

BOOK REVIEWS

IVO STRECKER, *The Social Practice of Symbolization: An Anthropological Analysis* [LSE Monographs on Social Anthropology 60], London and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Athlone Press 1988. ix, 226pp., Bibliography, Index, Figures. £32.00.

This is a challenging book which provokes one into re-examining old assumptions. It argues for its position in the chain formed by Turner and Sperber by virtue of its use of the arguments of Brown and Levinson. When in 1978 the latter two produced a model of politeness phenomena as a 'universal of language use', they set a challenge to anthropology that has hitherto not been taken up. Most anthropological accounts and analyses are both too general at the level of conclusion and too distanced from the data on which they are based. This book sets out to use Brown and Levinson's work to help the understanding of symbolism.

Much of the book consists of Strecker's accounts of the arguments that he is either criticising or using. As such, it will make a good teaching book, but I am left wondering if so much space should have been devoted to the sympathetic repetition of Brown and Levinson's argument, especially in the year following the re-publication of their original paper. Be that as it may, Strecker gives fair and reasoned accounts of both Turner's and Sperber's analyses of symbolism. They are then criticised, Turner for not being able to explain why some groups lack exegeses of their rites and symbols (both Strecker and Sperber worked among such groups). Turner also leaves the actors ignorant of the 'positional' meaning of symbols, thus making their production mysterious. Most importantly, his analysis decomposes the multi-vocality into a super-position of univocal 'meanings'. Thus Turner does not present an analysis of multi-vocality *per se*, a telling criticism since multi-vocality is the cause, not the effect, of symbolism. The argument with Sperber can be summarized as a result of contrary emphases on the part of Sperber and Strecker: Sperber on the understanding ('processing') of symbols by the recipient, and Strecker on their production by the speaker. To this end Strecker quotes Magritte extensively to establish that symbols are not wholly devoid of meaning (as Sperber has it), and that meaning affects the 'degree' of symbolization, as in the variously powerful 'the lion is the king of the animals' and 'the lion is the Paul Brown of animals' (p. 37). He then tests Grice's notion of conversational implicature against Sperber by contrasting their explanations of irony. Strecker shows Grice's notion of irony to be more social and inter-personal than Sperber allows since 'only if one focuses on the sender first can one grasp the particular character of an ironic statement. It is he who, to use Grice's terminology, "exploits the cooperative principle" and

"forces the implicative" which may lead to the complicity between the interlocutors that Sperber has observed' (p. 50).

Strecker then spends 96 pages explaining Brown and Levinson's paper on politeness, which need not be summarized here. It suffices to remind readers that on the basis of three weak assumptions about people the authors derive a very detailed set of linguistic norms. Their assumptions are 1) that actors have 'face', which they try and maintain in the presence of FTA (face-threatening acts); 2) they can calculate (rationally) the effects of their actions and hence modify them in the light of expected outcomes, for example, reduce the effect of an FTA when they produce it; and 3) the actors have mutual knowledge of these assumptions. Strecker gives many interesting examples culled from Hamar ethnography. Finally, he points out a new 'super-strategy' (his term) previously not considered, which consists of the mixing of 'negative' and 'positive' politeness types in the same utterance or exchange of utterances. Having demonstrated its existence, he does not provide an account of when it is likely to be used. (It should be noted that one of the diagrams accompanying this discussion, Fig. 12, p. 160, has a row of numbers at the bottom which do not relate to the rest of the diagram.) Strecker then modifies Brown and Levinson's typology of the 'ethos' found in different societies: the different politeness strategies predominating in different societies relate to basic sociological structures.

Strecker's main extension of Brown and Levinson hinges on his observation - an insight breathtakingly obvious in retrospect and all the more valuable for that - that any account of politeness is *ipso facto* also one of rudeness. Hence the same strategies that Brown and Levinson describe to avoid FTAs can also be used to impose them - one simply reverses the calculation. The same theory can be applied to the analysis of domination and exploitation. We can now analyze the detailed linguistic realization of the everyday processes in which power and status are realized, maintained and disputed. Strecker cites Bourdieu approvingly, and can be seen as fleshing out the 'outline of a theory of practice'. Strecker's claim is that 'a successful [conversational] implication always involves an exploitation of the addressee by the speaker' (p. 204). It is here above all that I expected to find links being made to Bloch's work on political rhetoric. For although Strecker must agree with Bloch's claims of meaningless, the details of Merina politeness and political uses accord with Strecker's view.

However, in the final chapter, when we return to the analysis of the symbolism of ritual we are left with a theory of ritual which this reviewer finds inadequate. Ritual is now to be defined as a 'means of maintaining face in situations of high risk. Ritual is thus a device which helps people not to hurt each other at socially critical moments' (p. 204).

This I believe to be an unacceptable position, and in some respects one reminiscent of functionalism. Yet people do deliberately (intentionally) produce multi-vocal statements and their ritual equivalents with a view to the actor's face relative to their colleagues, and consequently Strecker escapes the criticism levelled at functionalism, that it explains things by their unin-

tended consequences. Yet to put 'face' at the centre of ritual is to problematicize many of the smaller, quicker, yet more frequent rites that predominate in everyday life. What Strecker has done is to have identified an important element in public and hence political rituals. In so far as the definition of portmanteau words is possible, we still cannot do better than Sperber's definition, in *Rethinking Symbolism*, of the symbolic as 'all activity where the means put into play seem to me to be clearly disproportionate to the explicit or implicit end'. Despite its manifest problems of privileging the anthropologist's say-so, it is honest about it and has the virtue of being usable! What is missing is the recognition that, although we may disagree, rituals are held to be causally effective and that is why they get done. This is far from adequate by itself, of course, but Strecker's account remains lop-sided until he acknowledges it. Turning from the consideration of symbolism as found in metaphors (polite and rude) to the symbolism found in rituals and 'ritual symbolism', we have to consider a different set of problems, which Strecker says he will tackle but never really confronts.

