BOOK REVIEWS

JEAN CUSENIER (ed.), *Europe as a Cultural Area*, Mouton: The Hague, Paris & New York 1979. World Anthropology Series (General Editor Sol Tax). x, 281 pp. £18.70.

Advance notices of this volume, one of the latest in the World Anthropology Series, must have raised the expectations of many anthropologists interested in Europe. For one thing, it has a suggestive title. The notion of 'culture area' has been part of anthropological and geographical traditions in Europe and in North America. Despite its well-known limitations, there could be scope for discussion in the context of Europe, itself an area impossible to delimit with geographical precision (see Terry G. Jordan, *The European Culture Area*, New York 1973). It is surprising therefore that nowhere in this volume are these issues discussed — or even mentioned. One is left wondering what relationship the title of the book has with its contents. Certainly the present volume suggests none.

During the 9th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences more than 240 communications relating to Europe were issued. What criteria determined the choice of the ten published here? The answer is far from clear since the resulting volume lacks intellectual unity, is most uneven in geographical coverage and the papers vary considerably in standard of analysis and of presentation. The additional weakness of obscure and incorrect English in several articles in doubly unfortunate. Apparently only four writers are native English-speakers. Surely, therefore, specific attention should have been paid to the careful correction of grammatical and stylistic errors, often so obtrusive as to obscure the meaning, before publishing such a costly volume? If the book aims at acquainting English-speaking anthropologists with the work of scholars in other European traditions, linguistic accuracy should have been an elementary priority. This raises another question - what is the role of the editor in the production of a book? Cusenier has chosen to be self-effacing: he does not contribute a paper of his own and his scant three-page Introduction barely indicates his intentions. Indeed it puzzles rather than clarifies. With only one page directly addressed to the contents the reader is inadequately prepared for the diversity of the papers which follow.

The book is divided into two parts, but contains what the editor calls 'three kinds of texts' (though he does not explain the distinctions between them). Two writers contribute to Part One, 'Time and Space', a historian and an ethnologist.

First comes William McNeill's 'Patterns of European History': in the grand style of universal history, he sweeps through some 4000 years in 94 undocumented pages (with only one bibliographic reference). It is both too long and too brief, taking up two-fifths of the book, yet so impressionistic and reductionist in approach that its scholarly value is dubious. Thus for example in the pre-Christian period 'waterways' are supposed to account for the location of cities and civilizations, 'climate and technical handicaps' for the lag in development of northern Europe, 'wine and oil exports' for the pre-eminence of Mediterranean trade. Certainly all of these were important factors — among others; but his presentation is monocausal and

deterministic. What is one to make of his view of the Late Hellenistic and early Roman period? He describes it (p. 20) as 'a milieu ... not conducive to bold and restless innovation of any kind. Moreover, the easy availability of superbly attractive models of art, literature, thought, not to mention the delights of elegant eating, drinking, and sex, as worked out by Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. inhibited innovation still further.'

Two papers by Branimir Bratanić, Director of the Ethnological Institute, University of Zagreb, and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Ethnological Atlas of Europe and its Bordering Countries (forthcoming) complete this section and introduce a different element, namely the Central European preoccupation with cultural diffusion. These papers provide a particularly topical illustration of a flourishing *Kulturkreis* school (on which cf. the contributions of Andriolo and Braukämper in *Man* XIV, 1979). Bratanić's major concern appears to be 'scientific accuracy' in the mapping of items of material culture. Techniques of mapping at different scales are crucial (pp. 103-4; 108; fig. 1), though the resulting pretty distribution maps rather resemble cross-stitch embroidery patterns. An essential feature of the activity is a construct called the 'ethnological present' (p. 104) where '... a "moment" in the course of cultural development ... can last for a hundred or two hundred years' (p. 106). For those interested in agricultural implements, however, Bratanić's maps will be useful especially for information on the distribution of 17 varieties of dual yoke in Yugoslavia (map 1), or of the nine types of *ard* found in prehistoric and contemporary Europe (map 9).

