

## BOOK REVIEWS

SIGNE HOWELL and ROY WILLIS (eds.), *Societies at Peace: Anthropological Perspectives*, London and New York: Routledge 1989. ix, 243 pp., Indexes. £11.95.

The main purpose of this collection is to overturn the usual unthinking assumption that human beings are naturally aggressive by focusing on a group of 'peaceful' societies and arguing instead for sociality as the key human condition. In addition to the editors' introduction there are eight ethnographic papers, plus two on the development of sociality (in human beings and in human society respectively), and two on the theoretical problems of defining peace as a category and of identifying peaceful societies.

The editors and contributors are understandably opposed to the work of most biologists and psychologists, whose only resource in arguing for the innateness of human aggression is observation, not merely of human but of animal behaviour, analogies being drawn from the latter to the former. One problem with the analogizing approach has always been that animal societies are coterminous with the whole species, whereas human ones subdivide it—hence the inevitability of a degree of cultural variation, in attitudes to aggression as in everything else. Another is that only observed behaviour is recoverable for animal societies, yet it is wholly inadequate in understanding human ones. The editors quite rightly insist, therefore, that the focus should be on 'humans as meaning-makers, rather than humans as biological primates' (Howell, p. vii), in order to get beyond the idea of aggression as simple motor response. This leads to a stress on personhood, on 'what it means to be a human being' (ibid.), something which the new anthropology has made particularly its own.

Various authors occasionally recognize (Howell and Willis, p. 5; Howell, p. 58; Carrithers, Heelas, *passim*) that to regard peace as inherent in human nature may be as dogmatic as the traditional focus in some quarters on aggression. But in general, the dangers of over-correction are ignored in the rush to get across the point that 'sociality, not aggression, is the key human trait' (the title of Carrithers' very programmatic paper). Actually, this does not say very much that is new, given that Carrithers defines sociality simply as the individual's 'capacity for complex social behaviour' (p. 197): such has long been recognized, and not only in anthropology, as the basic human attribute, and is essentially what anthropology is all about. In practice, there is a tendency throughout the book to inflate this definition to mean social co-operation and the avoidance of conflict and of aggressive acts, even feelings. And here we hit a snag, for the continual implication that aggression and co-operation are somehow mutually exclusive can hardly be sustained.

For a start, it neglects the many examples of feud, or of conflict between affinal alliance partners, within what are clearly single ethnicities (cf. Leach's observation, in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (p. 153), that 'to the Kachin

way of thinking, co-operation and hostility are not very different' or the Mae Enga dictum recorded by Meggitt, in *The Lineage System of the Mae Enga of New Guinea* (p. 101), that 'we marry the people we fight'). In other words, sustained conflict requires, and achieves, the co-operation of opponents reacting in like manner rather than turning the other cheek. Secondly, while it may be true, as the editors say (p. 4), that some aspects of, especially modern, warfare need not entail aggressive feelings, all warfare demands a degree of co-operation between participants. Modern armies, for all their stress on cold efficiency in killing an often unseen, unheard enemy, are like mini-societies and are among the most highly ritualized institutions of modern life, using ritual to enforce both discipline and purpose. Tactics involving the closer combat associated with more traditional forms of warfare also habitually require at least the encouragement and excitation of aggressive feelings towards the enemy, even though these are commonly bound up with the cultivation and expression of stereotypical grievances, be they political, mystical or material in content. Finally, even if war *were* waged totally dispassionately, what of the passions commonly involved in insurrection and riot—the *intifada*, say, or the activities of Class War? The basic problem is that knowledge of exactly what inner states another person is feeling is notoriously difficult to uncover, especially in collective activities subject to cultural expectations, and this applies to aggression and its absence as much as to anything else. Aggression may be a socially constructed act, not a biological or psychological necessity; the act of defining it may be subject to Western ethnocentrism; and it may be absent from the values of a good many societies. But it is just as surely present in others, and may at times, or permanently, be their dominant structuring value.