This is not to quarrel with any of Strecker's analysis *per se*, nor with the account of the symbolism in Hamar 'cattle-leaping' initiation. Rather, it is to make the somewhat pedestrian point that the 'artful positioning' that establishes symbols would not be the same if Strecker's approach were right about ritual. He quotes two examples of Hamar men 'symbolizing' their dominance of women: first (pp. 85-6), when men accompany women's activities with a string of commands to do just what they are doing: commands that are totally redundant; and secondly (pp. 205ff.), in the symbolization of a boy's leap over cattle. But the two occasions are very different, even in Strecker's terms, since the first example uses linguistic redundancy to implicate its 'message' and thereby uses 'politeness strategies'. The second example differs, in that these are not linguistic symbols and also in that indigenous explanations for the actions are given/giveable. The Hamar, like the Dorze (with whom Sperber worked) are silent when asked the sort of questions that prompted Muchona to exegesis. However, much of the art of asking for reasons (or answering the questions) lies in agreeing a delimitation of the field of enquiry. Thus the question 'what does X mean?' may go unanswered, and the question 'why do it?' may elicit the reply 'because the ancestors did it'. Even if persistent and consistent, such answers do not warrant the inference that the people in question do not have reasons for their actions and that those reasons cannot be stated. For the Hamar, it may be that for a son to marry he must leap over cattle. This may seem like a very small answer to a very big question but its importance lies, I feel, in allowing us at the same time to pursue the sort of linguistic enquiry to that depth that Strecker enjoins on us whilst keeping a clear perspective of the relative importance of the symbolism being deployed at different times by the actors involved. Strecker gives this sort of account (p. 212), but does not see that this sort of 'functionalism' upsets the stress he puts on 'symbolism' in ritual.

To conclude, this is a book that deserves to be widely read and

discussed. Not only is its subject-matter of the greatest interest but it is also well written, without a single footnote!

DAVID ZEITLYN

JAMES PEACOCK, *Rites of Modernization: Symbols and Social Aspects of Indonesian Proletarian Drama*, with a New Afterword (Foreword by Dell Hymes), Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1987 [1968]. xxi, 306pp., Tables, Figures, Illustrations, Plates, Appendixes, Glossary, Bibliography, Index. £12.75.

Here is a book that has survived longer than its subject-matter. First published twenty years ago and now reissued in paperback, it describes a form of coarse proletarian drama in the Javanese industrial city of Surabaya just at the moment when the Indonesian Communist Party was at its strongest and the tensions caused by Sukarno's Guided Democracy in Indonesian politics were becoming most tightly strung. Based on fieldwork in the fateful period 1962-3 and published in 1968, after the Communist uprising and widespread massacres of 1965, it is in some ways comparable to that set of modern ethnographic studies in Portuguese Timor in the late 1960s and early 1970s which were, however, published after the Carnation Revolution in Portugal and the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975. At times, ethnographic work can unexpectedly provide a window to historic events far more momentous than the intended object of the study, giving a view which otherwise would have vanished at a stroke and have been unrecoverable by conventional historic means.

The form of drama in question is called *ludruk*, and at the time of the study actors and spectators were all poor and all involved in Communist organizations. Some troupes were explicitly affiliated with Party organizations, and the content of performances was often Marxist in character, without inevitably voicing Communist propaganda. *Ludruk* forms may be traceable as far back as the thirteenth-century Javanese empire of Majapahit, but eyewitness accounts of performances begin in 1822. During the 1930s it was used to express nationalist aspirations. During World War II the Japanese pressed it into the service of the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere'. Following the war, when the nationalists were fighting the Dutch in defence of their new Republic of Indonesia, *ludruk* troupes travelled with Indonesian armed groups. During the troubles of 1965 an estimated half-a-million people were killed, many by the army and many, though not all, Communists. Several of the actors of Peacock's acquaintance were killed or imprisoned, and all the *ludruk* troupes were disbanded. New troupes were formed under

military control, and where *ludruk* once gave expression to nationalism and communism, it now speaks for the capitalist, development ideology of the army. *Ludruk* groups were always short-lived and the content of the performances always shiftingly responsive to the political situation and to popular concerns. To expect permanence and to regret transformations in and of themselves would be to misconceive this ephemeral art form.

Perhaps what is really permanent is the space occupied by a rowdy, earthy, sexually provocative, forward-looking kind of performance which exploits themes of Javanese culture, while contrasting itself with the refined, courtly, serene, high art of Javanese shadow plays. In the early 1960s, *ludruk* retained as dominant elements the clown and the female impersonator. Relative to clowns, the transvestites situate themselves in clothing, manner and performance as *alus*, in the Javanese distinction of *alus* (refined, serene) versus *kasar* (coarse). Clowns are *kasar*. Another salient distinction in modern Indonesian culture is *kuno* (old-fashioned, traditional) versus *maju* (progressive, modern). Here the clown is old-fashioned and concerned mostly with only local themes and events, whereas the transvestite is pro-modern and concentrates on national matters. This uneasy tension between the two sets of contrasts is compounded by the fact that the transvestite, indeed everything about *ludruk*, is still highly coarse in comparison with the Javanese art forms that are usually the subject of Western scholarly attention.

Here is the point which most nearly explains the interest of this book and most justifies its re-publication. Peacock has made a study of something which is not just transient, but which is in fact a kind of anti-value of Javanese culture. It is an anti-value which is nevertheless very much a part of Javanese life and which has other expressions. Implicitly he shows the incompleteness of work which begins and ends with those values which the Javanese prefer to put on public view. Peacock argues two themes. The first is that *ludruk* is a rite and takes its place in the spectrum of other Javanese rites, such as the *slamatan*, and the other is that the rite is about modernization. The analogy is with van Gennep's rites of passage. What it is intended to do is to teach the poor how to make the transition from the traditional to the modern. At least that is what Peacock thinks it was doing when he was studying it, and in a significantly altered way that is probably still what it is expected to achieve. The inspirations of the book show a curious blend of the social science influences of the 1960s: Needham and Geertz, Lévi-Strauss and Kenneth Burke, Gluckman and Marion Levy. Peacock notes that in the period between first publication and reissue, *ludruk* has moved from Marxist to bourgeois values, while in some parts of social science the shift has been in the opposite direction. A book that stands up this well after such transformations in history and intellectual fashion repays author and reader alike.