The second article of Bratanić, a brief discourse on Eurasian peasantry and culture elements, includes a passing note on the occurrence of 'Alpine' culture (map 8). We are offered the following elements as being characteristic: 'women as shepherdesses and dairy workers; wooden butter churns and the important role of butter in life and customs ... haymaking with special racks consisting of horizontal poles ... knee-breeches, small felt hats, and earrings (in one ear) in the male costume ... braids put about the head in women's costume ....' (p. 128). These elements characterise the European Alpine area, southeastern Tibet, the Himalayas, and '... are found elsewhere, *especially in high mountains*: Scandinavia, the Pyrenees ... the Caucasus ... the Hindu Kush, the Pamirs' (p. 128; emphasis added). Is it really suggested that ear-piercing and the wearing of braids offsets climatic effects at altitudes above 8000 feet? If not, what is the point? One is left wondering.

The seven papers in Part Two, 'Culture and Social Organization', fall more or less within the recognized compass of familiar social anthropology, but as a collection there is little to recommend it. All the papers could have been revised with profit, and some even need re-writing. For example the paper by the Halperns on five Yugoslav villages is again sketchy, covering areas of great ethnic, religious and historical diversity.

French material is provided in two articles. Segalen, on two Normandy communities, uses historical records and the notion of the 'population isolate' (as used in demography and genetics) to trace marriage patterns. This analysis shows the recent erosion of endogamy based on occupational category in one village and on religious affiliation in another village. Karnoouh analyses the inter-relationahip of village politics in one Lorraine community with the manipulation of kinship networks and strategies relating to land distribution through marriage and inheritance.

Galli and Harrison, professors of cultural anthropology at the Universities of Bologna and Padua respectively, present a few interesting observa-

tions in their article on Lampedusa in Sicily, but the paper lacks organization and contains numerous side-issues. The stated aim 'to describe the concept of reality in Lampedusa and to explain it in terms of the conceptual conflicts present in an illiterate culture' (p. 222) is never quite achieved and indicates some of the conceptual and terminological problems. 'Illiterate culture', a curious formulation in itself, is defined as '... a "ghetto situation", unfair to those who have to submit to it' (p. 229). Yet the effects of 'modernization' brought to the island particularly through tourism are deplored: 'An entire world is lost, beyond repair, to a future world which may be or may not be. In the meantime, today, for the illiterate the different planes of reality are intermixed, confused' (p. 247). Must one then conclude that it is better to be trapped in the 'ghetto'?

Two papers on Romanian family and household organization are included, but they overlap considerably. Although interesting points emerge (for example, the popularity of 'sibling exchange' marriage), there is at least one major contradiction in content. Stahl describes the egalitarian basis of 'traditional' Romanian villages (from the 18th to the early 20th century) where access to resources (land, forests, water) is based on the 'assurance to all of equal conditions' (p. 212). Pop presents quite a different picture, however, claiming that 'Rumanian ethnological communities — the villages of free peasants — were not and are not today either, egalitarian associations of kinships [sic]' (p. 139). He goes even further, stating that from the Middle Ages a hierarchy was created based on family origin and title: '... village structure therefore acquired a caste organization' (p. 139). His choice of the term 'caste' without any further explanation is remarkable, particularly as his observations were purportedly based on two years' field-work in the contemporary Socialist state.

The last paper by Kiray examines business structure in Izmir. But to question the inclusion of Turkey in this volume is a mere quibble in view of its far more serious flaws.

For it is a task to find anything to recommend in this book. 'Europe is diversity itself', Braudel has noted succinctly (*The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, London 1972, p. 190). Certainly the volume does convey diversity; but even more it displays the disparity and incongruence of the intellectual approaches of those working in Europe — and even these are only partially represented (there are no Spanish or Dutch contributions, for example). Cusenier hopes that the book will succeed by showing that '... as regards European anthropology there is no need to sacrifice an intellectual tradition to another, but to study thoroughly each tradition by confronting one to another and building up what I would call a historical *anthropology*' (p. 4). The sentiment is admirable (though 'historical anthropology' is not explained), but the book does not succeed. It leaves a lasting impression of incoherence and careless preparation. Far more than a single paragraph is required to create some common ground for the 'study' and 'confrontation' of different traditions. Simple and thoughtless juxtaposition between two covers is not enough.

RENÉE HIRSCHON

J.W. ROGERSON, *Anthropology and the Old Testament*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1978. 127 pp. £7.95.