By no means everything in the collection calls forth the urge to criticize. Robarchek reminds us that avoidance of conflict need not entail absolute passivity, but may engender passive resistance instead. From Gibson and Overing we learn that eating may be regarded as a violent act, especially if, as is true of the Piaroa, eating is necessarily cannibalistic (here, game is of one nature with humanity). With Howell and Overing we remember that not all societies have institutionalized sanctions against wrongful behaviour, as traditional Durkheimian orthodoxy teaches—a corrective against any image of society as a bunch of fractious individuals straining at the leash of social constraint. Both Chewong and Piaroa actively value peaceful co-operation, and the latter, at least, regard it as a goal to be striven for constantly, not a given whose presence can always be relied upon. Less happy is the editors' more generalized correlation between peaceability and equality (p. 24; here, gender equality in particular). Away from such societies as the Chewong and Fipa the matter is not so clear—the various 'peaces' of Rome, the British Empire and the Soviet Union, for example, have been peaces established by the one-sided force of a paramount ethnicity, and not characterized by equality of treatment for all, even at the ethnic level, let alone between genders.

Certainly, as regards human peace and aggression, innateness would not seem to enter the matter at all. While animals are simply predatory, acting with purpose but without meaning in the anthropological sense, only humans seem to be capable

of both lethal intra-species violence and the outright valuation of peace above the satisfaction of other conceivable interests. Both qualities, as well as all points along the continuum that links them, require the conscious and collective construction of meaning, which will differ from one society to another. The present collection emphasizes this process of construction as regards peace, but despite the cautions expressed by Campbell and Heelas at the end, few of its contributors seem to find the categories of peace and co-operation themselves at all problematic, nor the assumption of their necessary association. This marks the essential difference between this collection and David Riches' earlier and complementary volume, *The Anthropology of Violence* (Oxford, 1986), which achieved a greater degree of balance in seeing not merely violence but images of what constitutes violence as culturally constructed: arguing away the innateness of aggression does not deprive it of conventionality. To take it so much for granted that all humanity shares a single view of what peace actually is, or that it values co-operation in exactly the same ways, merely displays a naïvety sharply at odds with the sophistication most of these contributors have demonstrated elsewhere.

ROBERT PARKIN

R. G. DILLON, *Ranking and Resistance: A Precolonial Cameroonian Polity in Regional Perspective*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1990. 310 pp. Index, Illustrations, Maps. No price given.

This book presents the corpus of data of Dillon's 1973 thesis and uses it to discuss the conditions for the maintenance of an acephalous polity. The Meta' are an acephalous group to the west of the kingdoms of the Bamenda Plateau. They are part of the regional system of the Cameroon Grassfields whose dynamics has been analysed by Dillon's fellow student at Pennsylvania, J.-P. Warnier (*Échanges, développement et hiérarchies dans le Bamenda pré-colonial (Cameroun)*, (Wiesbaden, 1985)). Chapter 3 comprises a good introduction to the Grassfields and to Warnier's regional analysis. One reservation, however, is that the concentration on the southern end of the Grassfields has led to the elision of the problematic Tikar influence of the north-western chiefdoms. This is unsurprising since the Meta' are found in the south of the grassfields, but to mention the Chamba but not the Tikar creates an imbalance in the discussion. Hence the summary cannot be wholeheartedly recommended as an introduction to the subject.

Dillon presents a reconstruction of the Meta' polity at the end of the nineteenth century before German influence was felt. Having described the economic system and the importance of patrilineal descent, Dillon gives an account of the ideal model of village-level leadership. This model was elicited through interviews with old men during fieldwork. He continues to describe some actual cases mentioned

by the interviewees, since these show how the ideal model worked in practice. Individuals may strive for power and seek to expand their influence. The distributed set of rights and powers meant that expansion had to be at the expense of others in a similar position in the lineage structure. At base, quarrels could be resolved by a recourse to force, but any fighting quickly triggered the most powerful conflict resolution processes, which rested on supernatural backing.