R.H. BARNES

JEAN-CLAUDE GALEY (ed.), *L'Espace du Temple I: Espaces, Itinéraires, Méditations* and *L'Espace du Temple II: Les Sanctuaires dans le Royaume* (Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de la Asie du Sud, Collection Puruṣārtha nos. 8 and 10). Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales 1985/1986. 202pp./192pp., Maps, Figures. No prices given.

Despite its two-volume format, this is essentially a single collection of essays on the Hindu temple consisting of eleven contributions (five of them in English) plus two forewords and a useful bibliographic essay. Two of the eleven essays are primarily text-based, and the rest have considerable ethnographic content. Three relate to Tamilnad, one each to Sri Lanka and Rajasthan, the rest to the Himalaya. A contribution on Puri apparently failed to materialize.

The dominant tone derives from the structuralism of Dumont and Biardeau, with Hocart and Paul Mus in the background. This tradition provides the basis here and there for critical comments on certain writers, mainly in America, who have studied south Indian temples from the viewpoint of transactionalism and political economy. As for the spatial aspect, the emphasis is mainly on mandalas, the symbolism of the centre, circumambulation, and macrocosm-microcosm correspondences. I was slightly sorry to find so little reference to the phenomenon whereby the sacred geography of a tract of territory reflects the projection on to it of the dispersed or magnified body of a supernatural being.

In accordance with Dumontian tradition, territory itself is on the whole subordinated to the ideology and social relations which give it meaning and value. Thus the analyses chiefly concern the relationships between king, deity or deities, and priests, sometimes bringing in 'outsiders' such as ascetics, Harijans and tribals, or representatives of the modern state. In the last analysis, this subordination of the territorial dimension is perhaps one of the general lessons of anthropology - the essence of a society lies more in its people than in its land; but the point needs to be nuanced for different contexts.

Even if a unitary problematic hardly emerges, the striking parallels between the northern and southern extremities of the subcontinent fully justify treating Hindu India as a single field of study. As is understandable in the context of *Puruṣārtha*, the work does not look outside the subcontinent; and no doubt it will be some time before serious comparisons can be undertaken with medieval Europe or with East and Southeast Asia. Meanwhile there is much here to use and enjoy. At the risk of arbitrariness, I would particularly recommend Marie-Louise Reiniche's comparison of four different temples in Tamilnad.

R.S. MANN, *The Ladakhi: A Study in Ethnography and Change*, Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India 1986. vii, 178pp., Bibliography, Tables, No price given.

This book concerns Ladakh, an area situated between Kashmir and Chinese Central Asia and Tibet in the dry, high-altitude areas of the northern Himalaya. Politically, the erstwhile kingdom of Ladakh has been part of India since the nineteenth century, and it is now a strategic border region between India and China. The polity and peoples of Ladakh have always had close economic and political links with Kashmir and the region is now a district of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. But culturally it is an area of its own, with close similarities to northern Tibet in ecology, religion, economy, language and social structure, as well as ethnically.

This ethnography of Ladakh by R.S. Mann, an Indian anthropologist, is based on fieldwork done in 1970-1 in collaboration with T.K. Gosh. Four villages in different areas, or rather different provinces, of Ladakh were surveyed, and this material has been expanded to provide a general ethnography of Ladakh on the grounds of the close resemblance in habitat, social structure, economy and religion. Anthropological monographs on Ladakh are few, and the existing literature is by no means sufficient to cover the area, so Mann's book is a valuable contribution, though it is not the only detailed anthropological study, despite the author's claim. It is divided into eleven chapters, starting with an introduction, 'Ecological and Historical Perspective', which provides a general framework. Seven chapters deal with social structure in general, covering ethnic composition and social stratification, family and lineage structure, the status of women, marriage, other rites of passage such as death and birth, and patterns of local socio-political control. A short chapter summarizes the economy and a longer one deals with Ladakhi religion in general, with the religious, political and social structure of Lamaism, including its belief system, forms of worship and pantheon, and with other related subjects. Only the religious system has been taken up, and no local variations have been referred to. Thus the relationship of the general religious system to its local variations and to other local belief systems is neither raised, nor scrutinized critically.

The last chapter analyses culture change - a basic topic of the book according to its sub-title - only summarily if systematically in a rather brief nine pages, though there are some references *pari passu* to the past and to recent changes. The author basically assumes a timeless status quo, a strong continuity in social structure and institutions conditioned by ecological factors and religion. This continuity can be presupposed for 1970, but a more detailed analysis of continuity would have strengthened his point, especially in view of the substantial changes he mentions having been brought about by the growing economic and political integration with Jammu and Kashmir and the closure of the Chinese border.

Mann covers many subjects in his book, and a great number of interesting and new facts are given. This is especially true for the treatment of supra-familial social structure, the *phasphun*, a sort of religious association of mutual aid, being of particular interest. In general, Mann's comprehensive statements on social institutions, their structure and function give a fair idea of the structures and principles of Ladakhi social organization. Relations between husbands and wives and the status of women are described in great detail, and the continuing prevalence of polyandry is pointed out. Unfortunately, no further details on the kinship system are given, and there is no analysis of the kinship terminology. The sections on birth and death rituals and ceremonies are ethnographically particularly rich and detailed, as is the chapter on socio-political control. The theoretical nexus of the book is, according to the author, his analysis of the interrelationship of ecology, social structure, economy and religion, though how far this interdependence has been brought out the reader will have to judge for himself.

Overall, the book is definitely a major contribution to Ladakhi ethnography for the detailed material on Ladakhi social life it presents. But none the less some critical remarks must be made with regard to the author's methodological and analytical frame of reference. Mann is highly indebted to the Indian sociology of the 1950s and early 1960s, and more recent trends of analysis in Indian anthropology and sociology are neglected altogether. As stated, the kinship system is not adequately dealt with, and the analysis of the family structure and marriage is rather stereotyped, and uninfluenced by any more modern approach. However, another point seems to be more critical. Ladakh, like Tibet, has no doubt been culturally influenced by India over the ages, and the critical scrutiny of the presence of Indian institutions like the caste system forms a valid and valuable exercise. But to analyse social stratification only, and to do so uncritically in terms of the criteria of caste, taking no account of possible alternative criteria and without questioning the validity of the approach, raises methodological doubts. This leads directly to the problem of Indian ethnocentrism, which substantially affects the analysis more than once by seeing Ladakhi society in terms of pan-Indian norms rather than in terms of its own. Unfortunately, these methodological defects weaken an otherwise informed book which the student of Ladakhi society is bound to want to read.