A theologian, but one with a long-standing interest in anthropology (see *J.A.S.O.* IV, 1973), John Rogerson is in a commanding position to review the impact which anthropology has made on Old Testament studies. As he observes, the later nineteenth-century was the period of greatest influence. Because Old Testament scholars have tended to be rather reticient about keeping abreast with anthropological enquiry, the impact since this period has in the main been unproductive. Thus, written primarily for a theological audience, *Anthropology and the Old Testament* is directed to displacing outdated anthropological theories, in particular evolutionism, diffusionism, and those advocating a primitive mentality.

Some of this is of considerable interest (for example, the rather remarkable ways in which Lévy-Bruhl's ideas entered Old Testament studies), although many of the objections should be well-known. Accordingly, the most interesting sections of the book are those where Rogerson surveys recent theories — largely structuralist — such as Pocock's 'North and South in the Book of Genesis' and Leach's 'The Logic of Sacrifice'. In connection with the latter anthropologist, he notes that 'Leach's statement that he hopes to have shown how, "in the analysis of ethnography, attention to small details really matters" will ... produce a smile among Old Testament scholars, in the light of J.A. Emerton's articles on Leach's handling of Genesis 38, where Emerton points out numerous small details which Leach appears to have overlooked'. The theme here could easily be developed: it is not simply that modern anthropological theory can aid in the interpretation of the Old Testament; equally, as Emerton, Derrett, Needham and others have recently shown, those with expertise in Old Testament studies can refine or improve anthropological theorising.

Rogerson does not develop a number of other facets of the anthropology of the Old Testament. Some he discusses elsewhere, as in his *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation* and *The Supernatural in the Old Testament*. Of especial interest is what he has written on the fascinating and perplexing topic of Old Testament views on the nature of human nature (see e.g. 'The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality', *J.T.S.* XXI, 1970, pp. 1-16). The argument, summarised in the book under review, begins with Lévy-Bruhl and Robinson, the latter applying the idea of mystical participation to suggest that Old Testament conceptualisations reflect a fluidity about the limits to a person's individuality. The various ways in which the individual or self can be conceptualised have of course been widely studied; for example in the work of Fortes, Levine and Horton. In this domain there is considerable scope for examining the relevance of various aspects of individualism in the Old Testament, and, more broadly, for examining whether the Old Testament model of man shows a 'logic' similar to that found in other cultures.

There is one facet of the relationship between Old Testament and anthropological studies which, unfortunately, Rogerson does not touch on. It concerns the difficult topic of whether anthropological theorising can be combined with theological approaches. Naturally, most Old Testament scholars do not write as strict theologians: in other words, their investigations are guided by scholarly or empirical standards, not by what they believe. But the question remains whether some anthropological theories are not reductionist and therefore unacceptable. Bearing in mind the problems once faced by Robertson Smith, is there not today some tension between

applying the ideas of Lévi-Strauss and writing for the 'Growing Points in Theology' series? Many anthropologists in the past — in particular Frazer — have appeared to use Old Testament material to argue against religion. It would be interesting to know if Rogerson thinks this manoeuvre is still being made or whether it is not in fact entailed by the closer liaison which he himself is advocating.

PAUL HEELAS

SANDRA BURMAN (ed.), *Fit Work for Women*, London: Croom Helm; Canberra: Australian National University Press; 1979. In association with the Oxford University Women's Studies Committee. 201 pp. £8.50 (Cloth), £4.50 (Paper).

JEANNETTE KUPFERMANN, *The MsTaken Body*, London: Robson 1979. 159 pp. £5.25 (Cloth).

Fit Work for Women is the second volume in the interdisciplinary Oxford Women's series, following Shirley Ardener's *Defining Females* in 1978. All eight papers in this volume focus on and challenge assumptions concerning the stereotype of a woman's role as mother, wife, childbearer, unpaid domestic and low-grade wage-earner — in the context of women in a wide range of occupations.

Most of the writers adopt a feminist viewpoint which relies heavily on Marxist analysis. Thus the vocabulary is one of 'oppression', 'power', and 'exploitation'. Women, or rather their current status in society, are seen as a 'problem', and we are asked to start from the basic assumption that women are oppressed. Thus 'the key to the understanding of women's oppression [lies] ... in the understanding of the nature of the family' Mary McIntosh, p. 154).