To call Meta' acephalous is not to say that they lacked chiefs. Dillon explains how village chiefs were powerful and respected but retained their power and respect only as long as they did not 'rule' or 'bear down' upon their subjects. They were foremost among a group of notables and could neither address the people directly nor act in their own right. Any attempts to do so would reduce the powers of other notables and hence be resisted by them. Since the notables spoke for and acted on behalf of the chief, he was rendered powerless to expand by the very powers vested in him. Dillon argues for a model of acephalous societies that combines Robin Horton's historicism with the results of the analysis of conflict resolution. Conflict may lead to fission unless balanced by such centripetal forces as the control of economics in the chiefdoms.

The Meta' were both producers of palm oil and important traders in oil, transferring it from the regions to their west to the kingdoms of the Bamenda Plateau. Trade, and its maintenance, was the major economic constraint on political structure and process in the late nineteenth century. First of all, the main commodity trade was a staple not a rare luxury good (such as iron, bronze or slaves), so that much of the population participated rather than a few specialist traders. Secondly, the need to keep trade routes open led to the strict control of slavery. It was a last resort to remove trouble-makers, or witches, and could only be undertaken after consultation with the senior kin of the person concerned. Attempts to circumvent this led to violence, the kin group of the enslaved person would defend them. Moreover, incursions from neighbouring groups led to defensive coalitions, which form the basis for the sense of unity of all Meta'. The only other arena for the unified polity was the ritual treatment of homicide. Power was held by the heads of patrilineal groups, which were usually co-resident. The dissemination of various ritual and political offices among the different lineage heads was the main force counterbalancing the centralizing tendency of a chief eager for power.

A major omission is that there is no discussion of the role of women. This probably reflects current interests at the period of fieldwork (1970). Granted that women's political action has been documented both to the north and to the south of Meta', one wonders what means Meta' women had of countering insult and other forms of oppression.

One of the puzzles left unresolved is that posed by Meta' witchcraft. The section that discusses it (pp. 185-91) describes Meta' witchcraft as occurring only between kin motivated by spite or jealousy, or by those who felt slighted, for example, by not receiving their due share of bridewealth. If divination diagnosed a case of witchcraft, then oaths could be taken and as a final resort the accused

person could be either executed or sold as a slave. This account sits uneasily with an earlier passage describing the rites to close a village to sorcery, which appears to enter from outside the polity. The relationship of sorcery, *sa*, to witchcraft, *izik*, is not discussed.

DAVID ZEITLYN

RON BRUNTON, *The Abandoned Narcotic: Kava and Cultural Instability in Melanesia* (Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 69; gen. ed. Jack Goody), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989. viii, 178 pp., References, Glossary, Index, Plates, Diagram, Maps, Tables. £25.00/\$35.00.

Brunton begins his analysis with a reconsideration of Rivers's original diffusionist explanation for the scattered geographical distribution of contemporary kava use. Rivers had suggested that the arrival of a different cultural group (the betel people) with their easier-to-prepare intoxicant was the primary cause of the decline and eventual abandonment of kava in various Oceanic societies.

Kava is found in various parts of Melanesia (including New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu), throughout Polynesia (except for Easter Island, New Zealand, the Chatham Islands and Rapa), and scarcely at all in Micronesia. Brunton considers three possible explanations for the fact that kava-drinking regions are interrupted by groups of non-consumers: (1) that there were never direct links between regions and that the psychoactive nature of kava was discovered independently in each area; (2) that there were direct links in trade or a migration occurred—in either case the plant and/or knowledge of its preparation were transmitted; and (3) that such links were indirect and that intermediary populations abandoned the use of the plant prior to European contact. On the basis of botanical, linguistic, ethnological and (rather scanty) archaeological evidence the author concludes that the third explanation is almost certainly correct. Having established this he proceeds to refute Rivers's kava-people and betel-people theory partly on the grounds that the supposed exclusivity of the practices is contradicted by twentieth-century ethnographic reports. Arbitrary characteristics of kava drinking that recur in diverse regions are used to show how the complex diffused, for such factors cannot be adequately explained away by geographical and biophysiological restraints. Many of these characteristics (for example, preparation in the particular form of a drink, the belief that kava-related material culture should be kept from contact with the ground, and origin myths concerning the plant) link it with religion and ritual activity.