KLAUS HESSE

KLAUS SEELAND (ed.), *Recent Research on Nepal: Proceedings of a Conference held at the Universität Konstanz, 27-30th March 1984* (Schriftenreihe Internationales Asienforum, Band 3), Munich etc.: Weltforum Verlag 1986. 220pp., Bibliography, Plates, Diagrams, Maps, Figures, Tables. DM 59.

DETLEF KANTOWSKY (ed.), *Recent Research on Max Weber's Studies of Hinduism: Papers Submitted to a Conference held in New Delhi, 1984* (Schriftenreihe Internationales Asienforum, Band 4), Munich etc.: Weltforum Verlag 1986. 223pp., Appendixes. DM 59.

The two books under review are both collections of papers from conferences held in March 1984, and published as Volumes 3 and 4 of a new German series devoted to Asian studies. One was an essentially Franco-German conference, held in Constance; the other was Indo-German, organized by Germans and held in Delhi in an attempt to introduce Indian scholars to the 'true' Max Weber.

The first book, *Recent Research in Nepal*, will be an essential addition to all libraries covering Nepal, not least because one-third of the book is taken up with a bibliography of publications on Nepal published between 1975 and 1983. This includes items in English, French and German, as well as a substantial number in Nepali and some in Newari.

Four of the conference papers are unambiguously anthropological. Véronique Bouillier contributes a short paper on child ascetics, the greater part of which is in fact an analysis of the caste-initiation ceremony of *vratibandha*. Anne de Sales describes a group of Kham Magar dances, and the myth and ritual associated with their dance. Gérard Toffin gives a clear and convincing analysis of the effects of monetization on shared labour groups among the Tamang. Joanna Czarnecka writes on hypergamy in ritual and marriage among Brahman-Chetris of Nuwakot district.

Marc Barani, an architect, contributes a paper on the residential unit in the Newar town of Kirtipur. The paper by Jean Fezas is on inheritance in Nepalese law codes of 1854 and after. There is a very interesting discussion of the relation of canonical Sanskrit law codes to the actual process of Nepalese law, in which - on paper, at least - widows had more rights than Hindu orthodoxy prescribed. Ulrike Müller provides a useful paper on what can be learned from cadastral maps about different patterns of landholding.

These seven articles - four anthropological, one architectural, one textual and one geographical - are all valuable additions to scholarship on Nepal. The authors, if they have axes to grind, keep them well hidden, betraying no concern to affect the way Nepal develops. This is less true of the remaining articles. Two are very similar in approach: Perdita Pohle on Manang and Rudi Baumgartner on the Rolwaling Valley both summarize the geographical position of their chosen area and describe how tourism has begun to affect the local economy. Both assume that there are traditional ways of living within the local ecology which are endangered by development and should, if possible, be preserved. Klaus Seeland writes a more ambitious article on 'Sacred Worldview and Ecology',

asking what view the Nepalese have of their environment. His answer assumes a 'traditional homeostatic community' and he concludes, unconvincingly to my mind, that 'ecological preservation cannot be a survival strategy', because first, it is a transgression of dharma, secondly, it is not a traditional pattern of reaction to changing conditions of living, and thirdly, it exceeds the normal working capacity of the peasant. I doubt this. If Nepalese peasants do not preserve the environment, it is not for ideological reasons - whatever they may be induced to say on religious matters, they are highly pragmatic and resourceful in fact - but because the institutional means for collective action are absent. They are as aware as anyone of the problem.

The other volume under review, *Recent Research on Max Weber's Studies of Hinduism*, has somewhat more coherence. It contains twelve papers, four by Indians and eight by Germans. Three of the latter are by the editor, Detlef Kantowsky - republished from *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (1982 and 1984) and from the *European Journal of Sociology* (1985). Since they hang together, it is useful to have them within the covers of one book. Simplifying somewhat, Kantowsky makes three points: that the Gerth and Martindale translation of Weber's *The Religion of India* is abominable, even by the usual low standards of Weber translations; that Weber has been incorrectly understood in a Parsonian way, both because of Gerth and Martindale's brief preface, and because of a conference in Delhi sponsored by the Ford Foundation in 1966 (the present conference and book are supposed to combat the pernicious effects of that earlier conference); and that modern capitalism is a retrograde step (Indian intellectuals' adoption of its values in the name of development is to be regretted). Kantowsky emphasizes Weber's doubts about Western development, and tries to make him consistent with Gandhi and 'the world view of a rural Hindu'. Hence he attempts to demonstrate the error of the development-oriented interpretations of Weber which have been favoured by Indian intellectuals.

Another paper, that by Walter Sprondel, also attempts to put Weber's 'Protestant Ethic thesis' in context, and warns against interpreting it as a 'how-to' manual of development. Ironically, three of the four Indian contributions - and still more the titles of Indian papers from the conference not included in the book but listed in it - bear witness to the fact that Weber is indeed understood in India in just the way that Kantowsky and Sprondel inveigh against. Weber was not saying that Protestantism causes a capitalist spirit always and everywhere, but that it was a necessary element of a combination of factors which together brought about the first, unplanned appearance of industrial capitalism in Europe. He claimed nothing about later deliberate and imitative industrial development. It is surely unsociological of Kantowsky himself to ascribe this widespread mistaken interpretation of Weber to a conference held in Delhi in 1966: it springs naturally from the deepest concerns of Indian intellectuals.

