BOOK REVIEWS

GERD BAUMANN, *National Integration and Local Integrity: The Miri of the Nuba Mountains in the Sudan*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1987. xiii, 213pp., Bibliography, Index, Tables, Figures, Plates. £25.00.

Anthropologists have been better at noting the irrationality of the frontiers between African post-colonial states than analysing the nature of cultural change within them, but Baumann's excellent study of the four thousand speakers of Timiri is among the exceptions. His book illuminates an issue which worries many people including those directly affected, and those who study them; how a small category of people can retain cultural integrity while becoming citizens in a state moulded by persons with a very different culture?

There have been two common model answers to this question. That which derives from political economy tends to stress the relative powerlessness of most small-scale cultures, their lack of capital, and the tendency for them to enter the capitalist economy at the bottom. The exceptions, who organize to exclude outsiders - aggressive trading networks, or craft-monopolies, are interesting. But the political economists suggest that fragile cultures will be extinguished by the power of market forces, and there is, alas, plenty of supporting evidence.

The other common approach, deriving from Weber and the plural society theorists, tends to stress political domination and the state's command of the instruments of cultural control; the neo-marxist interest in ideology as coercion, from Gramscian 'hegemonic ideas' to Althusserian 'apparatuses', provides additional support. In this model too, small is vulnerable.

Baumann's account of the Miri invites us to think of a third possibility, a kind of bicultural, bilingual adaptation to the nation state. The Miri have, it is true, all converted to Islam, but although they would now be ashamed of some of their former customs, the religion seems to sit lightly and syncretically upon them. They learn Arabic in school, and this allows them to communicate and trade with other Sudanese, but they continue to speak Timiri among themselves, including the children of urban migrants, whose remittances do a good deal to make life in the Nuba mountains dignified, in terms of the desired modern consumption of tea, sugar, cloth, medicine, etc.

The Miri have sufficient fertile land to meet their needs, and this is clearly crucial to their continued well-being. They are not so near a major town that they run the risk of being swamped by the dominant urban culture, yet they are near enough to get what they want without hardship. Where some tribal groups in Northern Sudan have moved away from an increasingly arid environment, and others have lost land to large-scale irrigation and

mechanised agriculture schemes, the Miri have been relatively fortunate. Does Baumann's analysis have lessons for other, less well-placed groups? Interestingly, it does.

His revival of the term 'redintegration' is instructive. He means a reactive process 'that aim[s] at restoring and renewing a local community to its state of wholeness as its members perceive it'(p. 3). Thus, for the Miri in the 1980s, 'being Miri' is not a matter of maintaining unchanged customs from the distant past, but of a selection from the flux that was the past, and an emphasis on language, ritual, and shared values (analysed by the author as 'key words') which help them to keep a distinction between Miri and others; the idea of a moral community is crucial here. My guess is that the idea behind redintegration will gain currency, and that the book will enjoy an influence which goes well beyond its ethnographic focus.

The monograph is a model of conceptual clarity, of precision in thought and writing, and of organisational coherence. Each paragraph and each sub-heading lead us persuasively forward to a very carefully considered overview of the Miri-in-the-Sudan. Those who will quarrel with the book will have to attack its most central ideas, for once the argument starts rolling it is virtually unstoppable.

Baumann is careful to keep a good separation between different analytical perspectives, and makes a convincing case for his deployment of material on Miri song, and dance. This is the first major study of the group and it is to be hoped that Baumann will add to it.

The quality of the photographs does not match that of the writing, but it is not clear whether this is the printer's doing or the author's. The index is austere.

PETER LOIZOS

DOMINIQUE CASAJUS, *La Tente dans la solitude: la société et les morts chez les touaregs Kel Ferwan*, Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme / Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1987. 336pp., Appendices, Bibliography, Glossary, Index, Figures, Plates. 160FF.

In this comprehensive and closely reasoned monograph Casajus elaborates on a culture to which he has already exposed *JASO* readers through two articles in this journal (as well as a third in a JASO Occasional Paper - number 4, *Contexts and Levels*).

The Kel Ferwan, a nomadic Tuareg group of northern Niger, are a people who call men veils and women tents. They are herders of goats and camels and divide themselves into nobles, commoners, smiths, freedmen and slaves. What provides permanence in this mobile society is the tent, but what guarantees the permanence of

the society is the activities undertaken during movement. The precise spatial orientation of the tent makes it a model of the social and celestial cosmos. A woman acquires a tent upon marriage, and her tent is a continuation of that of her mother, even to the point of incorporating parts taken from her mother's tent. However, she must pitch her tent in the camp of her husband's male relatives. A man acquires status through his wife's tent, in which he is never more than a guest. At periods in his life (youth, divorce, widowerhood) he will not have access to a tent and will therefore be deprived of hearth, home and social position.