The significance of this is elaborated with data from Brunton's fieldwork in Vanuatu (New Hebrides), mainly on the island of Tanna, during the 1970s. With the effects of contact with Christianity and the subsequent secularization and

profanation of kava drinking came problems of excessive use on the one hand and a religious reaction on the other. The latter, at least in certain parts of Tanna, resulted in revelations ordering its suppression in social and religious life. How far these findings from Vanuatu hold true for Melanesia in general is unclear. To be fair, the author does not overstate the possibilities of such comparison. The well-known themes of Melanesian cultural obsolescence and susceptibility to acculturation are seen by Brunton as significant in the region even prior to pacification and missionization. This is put forward as the key factor in the abandonment of kava in various areas of Melanesia. Kava usage in Polynesia is seen as more stable because the legitimization of authority is not a significant problem there. Clearly, this is a more satisfying overall explanation than Rivers's, although Brunton does see betel-chewing as a factor in kava's decline.

The book augments Brunton's 1989 *Man* article 'Cultural Instability in Egalitarian Societies' with its in-depth treatment of the Melanesian manifestations of this trait. The accompanying tables of kava cognates with additional commentaries make for a rather abstruse part of the book, yet its rigour—including a database of 460 Papuan and Oceanic Austronesian languages—compensates for this disruption in what is otherwise a flowing text. The illustrations are disappointing in that neither the plant itself (*Piper methysticum*) nor any of the attendant material culture are featured. The two plates showing Tannese ritual are of poor quality. The lack of emphasis on material culture is also reflected in the text itself, though this is a common omission in modern anthropological writing. Despite these reservations the book is valuable, both in tackling the Melanesian problem of cultural instability from a novel perspective and in providing a study of intoxicant use for those of us interested in the wider comparative aspects.

RICHARD RUDGLEY

HANNA HAVNEVIK, *Tibetan Buddhist Nuns: History, Cultural Norms and Social Reality*, Oslo: Norwegian University Press and The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture 1990. 218 pp., Plates, Glossary, Bibliography, Appendix. £25.00.

This smartly produced book, evidently the author's doctoral thesis, would probably never have been published in this form in the USA, but would rather have circulated in microfiche or microfiche photocopy. This would have been a pity. It is written in a simple and refreshingly unpretentious style. In spite of a few repetitious passages and its uncritical summaries of what Sanskritists and Tibetologists have said, on the basis of texts, about the position of women in Buddhism, it is the first work on an interesting and very worthwhile subject. It should interest specialists on Tibet, on Buddhism and in women's studies.

Havnevik's research, based in one of two Tibetan Buddhist nunneries established in exile in India, was carried out in English over a relatively short period. No doubt an anthropologist working in the vernacular would have produced data of greater depth and subtlety. None the less, Havnevik does provide some new and interesting information, thereby demonstrating that it is just as important to ask the right questions as it is to ask them in the local language. Since she names informants and quotes their words at length, others will be able to use and build on her work. Two small examples may be mentioned here. Evidently, lay Tibetans believe nuns particularly appropriate as performers of the worship of the goddess Tara; in fact the Tilokpur nuns derive most of their income from such Tara rituals sponsored by the laity. Secondly, nuns who are rumoured to be having an affair with their lama are treated with great respect by Tantric practitioners as embodying the highest female wisdom. This is in accord with Tantric ideology, but one would never learn this from better-known authors, whether Tibetologists or anthropologists, who tend to write as if the values of celibacy and chastity are unequivocally upheld and never challenged within Tibetan Buddhism.