Puthusseril's paper on charisma certainly ignores the lessons Kantowsky and Sprondel are concerned to teach. Aurora's paper looks for an equivalent to Protestantism in the traditional world-

view of trading (Vaishya) castes: consistent with Weber's approach, he concludes that while there were parallels, their asceticism was contextualized (confined to old age) in such a way as to preclude the development of a rational, 'this-worldly' asceticism (he persists with the unEnglish and confusing 'inner-worldly' for 'this-worldly'). Chaturvedi Badrinath attacks Weber (unfairly in my view) for not seeing that Hinduism was not a single religion. M.S.A. Rao is the only Indian contributor to put aside the pseudo-Weberian debate about whether Hinduism retards development. He uses the concepts of Weber's sociology of religion to analyze modern religiously expressed protest by low castes in Kerala.

Of the remaining papers, Johannes Laping contributes a brief piece on the way other-worldly doctrines were adapted in a pragmatic way in traditional India. Jakob Rösel's essay has a long and helpful analysis of Weber's concept of the patrimonial state, posing a long list of questions to the specialist who would seek to apply this concept to India.

Especially interesting for anthropologists are two articles by Dieter Conrad and Hermann Kulke. Conrad analyzes Weber's ideas about dharma, showing how Weber exaggerated the relativism implicit in the fact that each caste and station has its own dharma, and overlooked the very real tension between the universal duty of non-violence and a Kshatriya's dharma to fight. In a fascinating analysis Conrad shows how Weber's conception of Hinduism influenced and was influenced by, his analysis of the ideological options facing Western civilization. According to Conrad, Weber coined the German concept of *Eigengesetzlichkeit*: 'the characteristic of developing according to its own laws [and unaffected by outside influences]'. This applies to spheres of life (ethics, law, the economy), and was a crucial element in Weber's theory of rationalization. It is different from 'autonomy', which implies only the absence of outside interference and says nothing about internal development. Weber's concept is now written into German law and is part of current German usage. If Conrad is right, it has its origins in Weber's understanding of the Sanskrit *svadharma* ('own dharma').

Kulke's paper analyzes Weber on Hinduization and shows how Weber's sources were probably Lyall and Risley. Weber achieved a higher level of conceptual clarity than they by distinguishing intensive Hinduization (what is now called Sanskritization, Rajputization or Kshatriyaization) from extensive Hinduization (the absorption and proselytizing of peripheral tribes brought about by the desire of tribal big men for legitimation or, occasionally, by the activities of Hindu sects). Kulke also shows how Weber's analysis of Hinduization has had the greatest influence not on Indian studies, but on Southeast Asian studies, though the work of Van Leur.

The *Schriftenreihe Internationales Asienforum* is to be congratulated on bringing out these volumes in English, a language that will make them accessible, if they can get hold of them, to readers in South Asia.

DAVID GELLNER

PIERRE BOURDIEU, *Homo Academicus*, Oxford: Polity Press 1988. xxvi, 225pp., Appendixes, Notes, Indexes. £25.00.

The recent wave of reflexive writing in anthropology has all too often been grounded in a unitary conception of the subject - the self as opposed to the other - or a concentration on a unitary conception of our society or 'world', as, for example, in Geertz's *Works and Lives*. Pierre Bourdieu's study of the French academic world up to 1968 gives a more detailed and intricate view of the field within which anthropology is produced and some of the conflicts and processes of that field. It is a study that is, as with much of Bourdieu's work, pervaded by a sense of irony, as sociological techniques are themselves turned upon the academic world of sociology.

In this era of epistemological crisis, the most interesting aspects of this book for any anthropologist are, perhaps, the epistemological and methodological problems with which Bourdieu grapples in the introductory chapters. In many ways the problems inherent in producing a book concerning a society and a social field in which one is positioned from the outset are opposite to those of a study in which one of the main problems is the initial acquisition of even the barest outlines of ordinary everyday knowledge. Bourdieu sets himself against subjectivist epistemological positions and claims a scientific position for his sociology of academia. He wishes to distance himself from mere academic gossip, and to do so claims a break with inside experience and then a re-constitution of the knowledge attained by this break. He attempts this break by taking 'the common criteria and classifications and ...the struggles of which they are both ends and means...explicitly as [his] object' and by constructing 'a finished, finite set of properties' that function as variables and through which he constructs 'epistemic individuals', who are defined solely in terms of those criteria. Nevertheless, he seems to see his objectivity as fated from the outset in 'what is, after all, never more than a form of autobiography', and he does not claim a pure form objectivity but merely an attempt to step along the path to what he calls 'the *focus imaginarius*, spoken of by Kant...from which the perfected system could be discovered but which a properly scientific intention can only posit as an ideal...of a practice which can only hope to approach ever closer to it in so far as it has renounced all hope of reaching it immediately'.

From the abstracted 'objective' properties of the field, Bourdieu proceeds to draw a picture of that field and the space of the various disciplines in which he sees various oppositions at work. First is that between academic power, that is, 'control of the instruments of reproduction of the professorial body - the board of examiners for the aggregation, the University Consultative Committee', and scientific power, displayed through the direction of a research team, or prestige, measured in publication in a paperback series, publication abroad, and links with the media. Second is that between older and younger professors defined according to their 'institutionalized signs of prestige'. And third is

that between, on the one side social and economic capital - type of education, mention in *Who's Who*, the social directory, fashionable place of residence, extra-academic earnings - and scientific capital. This last opposition is concomitant with what Bourdieu, following Kant, terms the conflict of the faculties, that is, between those geared to reproduce and be subject to the social order - law, medicine etc. - and those 'free of all social discipline and limitations' - the sciences.

Much of *Homo Academicus* is devoted to the processes of change in French academia prior to the events of 1968. Bourdieu attempts to explain 1968 largely in terms of the internal dynamics of the education system. He sees 1968 as the result of a coincidence of crises within different fields in which different actors in different but homologous social situations identified with each other. He deals with the conditions of May 1968 as resulting particularly from the increase in student numbers, the devaluation of educational capital (of academic diplomas) consequent upon the greater number of students admitted and from the recruitment of large numbers of subordinate teachers who were badly integrated into the universities. These conditions encouraged 'maladjusted dispositions' (elevated expectations). These crises were most marked in the new disciplines, in sociology above all.