Catherine Hall's well-argued paper on 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology' discusses the role of the Evangelical Clapham Sect in re-defining the role of women in an increasingly industrialised society. Women had clearly-defined roles and spheres in which to operate. They were regarded as naturally delicate, reserved, pure and simple. Men, on the other hand, had grandeur, dignity and force. Whilst a man's task was to act in the theatre of public life, it fell upon the woman at home to regenerate the nation morally. The home, Hall argues, was expected to provide a haven in which women were 'faithful repositories of the religious principle, for the benefit both of the present and the rising generation' (p. 26). The result was that 'The bourgeois family was seen as the proper family, and that meant that married women should not work' (p. 31). The consequent castigation of working-class women for being 'poor housewives and inadequate mothers' is still with us.

Maureen M. Mackintosh's paper on 'Domestic Labour and the Household' provides a clear example of Marxist feminist thinking. Her thesis is basically that 'The household, the location of women's domestic labour, is the mediating institution for these two sets of relations [within the family and within society at large]: women's position and work within the household traps her and forces her into a subordinate position also within the wider society' (p. 190). The emphasis on structures of power and

oppression, as exemplified in Mackintosh's conclusion that: 'One wishes to investigate, for any society, how the two kinds of oppressive or exploitative social relations manage to be maintained against the opposition of the oppressed or exploited' (p. 146), underlies the rather negative approach to women on which this book is based.

Shirley Ardener in her introduction to *Perceiving Women* pointed out that '... after we have located the model of women in the overall ideological framework of a dominant structure we are still left with many features requiring analysis, and not least of them is ... the often little defined and seemingly vague, possibly repressed, alternative ideas which women may have about the world, including those about themselves, which may easily be overlooked' (p. xxi). Jeannette Kupfermann in *The MsTaken Body* seeks to redress this balance by looking at the way women view their bodies and how they relate to the world at large.

As an anthropologist Kupfermann examines women not as objects but as sentient beings who form an integral part of society. She seeks to go beyond the model of the body often presented in feminist literature which treats it as a machine, but instead to see it as a potent symbol and model of society. Writers such as Germaine Greer and Shere Hite have tended to adopt a fragmented, mechanistic view of the body and fall into the trap of separating the mind from the body, psychology from physiology, emotion from sensation. Kupfermann locates much of the anxiety and frustration experienced by women in a breakdown of symbolic language. She accuses the Women's Movement of underestimating the value of symbols in giving meaning to experience and in linking individual experience to a universal schema. In her own words: 'A new mythology has sprung up which uses the language of the body; it has seduced many women who now use its vocabulary, but it has created its own problems. An attempt has been made to destroy the symbol of women's bodies, and we have been left with a physical husk and a lot of *angst* that has no outlet' (pp. 11-12).

Jeannette Kupfermann has spent many years working as a trained antenatal teacher, both privately and in a London hospital. She has worked as a model, in films, and with radio and television. Her anthropological training took place at the L.S.E. and University College, London and she has carried out field-work among an orthodox Jewish community in East London. This wide range of experience is apparent throughout the book, and enables Kupfermann to give us a balanced and well thought out view of women.

The MsTaken Body is described as 'an examination of the influence of technological consciousness on women and their bodies' (p. 11). Drawing on her own experience of preparing women for childbirth, and on a wide range of anthropological, medical and sociological literature, Kupfermann reaches the perhaps controversial conclusion that 'the increasing problems women experience with their bodies ... relate in some way to the blurring of the lines between the sexes, the loss of opposites, and its correlate, the inability to complement, or to achieve mutuality' (p. 31). Echoing Lévi-Strauss Kupfermann emphasises the importance of exchange in any relationship, particularly in a marital situation. Men as well as women suffer from the inability to fulfil themselves as spouses: 'Husbands and wives need well-defined boundaries. It is only with these well-defined boundaries that they will have anything to exchange, which is the basis of all good relationships. It is therefore meaningless to dwell on the number of hours a husband puts in with vacuuming, or whether he merely "helps" with the houswork or does it. The important thing is that he does one thing and the wife another ....' (p. 33).