Havnevik is much more interested in the question of the nuns' 'secondary' status as women and nuns. Much space is devoted to the question of how they can overcome this, and to the question of whether only women who are in some sense failures in lay life become nuns. There is no doubt where the author's sympathies lie on these questions. Occasionally, one may convict her of anthropological naïvety. For example, she comments on the disapproval Tibetans generally feel for certain nuns of Western origin who wear the monk's yellow vest: 'It seems to be a classic cultural impasse created by lack of communication on both sides' (p. 204). The well-meaning assumption that more communication would resolve the issue could easily be turned on its head. However, Havnevik very plausibly identifies a vicious circle in which Tibetan nuns are caught. Because they are not respected as much as monks they receive few invitations to rituals; thus they receive few donations; thus they can rarely afford to invite high lamas to give the teachings that would command respect; and so they are not respected, because they are relatively unlearned; and so on. She also notes, however, that even if nuns do acquire some of the formal qualifications of the monks (that is, through study and spiritual retreats) they will probably still have secondary status, this being a reflection of women's lower status in Tibetan society as a whole.

DAVID N. GELLNER

JOHN H. INGHAM, *Mary, Michael, and Lucifer: Folk Catholicism in Central Mexico* (Latin American Monographs No. 69), Austin: University of Texas Press 1989 [1986]. x, 216 pp., Bibliography, Index, Tables, Maps, Figures. \$25.00.

Ethnographic work on Nahuatl-speaking populations has accelerated extraordinarily in the past twenty-five years. When reviewing the state of scholarship on Mexico's indigenous population in 1967 Ralph Beals noted: 'for great areas occupied by the largest language group in Mexico, the Nahuatl speakers, we have absolutely nothing beyond a few casual observations, if even that'. Knowledge was restricted to the area around Mexico City, and even then one could only count Oscar Lewis's studies of Tepoztlán, William Madsen's on Milpa Alta and José de Jesus Montoya Briones's monograph on Atla.

John Ingham's *Mary, Michael and Lucifer* marks a major development in modern Nahuatl studies. More than any previous monograph on the area, Ingham's new work combines historical and structural insights concerning the problems of syncretism and acculturation in an elegant analysis that benefits from more than twenty years of fieldwork experience. His long-term commitment to Tlayacapan has given rise to rare and authoritative insights into the metaphysical constitution of the body, into ideas about conception and sickness, and into the relationship between these and indigenous views of the morally constituted community.

Ingham distinguishes between structural and semantic levels of enquiry. While tracing changes in the meaning the community gives to the world, as a result of nearly 500 years of post-contact history, he nevertheless notes the persistent social classifications inherited from pre-Hispanic times that continue to structure ideology and social organization. In his interpretation, sixteenth-century Catholicism not only encouraged the recognition of similarities between the saints and pre-Hispanic deities as a matter of expediency, but also assimilated a considerable part of the older structure on which belief and social organization were based. Indigenous conceptions of space, time and the relations between ethical categories have remained remarkably persistent.

After the Conquest, the Spanish reorganization of the community substituted barrios in place of the old *calpulli*, transforming their leaders into *mayordomos* who retained responsibility for religious celebrations and administrative matters. Ingham's older collaborators recall the town being divided into twenty-eight barrios, each with its own chapel and local saint that had been substituted for a pre-Hispanic deity. Although the town is left with only thirteen barrios and seven functioning chapels, on some ritual and social occasions the town still acts as four principal barrios, thus recalling the pre-Hispanic pattern where each *calpulli* was organized within four larger wards.

Spanish pragmatism also permitted Tlayacapan to retain a modified form of the pre-Hispanic *Tonalpohualli*, or calendar, which instead of structuring the ceremonies of various Aztec deities now organized those of the Catholic saints who were attributed similar powers and jurisdictions. Barrios were left the



responsibility to organize, in the main, agricultural and life-stage festivals, while the large Christian feasts, fairs and carnivals were organized at the village level.