A crucial social bond is that between brother and sister, which, however, begins to rupture upon the sister's marriage. A brother leaves the tent of his birth and eventually, upon his own marriage, enters a new tent. The exterior of their social space is inhabited by malevolent spirits, souls of the dead. Most men and women become such spirits on death, and a man will haunt the tent in which he dies. The name-giving ritual draws a new-born child from the realm of malevolent spirits. Aspects of the wedding ceremony emphasize that when they enter the wedding tent, bride and bridegroom enter the tent in which they will die. Tuareg men wear veils because through their virility they are thought closer to the spirits than are women. There is also an analogy between sperm, spittle and the spoken word, each in its own way bringing to mind the spirits. Nobles and commoners are men of few words, so that the freedmen and the smiths are the bearers of Tuareg oral literature. Veils must be worn and properly adjusted when father-in-law and son-in-law are in each other's presence; for they have in common that they will die in and haunt what is, symbolically at least, the same tent, and they therefore represent to each other the closeness of the evil spirits.

Casajus traces the intermingling of these and other themes as he examines the relation between tents and camps, herding, warfare, alternative kinship terminologies, preferential marriage with the mother's brother's daughter, the ritual cycle, and finally the veil. There are three appendices on the history of Tuareg tribes, the origin of mat tents, myths of origin, and the division of sacrificial meat. Thirty-six interesting and attractive photographs, as well as forty-one clear and informative figures, add distinction to the book. A thirteen-page glossary helps the reader through an extensive list of native terms. The analytic style and ethnographic quality reminds the reader of some of the other volumes in Louis Dumont's Atelier d'anthropologie sociale, of which this is the latest title. That context also increases the comparative interest of this subtle but sound monograph.

R.H. BARNES

TAKIE SUGIYAMA LEBRA and WILLIAM P. LEBRA (eds.), *Japanese Culture and Behavior: Selected Readings*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1986 [1974]. xix, 397pp., References, Index, Tables, Figures. £12.95.

JOY HENDRY, *Becoming Japanese: The World of the Pre-School Child* [Japanese Studies], Manchester: Manchester University Press 1986. 177pp., Appendix, Bibliography, Index, Plates. £22.50.

As indicated in its sub-title, 'Selected Readings', *Japanese Culture and Behavior* is a book filled with miscellaneous articles whose only common denominator is that they are concerned with Japan. The range of literature on Japan is nowadays huge; this book by no means covers all the topics one might include under the broad umbrella of 'culture' or 'behaviour', and this is of course both the strength and weakness of the present volume. As a general introduction to various themes in Japanese studies it does its job well, but the articles are so disparate that the book loses whatever focus its editors intended it to have. The specialist reader is apt to find bits and pieces of information that are illuminating, while the general reader will - as is often the case with books on Japan - be left with the impression of an utterly alien and incomprehensible society. This is certainly not the intention of the editors, who note in their introduction that 'any selected characteristic of the Japanese is not inherent in being Japanese but emerges only in comparison with other cultural groups' (p. xiii). Leaving aside the Americanism 'cultural groups', what Lebra and Lebra are saying is true. The enigmatic Japanese become much less so when compared with others, when they are stripped of the mystique of being Japanese; hence the current move against the ethnocentric literature on Japan known as *nihonjinron* (literally, 'theories on being Japanese').

In this revised edition the editors of *Japanese Culture and Behavior* try both to update the material and to tie it together with opening and closing commentaries on each of its four parts: 'Moral Values and Sentiments'; 'Interaction, Communication, and Grouping'; 'Development and Socialization'; and 'Cultural Stress, Psychotherapies and Resocialization'. Perhaps it is typical of American sociology and anthropology that having given us a title so loaded with meaning, the sections blithely continue this trend and give the readers even more loaded concepts: twenty-three articles could barely begin to scratch the surface of any one of these topics let alone all of them. Yet the persevering reader will find that, despite the formidable section titles, most of the articles are well worth reading.

Of special note are Asquith's short and succinct account of a monkey memorial service held by Japanese primatologists, Befu's ethnography of dinner entertainment, Lanham's article on ethics and moral precepts as taught in Japanese schools, Kawai's examination of violence in the home, Rohlen's account of a weekend of spiritual education, and Munakata's look at attitudes toward mental health care in Japan. What these articles have in common is that they

are excellent descriptions of events, attitudes or ideas with little theory to muddy the waters. Far more theoretical but still illuminating are Sasaki's article on nonmedical healing, Moeran's analysis of individual, group and *seishin* (spirit), and Suzuki's examination of language and behaviour. All three manage to explore difficult territory without confusing the reader. The two articles by Takie Lebra do not quite achieve this, and although the comparative one on justice and moral investment is a bit more readable, like her article on self-reconstruction in religious psychotherapy it also suffers from a preponderance of theoretical jargon. Buried in both, however, is some excellent ethnography which makes them worth wading through. Finally, the Salamon, Brandt and Murase articles are useful introductions to various aspects of Japanese society not generally examined by ethnographers: male chauvinism and love; skiing; and religious meditation as a form of therapy.