In her chapter on 'The Polluting Body' Kupfermann examines women's attitudes towards menstruation and bodily taboos. Many women in our society want to do away with all ideas of taboo or pollution surrounding menstruation, or to do away with menstruation altogether (as proposed by Germaine Greer in *The Female Eunuch*). This, says Kupfermann, is because taboos and symbols themselves have been emptied of meaning and only an outer husk of experience remains. Jewish women in East London, for example, do not regard menstruation as a cheap trick played on women, but invest it with meaning as a sign of regeneration and renewal.

Menstruation is a potent symbol, menstrual blood being ambiguously associated with both death and rebirth. 'Blood ... is the most powerful symbol of both life and death. Menstruation reminds us of both: but in a society where the woman cannot allow herself to give birth, and where Death, emptied of religious meaning, equals what Eliade has called "Anguish before Nothingness", it is no wonder that menstruation and its taboos have been emptied of all meaning too and only the physiological, mechanistic shell remains, emerging as a frightening array of pre-menstrual or para-menstrual *symptoms*. Without religious values, menstruation can have no value either; at most a few *ad hoc* cults might be resurrected, but they, too, cannot be vested with any true meaning, as they will not be able truly to *relate the individual to the universe*.' (p. 61)

Jeannette Kupfermann's book provides fascinating and provocative reading for all those interested in women's studies, feminism, or 'body language' in general.

FIONA BOWIE

KIRK ENDICOTT, *Batek Negrito Religion: the World-view and Rituals of a Hunting and Gathering People of Peninsular Malaysia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press 1979. 234 pp. £12.

This book is a landmark in the ethnography of South East Asia in general, and Malay aborigines in particular. Though books and papers have appeared on these aborigines as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, they were all the results of brief encounters by Europeans who did not speak the native languages. One exception is the work by Father Schebesta who in the 1920s spent more than a year travelling with the Negritos of the northern states of the Malay peninsula, but he was on a mission supported by the Pope and his main purpose was to prove the thesis of the *Kulturkreislehre* that the chief feature of early religion is the concept of a 'Supreme Being' or 'higher god'. His presentation of the material is therefore highly tendentious. In recent times several anthropologists have conducted intensive field-work among the various aboriginal groups, but very little of their findings is available. No full-scale ethnographic study of any one group has been published until the appearance of Endicott's book. Endicott spent almost two years living with the Batek, a group of about 350 people. Altogether there are no more than about 2000 Negritos and they form the smallest of the ethnic groups in the Peninsula. They are one of the last nomadic hunting and gathering peoples of South East Asia.

Endicott's analytical position in his discussion of the Batek religion

is, in his own words, the 'literalist' one. That is, he describes their religion as much as possible in terms of their own concepts, and claims that, 'properly inderstood, Batek ideas make sense in their own right' (p. 28). He then goes on to say, 'I do not think the Batek need an anthropologist to tell them what their beliefs "really mean". I take what the Batek say about things, the expressed ideas and feelings evoked by them, to be the meaning of the things for the people' (p. 29). As a result of this method, the material is largely left to speak for itself and at first sight his presentation is deceptively simple. Personally, I would have preferred on occasion more interpretations by the author, but on the whole his arrangement of the material is such that the Batek modes of thought emerge into a coherent whole. By the end of the book the reader is left with a strong impression of the Batek as human beings whose religious and symbolic concepts help them to understand the world in which they live.

Only in the chapter on the Negrito deities does he embark upon a detailed interpretation and analysis of the concepts. To a large extent his approach is dictated by the data themselves. There has been a lot of confusion in the past as to the 'true nature' of the various Negrito deities and supernatural beings, arising out of the conflicting information given by the people. Endicott solves the problem in an original and interesting way by insisting that 'What I am calling the deities of the Negritos, are, I suggest, ideas built up and out of imagined actions, corporal images, and names' (p. 199). He divides the vast amount of information on the deities into three sets of attributes in the following way: the part played by the deities in the working of the universe he calls their 'function'; the actions by which they achieve their functions he calls their 'role'; and the form the being is supposed to take he calls their 'image'. By doing this he overcomes the problem of definition by one feature only, and he shows that by treating the deities as polythetic classes (see Needham's article in *Man* 1975) there are many ways that the elements in any one 'function-role-image' set can be combined.