Perhaps the central problems of *Homo Academicus* are the areas with which it does not deal. These omissions result from Bourdieu's epistemological practice. Elsewhere, most notably in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, he presents his epistemological position as a kind of Hegelian synthesis of phenomenological and objectivist (above all, structuralist) positions. However, *Homo Academicus* does not derive itself from a preliminary phenomenology of the academic field nor, with the exception of the postscript (an analysis of the language of school reports), does it take the classifications and criteria of academia as its object. Instead, subjective or phenomenological statements are replaced by a set of objective criteria, such as number of citations, place of residence etc.; problems of varying academic social classifications and hierarchies of prestige are pushed aside by the utilization of the objective set of criteria rather than solved synthetically. This, as Bourdieu notes, does tend to make the study rather grey. Furthermore, it ensures that he can only deal with the social situation of academic discourse, divorced from that discourse itself. There are not even any pointers to the links between academic discourse and its social situation; the effect of changing academic formations on changes in academic discourse is hardly dealt with at all. Consequently, Bourdieu's analytic concepts often seem somewhat under-used, or capable of explaining far more. For example, the concept of habitus (of structured and structuring dispositions) is introduced to explain the fact that recruitment to academia continued to follow similar principles during the expansion of the higher education system, which could equally well be explained in terms of choice models, whilst what might be termed the academic ethos or ethoses, areas that the concept of habitus might be particularly useful in explaining, are hardly dealt with at all. Furthermore, any study based in the phenomenology of academia, however much it would

later provide a synthesis of the varying phenomenological positions, would probably ensure a greater stress on the positions of the academic fields in the wider social universe. The lack of stress on these relations is particularly noticeable in the way in which Bourdieu deals with the background to the events of 1968. That 1968 provides a full stop to this study ensures that the effects of recent higher education contraction are not dealt with at all.

Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* provides an interesting outline of a necessarily reflexive sociology of education. But epistemologically it raises as many problems as it purports to solve.

TONY FREE

VICTOR PERERA and ROBERT D. BRUCE, *The Last Lords of Palenque: The Lacandon Mayas of the Mexican Rain Forest*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press 1985 [1982]. 317pp., Annotated Bibliography, Plates. £8.50.

Here we are given an evocative account of the first author's initiation into and subsequent experiences in the Lacandon Maya community of Naha. Working under the guidance of the more experienced anthropologist Robert Bruce, who has dedicated his life to the study of these people, Victor Perera is quickly able to familiarize himself with their history and culture, while at the same time maintaining a certain objectivity.

Perera recognizes the unique psychological outlook of the Lacandon Maya, who appear to be the last cultural inheritors of the great Maya civilization. It is their innate dignity and bearing, and their consciousness of being the *hach winik* or 'true people', which makes them able to converse on a level with anyone. This quality of self-assurance, described by Robert Bruce in his Introduction, is referred to as 'poise'. He attributes this 'poise' to the Lacandons' awareness of their place and role in accordance with a philosophy which defines every entity in terms of its relation to others in a harmonious and well-balanced universe. Bruce contrasts this with the tenets of Western science, which describe the world in terms of dynamic and utilitarian values. This is evident even in the form of language, where nouns combine with verbal actions to cause effects on objects. He suggests that occidentals seek to control the universe, whereas Maya prefer to seek their proper place within it.

The clash of occidental and Maya cultures presages the downfall of the latter, but in so far as this book provides a case-study of a worldwide problem, it could equally well indicate the demise of the former. Perera quotes Old Chank'in, the mentor and moral leader of Naha, who reminds us that the roots of all living things are tied together. This book, therefore, discusses one of the great

dilemmas of our age, the destruction of non-Western cultures and the simultaneous ecological damage to this planet that so often results from the expansion of economic and technological interests.

Perera's descriptions of his personal experiences during his stay in Naha are both poignant and moving. He makes no attempt to romanticize the Lacondon. Instead he shows how, once individuals from the community are exposed to occidental values, they tend to succumb to the same temptations and dishonesties which are commonplace in a materially oriented society. As the author comes to terms with his anger at the hopelessness of the situation, he realizes that the blame cannot be attributed to a single group of people. Government officials, loggers, missionaries and particular Lacandones have all played their part, and ultimately we all contribute to the forces of change. Paradoxically, it is the Lacandones themselves who most clearly understand the passing of their age, as it fulfils the ancient Maya prophecy of the death of their world. Old Chank'in's teaching, however, attests to the personal accountability of us all and does not excuse any who contribute to the destruction of the creation of Hachakyum ('Our True Lord').

CAROLINE KARSLAKE DE TALAVERA

WALDO R. WEDEL, *Central Plains Prehistory: Holocene Environment and Culture Change in the Republican River Basin*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1986. xviii, 222pp., Plates, Figures, Tables, Appendixes, Notes, Bibliography, Index, Maps. £34.50.

The grasslands of the central American plains show few trees and little relief and have often been regarded by travellers as empty spaces to be traversed as quickly as possible. Some say that here one can look further and see less than anywhere else on earth. Anthropological theory has complemented this impression with a doctrine that the area was uninhabitable until the Spanish introduced the horse in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The peopling of the plains was recent and took place not long before the coming of White men.

In fact, the North American Great Plains, at whose heart the central plains or Republican River Basin lie, have been inhabited by humans for 10,000 or even 20,000 years. The oldest, radiocarbon dated evidence relates to the Clovis mammoth hunters of c. 11500-11000 BP and the Folsom bison-hunters of c. 10500-10000 BP. The human record in the Republican River Basin spans the entire period of demonstrated presence on the Plains, and Wedel surveys the long-term relationships between humans and nature over approximately 15,000 to 18,000 years from the waning of the Pleistocene to now.

Ten thousand years before Europeans found the Plains supporting vast herds of bison, natural wildlife included mammoths, camels, native horses, ground sloths, and large species of bison, all now extinct. When these animals died out or were destroyed, men shifted to new ways of life and new animal forms. Wedel traces the climatological, geological, floral and faunal transformations which provide the background to the archaeological studies that are the main evidential basis for the book. After the Early Big Game Hunters came the Archaic Foragers, the Plains Woodland Hunters and Gatherers, and then the Early and Late Village Indians. The sequence is rounded off with the Indian clearances of the nineteenth century. White men, with the special environmental strains their way of life entails, had arrived.