Another nine of the articles are reprinted from the original 1974 edition, and of these nine it was clearly necessary to keep the Ishida article on Japan as a paradoxical culture of love and hate, as well as those by Befu on gift-giving and by Caudill and Plath on sleeping patterns in Japanese households. The last two are classics, referred to again and again in all the literature on Japan. Also interesting are Doi's article on *amae*, the nebulous Japanese concept of indulgence towards children (immediately recognizable to any Spanish speaker as *mimar*), and Nakane's article on group formation. These two are also classics but have, with time, come to stand for all the worst aspects of *nihonjinron* arguments, since both stress the inalienable uniqueness of the Japanese. Another three papers, by De Vos, Pelzel, and Kasahara, are of interest while that by Caudill and Weinstein on maternal care in Japan is a frightening piece full of statistics. Is it possible that one can get valid results in a study which requires that the researchers never ask the people they are studying what they think but instead use a timetable, a stopwatch and so 800 observations in a five-hour span? Child care cannot be done as a time-and-motion study.

In contrast both to the failed attempt to organize so many diverse topics into one coherent book and to the Caudill and Weinstein article, Hendry's *Becoming Japanese* demonstrates how a careful study of one aspect of a society can successfully reveal the entire workings of that society. This is perhaps the best illustration of the key difference between American cultural anthropology and British social anthropology. Holding fast to the notion that culture can be subdivided and examined out of context to the social whole, the articles in *Japanese Culture and Behavior* do little to give the reader a good understanding of Japanese society. In contrast, *Becoming Japanese* begins with the premise that all of society is interconnected and this touches on all the concepts which the Lebra book tries so hard to elucidate. In examining the world of the pre-school child, Hendry must also delve into language, morals, socialization, development, communication, grouping and sentiments. If the book is flawed it is by an aspect of the study which the author herself notes, for she is exploring socialization within the context of social anthropology, 'an area of the subject

which has been neglected in recent years' (p. 6). Lack of comparative data, then, means that some basic questions the study raises cannot be answered. A good example of this problem is the practice of parents and children sleeping together: as part of Hendry's argument for the process of becoming Japanese it is important, but the practice is not unique to Japan. A reader with any experience of child-rearing will cry out at such points: 'but we (or the so-and-so) also do this; why is this seen as being *Japanese*?' Until more comparative studies on child socialization have been carried out, such questions cannot be answered in full.

That is not to say that Hendry's book raises queries and provides no answers. Rather, with its close examination not only of child-rearing practices but of the concepts surrounding children and child-rearing, as well as with her analysis of the specific words associated with children, Hendry's book reveals both the similarities and differences between the Japanese and other cultures. There is not enough space in a review to elaborate on the whole book but a brief example should suffice to give an idea of the excellence of *Becoming Japanese*. In a lucid and concise style, Hendry examines the difficult Japanese concept of *shitsuke* or breeding, upbringing, training and discipline. Rather than surround it with mystique as Doi did for *amae* (passive love), Hendry considers the word in all its aspects and uses. She employs Japanese material as well as informants' data so that, at the very beginning of her book, the conceptual framework which is integral both linguistically and structurally to child-rearing in Japan is clearly understood. Thus the concept of *shitsuke* - which is ultimately one of 'making up' or 'straightening' - is unravelled so that its relationship to all of Japanese society from rice-planting to kimonos becomes apparent.

That so short a monograph could be full of such essential detail is the hallmark of a good ethnography. Throughout the book Hendry repeats this process of examining each area of child-rearing with impeccable clarity, so that at the book's end one feels that one has really learned something about the Japanese. There can be no better recommendation for a book than that.

D.P. MARTINEZ

PENELOPE GRAHAM, *Iban Shamanism: An Analysis of the Ethnographic Literature* [Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University Occasional Paper], Canberra: The Australian National University 1987. x, 151pp., Notes, References, Glossary, Maps, Figures, Illustrations. A$12.00.

This 'analysis of the ethnographic literature' may be recommended for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the quality of the

concise analysis. Graham addresses some of the central problems that have developed from contradictions in the ethnographic literature on Iban shamanism. These include establishing 'the range and nature of the powers attributed to the Iban shaman ... the significance of the transformed shaman, and [the position of] shamanism within the coherence-structures of traditional Iban culture'. A close reading of texts of ritual language reveals the field of salient associations and the source of the shaman's power in the socio-economic order of Iban life. As such, the analysis illuminates interesting categories of Iban thought concerning the role of the shaman, the nature of illness, and the 'order of things'.

Graham demonstrates the inadequacy of general theories of shamanism such as those of Eliade and Lewis for the Iban case, and chooses to demonstrate the significance of Iban 'shamanic' ritual as specifically appropriate to the Iban dialectic of self : other which permeates Iban political, kinship, and religious spheres. The interpretations of transformed shaman (*manang bali*) have usually depended on some notion of innate transvestism, but Graham offers an additional interpretation whereby *manang bali* 'place themselves beyond the range of effective competition in the gender-dichotomized terms of the Iban prestige system', and thus they may be 'credited with powers of perception beyond the surface appearances of things and events as they are seen by Iban men and women'.