Although Endicott does not discuss the problem of cross-cultural comparisons, his framework of analysis as applied to Negrito deities opens new possibilities for meaningful comparisons to be undertaken across cultures without falling into the pitfalls of 'Frazerism'. His book is therefore important both in terms of the ethnography of Malay aboriginals, and of the problem of definition and classification.

SIGNE HOWELL

P.C. BURNHAM & R.F. ELLEN (eds.), *Social and Ecological Systems*, London & New York: Academic Press 1979. A.S.A. Monograph, No. 18. 188 pp. £8.80.

The twelve papers in this volume are drawn from the 1978 A.S.A. conference and provide a very useful introduction to a growing 'British' tradition in a hitherto American field. It is a field in which no single 'ecological methodology' is apparent, and Roy Ellen's Introduction is a much-needed guide for the perplexed in search of what constitutes the discipline.

Ten of the papers make use of specific ethnographic analyses to

touch upon two main themes of theoretical interest: the problem of controlled comparison and the boundary of explanatory units; and the difficulties surrounding the concepts of adaptation and 'environmental fit'. With regard to the former, a paper by James Fox on the utilisation of lontar palm sugar as the basis of economic and social variation in the historical development of two Rotinese States, well illustrates the problem of boundaries. Papers by Roy Ellen on Moluccan sago and spice economy, Paula Brown on New Guinea highland regional systems, David Harris on Torres Straits, and David Riches on the American North West, also address themselves to the difficulties of defining 'systems' and reproductive units. Variation and the possibilities of controlled comparison are the subject of papers by Alan Barnard on Bushmen groups in the Kalahari, and by Pierre Bonte on variation in segmentary lineage organisation under differing ecological conditions.

The emerging discipline is not without its academic battle-grounds. The paper of Philip Burnham on the Gbaya of Cameroon, and Jonathan Friedman's theoretical essay, lay siege to the bastion of American 'ecosystem' anthropology that explains the social in terms of negative feedback systems for the promotion of harmony with the environment. Doubt is cast upon the existence of simple equilibrium systems. Nicolas Peterson, on the other hand, takes cultural materialism even further by arguing the adaptive role of ideology, hitherto neglected in the emphasis on observed behaviour, with reference to Australian Bushmen groups. Pierre Van Leyneele's paper concentrates on the technical practices of the Libinza of the middle Congo flood-plain, describing how the knowledge necessary to sustain the system is reflected in classifications of environmental space, ecological successions and seasonal processes.

From the standpoint of a 'political ecologist' I find Friedman's 'Hegelian Ecology' the most rewarding piece. It lays bare the ideological content of Bateson's 'cybernetic harmonies' — as the strivings of those weary of the industrial, war-torn Western world to erect a new savage nobility. Like Rousseau the 'post-industrialists' see Western man as maladaptive, with his 'linear thinking' and 'conscious purpose' as the new evils that are contradictory to the self-maintaining circular nature of the ecosystem cybernetic. Tim Ingold, in an essay on evolutionary dynamics, follows this attack on harmony and equilibrium concepts with a self-confessedly contorted argument which presents the social system as a succession of phases and transformations, where limits are reached, equilibrium is dissipated and where discontinuous structural change, bifurcation or catastrophe occurs.

The British School thus emerges as critical of what is termed, perhaps rightly, a naive ecosystem approach. It is interesting in a historical perspective that the traditional reaction to materialist environmentalism is maintained, yet in this case the leading reactionaries are Marxist. Herein should lie fruitful ground for the sociologist of science. Ellen comments, 'the British School's ... intransigent position is no doubt partly due to the necessity of establishing a set of distinctive intellectual credentials' (p. 3), and he highlights the 'internalising circular explanations' drawn from French sociology as its main barrier. But the 'necessity' of 'credentials' must also reflect the wider political milieu in which anthropological institutions survive. It will be interesting to watch as the social movements of 'political ecologists' with their new religion of cybernetic harmony approach the foundations of industrial society, and observe the creation of explanations of the social that fend off the advancing ecological ideology.

PETER TAYLOR

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