The book can comfortably be read straight through, or dipped into as a reference work. It is plainly authoritative and of considerable use to anyone concerned with Plains Indian life. Wedel's many-stranded scholarship seems to have achieved its aim of seeing to it that the link between man and long-extinct animals, and with it the antiquity of human occupation of the Plains, be taken seriously and acknowledged.

R.H. BARNES

FRED B. KNIFFEN, HIRAM F. GREGORY and GEORGE A. STOKES, *The Historic Indian Tribes of Louisiana from 1542 to the Present*, Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana University Press 1987. xvi, 314pp., Index, Bibliography, Maps, Plates, Figures. £23.70.

Although until 1971 Louisiana had only one federally acknowledged Indian tribal group, it now holds claim to the third largest native American population in the eastern United States. Figures are misleading, partly because unorganized and officially unrecognized Indian groups in the past avoided identifying themselves as such in response to racist attitudes in the White community, and partly because racially mixed individuals and groups have alternative identifications to choose from. Recently, shifting attitudes and policies have provided incentives for groups to strive for official status. There are at present three federally recognized tribes and a total of five recognized by the state, plus many scattered mixed-blood and full-blood families. The current population of 16,000, compared with 490 in 1950, represents a growth out of proportion to probable real demographic change.

Louisiana Indians have been called 'the invisible people', both because of their retiring ways and because they have never figured in the national imagination as prominently as have the tribes of the western plains or the north-eastern woodlands. Most dress, work and talk like the people around them. Nevertheless, there are

still three viable languages in use, Alabama, Choctaw and Koasati. On the other hand, Louisiana Indians play a major role in preserving European languages other than English in this multilingual state. The Spanish-Nahuatl dialect of Texas and north-western Louisiana is still spoken conversationally. More striking is the fact that the large Houma population, whose language is virtually lost, today retains the most conservative of Louisiana French. This book is probably best taken as a contribution to the history and sociology of Louisiana, rather than just a compilation of sparse and scattered references to obscure or forgotten ethnic fragments.

R.H. BARNES

DON E. DUMOND, *The Eskimos and Aleuts*, London: Thames and Hudson 1987 [1977]. 159pp., Bibliography. Index, Plates, Illustration, Diagrams, Maps. £6.95.

A professor of anthropology at the University of Oregon, who has carried out excavations in Alaska, the author focuses attention on Alaska's south-west where, as he stresses, the majority of Eskimo-Aleut, or 'Eskaleut', people live. Here is the centre of gravity' of the Eskimos' 'population distribution and their pre-historic identity' (p. 7). While the ancestors of the Inuit migrated to the Arctic, the numerous Yup'ik and Pacific Eskimos, like the Aleuts, remained here.

He demonstrates that these people derive from a single stock, and gives dates for the splitting of their major groups. The primary evidence is technological. Of eight chapters, prehistoric material cultures are analyzed in six. In the other two, effectively the introduction and conclusions, linguistic and physical anthropological evidence are incorporated.

The first tradition he identifies is the 'Paleo-Arctic', from about 8000 BC. Since the date is older than evidence for American Indian cultures in Alaska, and at the same time younger than such evidence elsewhere in America, the author reaches the conclusion that the ancestors of the 'mass of American Indians' migrated from Asia through Alaska earlier by at least two millennia than the occurrence of the Paleo-Arctic tradition, thus leaving Alaska to the bearers of this tradition, the ancestors of the modern Aleuts and Eskimos (p. 155).

The conclusion is useful, as it indicates that the shared 'Eskaleut' ancestry did not displace other people. Modern native Alaskans can, therefore, counter any social Darwinian presupposition that might be put forward against them to the effect that the course of universal history naturally involves invasion and

displacement. By tracing their roots deep into prehistory and citing work like this, they may reply that theirs did not.

S.A. MOUSALIMAS

GEOFFREY M. WHITE and LAMONT LINDSTROM (eds.), *The Pacific Theater: Island Representations of World War II* [Pacific Islands Monograph Series, no. 8], Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1989. xiv, 422pp., Indexes, Maps, Plates. No price given.

On 4th May 1942 the worried white inhabitants of Vila, the tiny capital of Vanuatu, saw the horizon fill with a fleet of warships and smaller vessels. Were they Japanese? Were they American? The locals couldn't tell. As the first of the landing craft approached a young French boy ran down to meet the troops. A GI jumped on to the jetty, looked into the child's face, and said, 'Any girls here? I wanna fuck'. And that was the first encounter between the occupying forces and the residents of Vanuatu.

If the interests of the recruits centred on illicit liquor ('torpedo juice'), unavailable women and entertaining ways to pass the time, the interest of the Melanesians in these latest incomers was both more complex and more varied. Throughout Micronesia and Melanesia the effects of the war were usually dramatic, occasionally profound and, in almost all cases, long-lasting. This book tries to tell how islanders saw the conflict, exactly how they were taken up in it, and how it influenced their later lives. Sixteen contributors who have worked on a glittering array of different islands describe the war years and their continuing aftermath.

For war stories make good stories, and tales about that time are still told, and not just in cargo-cult communities. Narrating these vivid tales of time spent with generous, extremely well-equipped Americans to a younger audience is a rhetorically effective manner of expressing key moral problems and of delineating the bounds of collective identity. This is a Pacific theatre, one of war, and one on the whole well portrayed in this collection of papers.

JEREMY MacCLANCY

JOHN C. CALDWELL, ALLAN G. HILL and VALERIE J. HULL (eds.), *Micro-Approaches to Demographic Research*, London and New York: Kegan Paul International 1988. xvi, 470pp., References, Tables, Figures. £30.