Graham, as Derek Freeman notes in the Introduction, has produced 'an invaluable contribution to Iban studies', but the book recommends itself to a wider audience than Indonesianists for its relevance to more general studies of shamanism. It is also worth noting that this work grew out of Graham's Master of Arts thesis at the Australian National University. One is left considering the potential to the discipline if more Masters theses provided such concise, erudite analysis of ethnographic literature.

TIM FERRIS

RICHARD DAVIS, *Muang Metaphysics: A Study of Northern Thai Myth and Ritual* [Studies in Thai Anthropology 1], Bangkok: Pandora 1984. 299pp., References, Index, Maps, Figures, Plates. No price given.

GEHAN WIJEYEWARDENE, *Place and Emotion in Northern Thai Ritual Behaviour* [Studies in Thai Anthropology 2], Bangkok: Pandora 1986. 249pp., Bibliography, Index, Plates. No price given.

Theravada Buddhism as a religious system does not attempt to do more than teach a way to enlightenment. It has less involvement in life-cycle rituals and the legitimation of kin-groups than any other world religion. It provides extremely meagre resources for magical, apotropaic or healing rituals. Consequently it always

coexists with other religious systems with different origins. Theravada Buddhists consider these other systems lower than Buddhism. The people of northern Thailand recognize two other systems which they call 'Brahmanism' - referring to non-Buddhist ritual and knowledge deriving from India - and the religion of spirits. Should one interpret these as opposed and ranked aspects of one overall system or should one follow the Thais in seeing them as separate systems of diverse origin with no necessary connection one to the other?

Both approaches have their value. Depending on the questions the anthropologist is interested in, one or other may be appropriate. And the two books under review, numbers 1 and 2 in a new series devoted to the anthropology of Thailand, for the most part take opposite sides on this issue.

The two authors evidently knew each other well and it seems that Gehan Wijeyewardene, the author of *Place and Emotion*, edited *Muang Metaphysics* after the death of its author, Richard Davis, at the early age of 38. (We are not told why no name appears on the title page of Davis's book.) The books are attractively printed in Bangkok, but would have benefited from careful proofreading.

Muang Metaphysics focuses on non-Buddhist myth and ritual in a Muang (northern Thai) village. It includes discussion of Buddhism only where relevant and thus describes only part of the religious experience of the people it describes. *Place and Emotion* on the other hand appears rather as a collection of essays on a variety of topics, some very much to do with Buddhism, others to do with spirit mediums and other forms of 'folk religion'. Unlike *Muang Metaphysics*, it does not draw its data primarily from one village but from a wide range of localities. By its method, then, rather than by its argument, it attempts to break down the distinction made by Thais themselves, and by most scholars, between Buddhism and other forms of religion. Wijerewardene argues that Buddhism is essentially this-worldly in its orientation and that folk religion is often concerned, like Buddhism, with the accumulation of merit. He recognises nonetheless that 'it is ... probably a mistake' 'to assemble these complementarities and dichotomies into a single coherent intellectualistic system' (p. 140).

Of the two books, *Muang Metaphysics* has the greater coherence and will probably be of more interest to non-specialists. Richard Davis clearly knew northern Thai society and its language very well. One should not be misled by the title into thinking that he deals with abstract concepts divorced from their ethnographic context. The book's valuable discussions of space, time and myth are firmly and unpretentiously grounded in the facts of Muang matriliny, household organization and ritual. The ritual year, and the symbolism of its rites, are described in great detail.

Davis begins by castigating previous anthropological work on ritual in Thailand for having 'for the most part shown only a rudimentary knowledge of local Thai idiom, no knowledge at all of Pali or Sanskrit, and a virtual indifference to Thai written traditions'. Davis himself is keen to use textual evidence to attempt some conclusions about the provenance of the various parts of Muang culture.

Since the locals themselves divide up their culture according to the origins of its parts, he does not refrain from more scholarly historical speculation about it. What the locals call 'Brahmanism' includes elements due to Tantric Shaivism and probably also Mahayana Buddhism, as well as the Indian system of astrology. Some local spirit cults are believed to have been inherited from the aboriginal inhabitants of the area, the Mon-Khmer tribes, who were driven out and/or absorbed by the present Muang. At the same time the Muang preserve, *inter alia*, certain classes of spirits and beliefs about the auspiciousness of certain times from their own pre-Buddhist Tai heritage. Davis himself believes that the Muang are the only Tai people to preserve an ancient Tai practice of matrilineality, the other Tais, found in Laos and Vietnam, having diverged from this under the influence of the Vietnamese. He recognizes, however, that this is a controversial conclusion.

In discussing the local system of astrology Davis proposes a distinction between primary civilizations and secondary civilizations. In the former the Great Tradition represents a universalization, in Marriott's terms, of what were originally local or tribal ideas. In the latter the Great Tradition is derived from abroad. In the present case it leads to two wholly different systems of astrology being carried on, the one at court centres, the other by local soothsayers. They appear to be related because the local system adopts Sanskritic terms for its own, quite different, concepts. 'The astrological terminology is there,' concludes Davis, 'without the astrology' (p. 94).

