/formalist discussions of the '60s. The modernization closely resembles that effected elsewhere in the subject by the rise of structuralist and post-structuralist approaches. But Godelier himself characteristically exceeds the traditional materialist brief when he says 'we must learn to see reality as phantasma', or again, that 'mode of production will be located in different ways: we must learn to see it even in religion' (oral discussion).

The Godelier of the ASA, Decennial Conference in 1973, cannot be easily accommodated within the sort of Marxism that British ex-functionalists are likely to feel at home in. Indeed there was a little embarrassment at the Conference when Professor Salisbury asked 'what distinguishes a Marxist analysis from an ordinary anthropological analysis?'. Maurice Bloch replied - with intended humour - that 'all good economic anthropologists had been doing Marxist studies'. The ecumenical and hardly radical note of British anthropological Marxism is revealed again in the weight given to Sir Raymond Firth's essay on the subject. Marxism is more serious an enterprise than this. The switch from functionalism to Marxism as an

inexpensive way of building some intellect into the functionalist machine, runs the risk of holding up, and confusing, that anthropological restructuring of Marxism itself which is the main contribution of the French theorists. The latter are much too kind to the British: once more they are in too much awe of the famed British empiricism.

The present volume does not stem from the economic anthropology tradition and is not open to the full force of these criticisms. But the final lack of power in the papers, a kind of mesmerization which leaves the contributors and their subject more or less as they were, lies in an ultimate unwillingness to live mentally in the arduous kind of world their attempt at heightened awareness requires. Perhaps the relative juniority of some of the contributors makes them unprepared to face the erosion of the very structure of academic hierarchy by which they live. The story of anthropology shows how too many ideas are 'laundered' according to the prevailing ideas of the middle-class circles of each period. Yet it is surprising how few are prepared to risk the obloquy of choosing their own path, if necessary to their own detriment. Like Northcote-Thomas, with whom we began, they merely accept transfer to another (mental) colony. Edwin Ardener

SHORTER NOTICES

Structuralism: an Introduction. Edited by D. Robey. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1973. £2.75 (paperback £1.25).

Yet another introduction to what is rapidly becoming yesterday's subject. It is already 75 years since Saussure's early statements, 35 years since Troubetzkoy's, nearly 30 years since Lévi-Strauss's, 20 years since Leach's, 10 years more or less since the main British work - without considering all the other highly relevant theoretical streams. Although surprisingly weakest in the chapters on linguistic and mathematical structuralism, this is still a better set of essays (once Wolfson Lectures) than some on the topic. It is interesting, however, to see how semiotics, 'boundarism', and transformational generative grammar, as well as the views of Foucault, Lacan and the rest are simply collapsed together with structuralism. Too elementary for experts (not Hjelmslev's examples, and Berlin and Kay again!), and too outdated for students, it is literate and may interest the readership outside social anthropology that it aims for - without, perhaps, allaying its doubts.

The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860-1960: A Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs. Anton Blok. Oxford. Basil Blackwell. 1974. £5.25. xxxiii, 293 pp. illus.

Blackwell's Pavilion Series continues in its uninspiring but competent tradition. Most of the familiar themes go to make up the framework: social networks, entrepreneurs and the rest. An impressive body of facts on a subject fast attaining great general popularity, the book is perhaps most remarkable for its excellent photographs.

Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions. Jeremy Boissevain. Oxford. Basil Blackwell. 1974. Cloth £4.75, paper £2.25. xv, 285 pp.

The book attends to 'the way interpersonal relations are structured and influenced'. The approach predictably involves the general framework provided by the idea of taking an actor's view of his society, and analysing how he manipulates the other people and resources in his environment. The tone of the book is captured by the following quotation: "The most important structural criterion of a person's network, whether total or partial, is its size."