In the eyes of demographers, what most anthropologists do is 'micro-research', so the avoidance relationship between anthropologists and demographers should perhaps be overcome by the concept of 'micro-approaches' to demography. Despite the editors' claim 'that it fills the need for a textbook as to what might be done and how the researcher can begin in a very new sub-field', this volume, which contains twenty-seven papers from a conference held in Canberra in 1982, will in fact do little to remedy the situation. Its main virtue is its extensive bibliography. The papers present the results of research with far too little information about methodology to be helpful to a researcher beginning work in this new sub-field. Exceptions are a paper by Hull *et al.* with a methodological appendix and another by McCormack which presents interesting results about indigenous models of reproductive process and how these relate to the use of contraception.

Only one paper, that by Chapman, includes details of the question schedules used. Van de Walle includes transcripts of interviews in her discussion of problems of coding and comparing quantitative and qualitative research; but her conclusions about the use of language to make indirect answers are not new to anthropologists.

In the concluding papers, Srinivas and Caldwell make general pleas for micro-studies to complement the large-scale surveys which typify demographic research. There is clearly room for much fruitful co-operation between anthropologists and demographers. The concern of anthropologists with contextualization and the way that answers to questions may be radically different from what they seem to say, combined with the rigour of demographic calculation, should lead to interesting generalizations based on trustworthy data. Certainly this book provides some examples of such research, but the results are presented in part only, and the interested reader must go elsewhere to discover in any detail what micro-demographic research is like.

DAVID ZEITLYN

OTHER NOTES AND NOTICES

OXFORD UNIVERSITY ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1988 - 1989

General interest in the Society showed a decline on the previous year with no meetings at all being organized in Michaelmas Term. However, certain students took advantage of the Society's lack of a general programme to organize their own events under its auspices. Sadly, Susan Erb resigned as Secretary at the start of Hilary Term and as yet no one has been found to take her place. The President would like to take this opportunity to thank Susan for all her hard work and effort.

In line with the President's own interests, all the meetings in Hilary and Trinity Terms were centred around film screenings. The majority of the films were selected by Debbie Des Jardins, and were chosen for their portrayal of societies in change or of minorities or disadvantaged groups. At each screening the film served as the starting-point for extended discussion.

Over the two terms we saw the following films: *Waiting for Harry* (Kim McKenzie); *N'ai: The Story of a !Kung Woman* (John Marshall); *War of the Gods* (Brian Moser / Disappearing World; anthropologists: Stephen Hugh-Jones, Christine High-Jones, Peter Silverwood-Cope); *Some Women of Marrakech* (Melissa Llewelyn-Davies / Disappearing World; anthropologist: Elizabeth Fernea); *The Basques of Santazi* (Leslie Woodhead / Disappearing World; anthropologist: Sandra Ott). There was also a joint presentation with Oxford Survival International Group of a film on medical pluralism in the Bolivian Andes. We were especially fortunate to have Sandra Ott present *The Basques of Santazi*, the personal presentation adding to our appreciation of the film. After every screening discussions followed - these ranged from consideration of the ethnography presented to the finer points of production goals and strategies.

MARCUS BANKS
President, 1988-1989

MOLAS: TEXTILES OF THE KUNA INDIANS

On descending the small flight of steps into the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, the visitor is currently greeted by a display of small-scale panels which at first sight seem to be characterized by repeated patterns and jewel-like colours. These exquisite, more or less rectangular panels which are seemingly so suited to hanging under glass on gallery walls are, in fact, the appliquéd sections of blouses made by the Kuna Indians of Panama and Colombia. *Mola*, the exhibition informs us, is the Kuna word for 'cloth', and by extension it may also describe a blouse or its appliquéd panel. The exhibition shows complete mola blouses as well, and these are not only beautiful objects, but part of everyday dress. Consequently, they have to be both flexible and durable; many of the mola panels on display show signs of having been washed frequently. Among the complete blouses is one from the Chucanaque River of Panama described as a two-layer, four-colour mola, which features counter-changed red and blue motifs, both outlined with orange. The front and the back of the blouse, therefore, are 'the same only different', the swapping of colours from front to back serving to highlight that the same basic repeated design is different, and inviting a second look. As one's eyes linger on the individual panels, the designs of geometric, human and animal motifs, with their contrapuntal dashes and dots of colour set up rhythmic patterns which reveal an evident delight for the exploitation of mirror and rotational symmetry on the part of the women who invent and carefully execute these designs.

The exhibition is unobtrusively informative, and we learn from the observations of an English buccaneer ship's surgeon who visited the area in the late seventeenth century that the Kuna peoples did not ordinarily wear clothes, but that the women took a great delight in body painting using 'bright and lovely' hues of red, yellow and blue. Sometime between Lionel Walfer's observations of 1681 and the 1880s, the mola blouse evolved, probably inspired by the designs once painted on the body and subsequently transferred onto women's skirts.

The mola panels are worn horizontally, with the central axis of the design, about which the two halves are mirrored, corresponding to an imaginary line down the centre of the human body, creating two bilateral halves. This type of symmetry is, of course, very widespread in the art of the Americas, but also evident in the mola designs is the use of rotational symmetry in motifs such as the swastika, which was combined with a circle on the Kuna flag. But take a closer look. Although the main design is unfolded in mirror symmetry, the finer details often set up a slightly asymmetric counterpoint to the main rhythm.

Because most of the panels have been abstracted from their context and displayed as flat pieces of work, the viewer can take the time to appreciate the finer details of the design. However, the exhibition also includes other aspects of the material culture of the Kuna so we are offered a fuller picture of Kuna life. In

addition, the mola panels are used to introduce us to Kuna concepts. The layered construction of the mola related to the belief that the heavens and the nether world are made up of eight layers, inhabited by good and evil spirits, and the molas may also contain pictorial themes relating to girls' puberty rights, marriage and death. Other pictorial themes include a bird catching a fish, and a mola of two turtles, which evokes the story of how the turtle acquired his coat.

I can thoroughly recommend this exhibition. It gives space for the viewer to appreciate the mola panels, and the concise written information is interspersed only after the visitor has had time to make a visual response to the beauty of the panels on display.

PENNY DRANSART

Molas: Textiles of the Kuna Indians is on show at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford until 21 April 1990.

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