In his conclusion Davis eschews historical questions and advances a theory of myth and ritual. He argues that Muang ritual is structured by a series of hierarchical and asymmetric oppositions (male:female, senior:junior, north:south, high:low, head:feet, right:left, settlement:forest). These oppositions receive very different treatment in Muang myth and ritual:

> The *rituals* express, affirm, and reinforce certain oppositions and important distinctions which the Muang feel are inherent in the nature of things, and these oppositions are presented without ambiguity. In the *myths*, on the other hand, the discrete categories so important to Muang thought tend to be confused and even obliterated (p. 291).

He then broadens the argument by suggesting that in most societies what Roger Callois has called *paidia*, 'the playful emphasis of spontaneity, uncontrolled fantasy, and carefree gaiety', is, as with the Muang, expressed in myth. There may be some societies with an impoverished mythology, such as the Bantu described by Gluckman, which express *paidia* in ritual itself; and there are others, such as the Abelam of New Guinea described by Forge, which express it through painting. But in general, Davis concludes that 'ritual is typically motivated, at least in part, by a concern for the preservation of conceptual order; and myth is universally playful'. And he continues:

> The Muang themselves are not of a particularly reflective or philosophical temperament. Although they are Buddhists, they

> are not given to pondering the ultimate nature of things. But in their myth and ritual there is an implicit metaphysic which states that while definitional patterns are necessary to human existence, in the last analysis these patterns are illusory (p. 299).

Whether or not this view of myth and ritual is fruitful on a global scale, it deserves consideration. For South Asia it is certainly very suggestive.

Wijeyewardene's *Place and Emotion in Northern Thai Ritual Behaviour* will, like *Muang Metaphysics*, be of great value for students of Thai ritual. It also contains much useful data on Thai Buddhism, for instance on the way in which monasteries define localities, or on the different definitions of Buddhism competing in Bangkok, and foreign anthropologists' understanding of them. Thus Wijerewardene has much to say about the sociology of Buddhism which is of considerable sophistication. There is much data also on interaction with spirit mediums, with long quotations from tape-recorded consultations. Wijeyewardene also discusses the history and symbolism of the pillar of Indra found at the centre of Chiang Mai. This leads to some suggestive remarks on the way in which rulers try to integrate and dominate communal rituals of all types, whereas monks are bound to resist this or find their position undermined. He concludes the chapter with some equations which he rightly calls 'intriguing': female : [spirit-] possession : personalized power :: male : territorial authority : impersonal power :: monks : ascetic : sexual power (p. 151).

Characteristically, however, Wijeyewardene then moves on to present further data, without clarifying this conclusion. One is left with the impression of a jumble of anthropological *aperçus* and fascinating, but sometimes half-digested, data. In spite of the billing of emotion in the title, the book does not attempt cross-cultural analysis in the manner of American psychological anthropology. Lacking a clear and dominant theme, the book will be useful only to Buddhologists and students of Southeast Asia.

DAVID GELLNER

DAVID RICHES (ed.), *The Anthropology of Violence*, Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell 1986. ix, 227pp., Glossary, Index. £25.00.

This is a collaborative volume in which there are two chapters about Spain, one about Japan, one about a 'non-violent' society (the Piaroa of Venezuela), one about Northern Ireland, one about football hooligan behaviour, and one which concerns the London Metropolitan Police. Each is written either by an expert in the field, or by an academic whose star appears to be rising or who has

already established a reputation for having something to say - respectively, John Corbin; Garry Marvin; Brian Moeran; Joanna Overing; Graham Macfarlane; David McKnight; Dunning, Murphy and Williams; and David Parkin; as such they command attention. And if this reviewer were not familiar with the work of David Riches, the editor of this collection, nor with that of Copet-Rougier on the Mkako of Cameroon and of Heald on the Gisu of Uganda, then he was pleased of having the chance of getting to know it.

There is no question that the papers published in *The Anthropology of Violence*, which are rewritten and extensively revised versions of the papers read in St Andrews, will be required reading for the students of the peoples aspects of whose lives are addressed. Furthermore, because 'violence' is an odd-job word (Parkin, p. 204), the consideration of the topic in widely different forms of life also involves the consideration of an equally wide range of related ideas, what these ideas are depending, naturally, on the place of 'violence' in the ideology of the form of life in question. As Corbin writes, 'each culture constructs and lives its own meanings, each experiences its own violence, and each must be investigated in its own terms' (p. 48).

This injunction, however, runs counter to the stance adopted by almost all the contributors to this volume, who do not limit themselves to one particular form of life, but employ comparative data and more abstract writings to elucidate their material. Perhaps the most extreme example is Parkin's use of African material, from the Giriama, one of the Mijikenda peoples of Kenya, to throw light on Anglo-Saxon understandings of violence.

Such comparativism strikes this reviewer as wholly legitimate, and as a relief from the rather narrow regionalism which characterises some comparative approaches. The real question, though, is, perhaps, in what terms are such comparisons most profitably conducted? If it is the case (as it clearly is) that 'activities which strike members of one society as violent (and which are judged accordingly) may be conceptualized and evaluated quite differently by members of another society', as Marvin writes (p. 134), then clearly English 'violence' is unlikely to be a useful tool for comparative analysis, as Paul Heelas has already pointed out (cf. Riches, p. 2).

Various ways of dealing with this question are adopted by the essays in *The Anthropology of Violence*, and their success is best gauged by the reader. One way, which in one form is advocated by Riches (pp. 4-7), is to define 'violence' artificially, by reference to a characteristic which is common to all forms of violence (he argues), i.e. monothetically. Riches thus defines violence by reference to what he calls a 'core purpose', 'tactical pre-emption, i.e. securing practical advantage over one's opponents in the short term through forestalling their activities' (p. 5).

Riches's 'core purpose' runs hand-in-hand with his declared focus on the 'strategy' and the 'meaning' of a performer's violence, which in turn, of course, means that violence is taken to be rational and in a sense orderly.

Now, in his study of 'Violence in Rural Northern Ireland ... ', Macfarlane asks: 'How do people square their views of violence [in which 'killings and bombings within the home community tend to be

blamed on outsiders' (p. 192)] with the reality of it?' (p. 198). This attitude to meaning, i.e. that somehow the contributors have access to a meaning of what they study, which is other people's meanings, which is more real than the meanings upon which, in concert with Riches, they partially focus, detracts somewhat from the attractiveness of this book, for the attitude is inconsonant with the achievements of the social sciences in accounting for social phenomena.

The Anthropology of Violence leaves this reviewer a little dissatisfied too: although it manages obliquely to satisfy its main aims - 'to grasp what *underlies* the striking capacity of violence as a social and cultural resource: why is violence so readily chosen to satisfy social goals? Why are images of violence so culturally prominent, even in "peaceful" societies?'(Riches, p. viii) - the terms in which ultimately it does so, mostly power and politics very broadly defined, seem not to meet the demands of the case.

The attitude referred to, and sleights-of-hand in argumentation - in Parkin's essay, for instance, a young man, possibly a teenager, whose eyes burn with what could be anger, frustration, hatred, desperation or hopelessness (p. 206), later becomes a confused-looking teenage boy (p. 209), and then a desperate teenager (p. 219) - tend to lessen the compellingness of this volume. This effect is exacerbated a little also by Moeran's reliance, in a fascinating analysis of the relationship between Japanese conceptions of beauty, violence, sex, and death, and their connections with time, on the works of Mishima Yukio. Mishima, Moeran writes (p. 109), 'is, in fact, one of Japan's more interesting modern writers in that he acted out in real life what he frequently alluded to in his faction and essays', namely, among much else, he disembowelled himself publicly (the samurai's *seppuku*). Yet every Japanese person with whom I have discussed Mishima appears to think that he was quite mad (*ki-chigai*), and wholly unrepresentative, therefore, of the Japanese, and his works equally unrepresentative of Japanese thought. So I am uneasy: if one only knew more about the other places and topics discussed by the other contributors, one is led to ponder, what else might make one stop and think? This unease is not alleviated by the Glossary, it should be added, in which 'technical terms in the text' (Riches, p. ix) are listed and explicated. In this list, words such as 'Azande', 'Durkheimian', 'epiphenomenon', 'Nuer' and 'Weberian' appear (pp. 224-226), while 'incest' is glossed as 'sexual relations between kin (normally close kin) among whom sexual relations are disallowed', and 'kinship (kin)' as 'relation between people built up from links between parents and children, and siblings' (p. 225) which, it will be agreed, is not terribly reassuring.

Still, *The Anthropology of Violence* is instructive and thought-provoking and can be well recommended to *JASO* readers. This reviewer can hardly say, though, that it was as enjoyable a book to read as he had hoped.

ANDREW DUFF-COOPER

HENRY LOUIS GATES, Jr. (ed.), *"Race", Writing, and Difference*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1986. 409pp., Index, Illustrations. £26.75 / £13.25.

'Race' is a racist construct, an interested way of stating and creating political and economic difference in pseudo-biological terms. 'Race' is a word in language, and racism is literally expressed in an insidious variety of verbal and narrative forms. This is not a question of mere linguistics: racism has ugly consequences in the real world. All the more reason then for this collection of essays discussing the ways forms of difference are made and maintained in racist terms in the language we use.

Gates has gathered here a remarkable number (twenty) of (mostly) distinguished academics to contribute thoughtful, combative essays on different aspects of his central theme. Many papers gain edge because their authors are intellectuals from communities marginal to male WASP culture (black, female, Palestinian, Indian, etc.), while the white males included in this edition are all politically sensitive to the issue at hand. It is a pleasurable change to read works by dons who do not forget universities are functioning parts of the social world which foots their bill.

A sample list from the book includes: Anthony Appiah demonstrating that there is no biological basis whatever to 'race'; Edward Said uncovering the undemocratic core of the Israeli state; Abdul JanMohamed revealing how a political economy of Manichean allegory functions to generate racial difference in colonialist literature; Mary Louise Pratt - as sophisticated as ever - emphasizing the multiplicity of ways of codifying the Other, the variety of (seemingly) fixed positions and the variety of (seemingly) given sets of differences that they posit. She stresses the need to consider ideology not only in terms of reductive simplification but also in terms of the proliferation of meanings. Sander Gilman relates the perceived identity between the European prostitute and the Hottentot female by unravelling the threads connecting late nineteenth-century notions of female sexuality in art, medicine, and literature.

In an endpiece commenting on the other essays Todorov complains that buzzwords overused oversimplify. Indeed most of the contributors, trained in English literature, delight in using a composite vocabulary derived from Derrida, Foucault, literary theory, and narratology. 'Discourse', 'textualized', 'seen/scene', 'site/sight', 'capitalist mode of production', 'imperialist', 'narration', 'Bahktinian', are key terms to be found throughout this text. Skilfully used, this intellectual dialect advertised the intelligence of its author and pleases an educated reader. It also excludes non-academics from understanding highly informative articles on important issues. This edition may have radical tone but its edge is blunted, for its contributors' use of such terms restricts its possible market to already converted liberals living on campus. And some contributors waste their passion in unnecessarily political pieces criticizing others included in the book. Derrida's shrill reply to two doctoral students' commentary on a

short article by him is an unlikeable example of academic overkill of enthusiastic fledglings by an intellectual eagle who is already flying high. These otherwise politically concerned authors may want to change the world, but how can they do it if they burn time scoring points off one another? This is all a great pity because this stimulating collection of mostly well-written provocative articles deserves a wide readership. Anthropologists will profit from it.

JEREMY MACCLANCY

JAMES PEACOCK, *The Anthropological Lens: Harsh Light, Soft Focus*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1986. xii, 119pp., Index. £17.50 / £5.95.

This is intended not as a text book, but as 'a somewhat philosophically oriented glance at anthropology by an anthropologist'. Essentially, it offers an account of just what is distinctive about anthropological thought and of how anthropology differs from other professions - academic or otherwise - with which it might superficially be compared. In plan it is quite straightforward, consisting of three chapters entitled 'Substance', 'Method' and 'Significance'. The first sees culture as 'the dominant concept in anthropology' on both sides of the Atlantic, including Britain, which is declared to be mainly concerned with 'the social context of culture'. The word 'culture' can be defined in many different ways, of course, but it is here that Peacock most clearly betrays his own allegiance and bias. Nonetheless, holism and meaning are also given their due.

The second chapter predictably highlights fieldwork as 'the distinctive method of anthropology' even though other professions could also be said to indulge in it. Accordingly, Peacock spends several pages emphasizing the long-term, total-immersion, 'pure' quality of anthropological fieldwork, free from the ulterior motives of the missionary or spy, from the deceit of the latter, from the superficiality of the journalist etc. Nor are the post-fieldwork methods of interpretation and comparison neglected.

The final chapter is largely concerned with anthropology's applicability in a complex and conflictual world, concluding finally that it has more to offer than just helping with the implementation of family planning: 'the contribution of anthropology is to broaden the framework of discussion' on the broader issues facing the world, making use of its cross-cultural competence to eliminate any particular cultural bias in their discussion and solution. Of course, this depends on finding enough people willing to listen. Peacock's tightrope-walking merely highlights the difficulty of avoiding both the ivory tower and the worldly corruption of

professional ideals that is especially acute for anthropologists.

Peacock draws on his own fieldwork area of Java on occasion, and on his sabbatical year in Oxford in the early 1980s, the University being presented as a typical (anthropological) academic community. It cannot be said that he has got all the details right, however (e.g. the Pitt Rivers Museum is autonomous from, not just a section of, the University Museum), and the nature-culture explanation of the distribution of science and humanities teaching in the University is distinctly forced; surely the science departments are on the periphery simply because they arrived later, not because they are closer to nature.

Frequently anecdotal, sometimes aphoristic, occasionally trite in its choice of the familiar for examples, this is nonetheless a very adequate defence of what anthropology is and does and what makes its practitioners tick. Outsiders frequently complain at anthropologists' apparent inability or unwillingness to explain these things - this is a book they should read. Unfortunately, though, such books have a habit of going out of date quite quickly, for they are less concerned to advance new ideas than to explain current ones to a wide audience. So what will this effort look like a generation or so hence?

ROBERT PARKIN

AKBAR S. AHMED, *Toward Islamic Anthropology: Definition, Dogma, and Directions* [Islamization of Knowledge Series, no. 2], Ann Arbor: New Era Publications 1986. 68pp., Bibliography.

This work falls into two parts: the major section (55 pages) is devoted to the development of anthropology, its scope, methods and the social problems it deals with; the remaining 13 pages define Islamic anthropology, its scope, principles and directions.

Ahmed maintains that the early development of anthropology was closely related to colonial expansion and that this, together with orientalists' prejudices, is reflected in the works of some contemporary Western anthropologists. Colonial policy in British India and French North Africa tried to divide tribal peoples in the hope that separate administrative entities would eventually create ideological divisions within the population. Thus some contemporary anthropologists promote provincial divisions as 'the pre-Islamic font of national existence' (p. 8) and stress the idea that certain nomads are bad Muslims, while others are good (p. 27).

According to Ahmed, some orientalists considered the age of the Prophet as an age of 'violence and barbarism' in contrast to the 'gentleness and peace' of contemporary Western society. Ahmed sees this dichotomy reflected in the works of some contemporary anthropologists who describe some Muslim groups as 'deceitful,

hollow, and suspicious', Muslim life as 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short', or claim that a 'particular Muslim society resembles the Mafia' (pp. 54-5).

Ahmed suggests the establishment of Islamic anthropology to counteract these prejudices. It is to be based on the sociological principles of Islam, mainly the universalistic concept of *ummah*, relating village/tribal society to the larger historical and ideological frame of Islam. The *ummah* includes a multitude of Muslim societies within the framework of universal Islam (p. 58). The teachings of the Prophet recommend also that *ummah* transcends lineage and race. The rules which organize social relations (marriage, inheritance) are laid down explicitly by Islam. Ahmed states the Islamic view that man's mission is to reconcile society with the instructions of God (p. 57). Life is a struggle to improve the moral quality of one's existence (*jihad al-nafs*). However, he does not relate this to any specific anthropological questions.

Ahmed recommends that Muslim societies should be studied in chronological sequence corresponding with broad periods in Muslim history, namely tribal society in early Islam, the Ottoman period, Islam under Western Imperialism, and re-emergent Islam as in the creation of Pakistan, and the Islamic revolution in Iran. He also recommends the writing of text books and monographs in the various languages of the Muslim peoples, cooperation between the anthropologists of the various regions of the Muslim world, comparative studies of the major categories of peasants, tribes and cities, and the creation of a core of Islamic anthropological literature based on the works of Ibn-Khaldun, al-Biruni, Ibn-Battuta and al-Mas'udi (I would add the works of Arab geographers like al-Bakri and Ibn-Hawqal, and Ibn-Meskawayh who wrote on the manners of the Arabs and Persians).

Ahmed's brief outline of Islamic anthropology is unclear. He does not state the specific questions such an anthropology would ask. He does not detail the rules, the theoretical implications and the relation of the chronological study of Muslim societies to the existing body of historical and social data. He does not explain what contribution this study would make towards the improvement of the methods of present studies. Ahmed argues that the world-view of Muslim anthropologists should be the universality of Islam (pp. 56-9) and the Muslim ideal that society and individuals are motivated by the desire to perform the will of God. However, he does not elucidate how this would create an Islamic anthropology. It is a general anthropological rule that an anthropologist working in any community should bear in mind the ideals of the community and the religion of its people, but this is not in itself a Christian, Jewish or Hindu anthropology.

In my opinion, what is important is to try to find out how Islamic ideals and world-views are articulated in social contexts and in popular imagination; in order to do so the anthropologist, whether Muslim or Western, should be well versed in Islamic literature, culture, history and the language of the people concerned. Muslim anthropologists who are not educated in these subjects write bad anthropology.

Islamic values and ideals permeate Muslim society and affect

most of its social aspects. The quality of some Western works may be affected by bias or ignorance of Islamic literature, Middle Eastern history and culture. The latter weakness is also common to some Muslim anthropologists. Ahmed's suggestion of the establishment of efficient educational institutions in the Muslim world may be one way to remedy this problem.

NADIA ABU-ZAHRA

BEN WHITAKER (ed.), *Minorities: A Question of Human Rights* (with an Introduction by Professor Roland Oliver), Oxford etc.: Pergamon Press 1984. 127pp., Appendix, £10.00.

This book consists of a collection of Annual Lectures, covering the period 1972-83, instituted by the Minority Rights Group. The distinguished collection of politicians and academics, which includes Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, Professor Sir Edmund Leach, the Rt. Hon. Shirley Williams and Professor Ralf Dahrendorf, were given the task of developing a 'coherent philosophy for dealing with minority problems in the abstract' (p. 6). As Roland Oliver indicates in his introduction, only Professor Sir Edmund Leach used the occasion to 'pour scorn on his hosts' by questioning the underlying philosophy of MRG. Leach declared that there is no such thing as a moral absolute, every human culture having its own system of values. The values propounded by MRG should therefore be recognised, he argues, as a form of moral imperialism. One wonders how far those suffering discrimination would go along with Leach's stance on the relativity of moral values? The style of Leach's contribution is provocative and his message ultimately unconvincing.

Other contributions cover a wide spectrum, reflecting the varied content of MRG reports. The term 'minorities' itself is something of a misnomer, the concern being with what is considered unjust discrimination wherever it occurs. The problems of refugees, human rights abuses, the undemocratic rule of minorities, the effect of prejudice, the limits of integration and the tension between intervention and sovereignty are all given an airing. An appendix lists the first 62 MRG reports, together with details of how to obtain them. I found the volume informative and thought-provoking and the values expounded altogether more universal than Leach would allow.

FIONA BOWIE

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