Tlayacapan family relations and spiritual kinship may bear less pre-Hispanic influence than is found in other domains of the local culture. The family is structured on an ambiguous metaphor of the Holy Family. When a woman is nursing and sexually continent, she is compared to the Virgin Mary, while the man when dutiful and self-denying, parallels the role of St Joseph. Nevertheless, male and female sexual roles and men's behaviour in masculine groups lead to other aspects of life being compared to the relations between Adam and Eve. Ritual kinship is interpreted as a way of domesticating adverse behaviour that strays from the ideal roles represented by the Holy Family. Godparents are assigned at baptism, when a child is spiritually regenerated (after his conception through sinful sexual intercourse) and incorporated into the body of the church. The ritual of baptism and blessing purifies the child and introduces it into the spiritual community whose members organize and participate in Christian ceremonies and fiestas that closely associate them with the Holy Family and the saints. Although Ingham does not argue that metaphorical linkages between human and divine families may themselves be based on pre-Hispanic antecedents, evidence from the Huichol and Mayo suggests that this may be a more general characteristic of Uto-Aztecan classifications. As in other parts of Latin America, people who are not part of the moral community are identified with the Devil and seen as opposed to it. The different manifestations of demonic power, La Llorona, the Culebra de Aqua and Lucifer, are seen as derived from the evil pre-Hispanic deities, Cihuacoatl, Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca, suggesting that Christian ethics have wholly substituted more ambiguous pre-Hispanic categories, which probably did not distinguish absolute categories of good and evil. While Tlayacapan conceptual classifications illustrate a high degree of structural coherence, Ingham emphasizes the role of pragmatism in the choosing and manipulation of categories in everyday life, thereby acknowledging the historical dimension of the community's existence.

ANTHONY SHELTON

STANLEY BRANDES, *Power and Persuasion: Fiestas and Social Control in Rural Mexico*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1988. 112 pp., Maps, Tables, Illustrations, Glossary, Bibliography, Index. £26.55/£14.20.

Tzintzuntzan, a mixed Indian/Mestizo municipality on the shores of Lake Patzcuaro, Mexico, is one of the country's few communities to have received intensive long-term anthropological attention, in this case extending over forty years. Brandes's account of the dynamics and pragmatics governing the community's religious celebrations draws upon earlier studies by George Foster

and others, to provide a historical description of the organization of fiestas and an interpretation of their changing importance for the community's identity and cohesion. As Tzintzuntzan has become increasingly incorporated into the Mexican state, communal celebrations have declined while those that survived have become more elaborate. Surviving communally based ceremonies were refinanced to spread the burden from a few individual sponsors to larger segments of the community, thereby shifting the potential for competitiveness from individuals and families to wider, though still internal, community divisions. However, family celebrations centred around baptisms, weddings and funerals have also become more lavish, providing a new arena for competitively displaying both wealth and personal qualities.

Brandes challenges common assumptions about the timeless and intransmutable character of religious celebrations. In Tzintzuntzan, the church played an important role in reforming and reorganizing the fiesta system. During the 1930s and 1940s, the number of official positions for religious sponsors (*cargos*) was much reduced and the means of financing celebrations reformed. Some episodes that the church or civil authorities deemed unsuitable were discontinued while others were elaborated. Particularly noteworthy is the community's adoption of a very elaborate 'Night of the Dead' celebration, encouraged and marketed by state and church agencies to bring more tourism to the town. The decidedly low-key celebrations described by Foster before the 1970s contrast markedly with later events, which have assumed many of the attributes of the more elaborate expressions found elsewhere in Mexico. Furthermore, although 90 per cent of the population of Tzintzuntzan is Mestizo, the community has come to identify itself strongly with a ceremony that has strong indigenous roots and has contested the authority of the local church to simplify it. Even the relative importance of one celebration to another can change. For example, the celebration of the miraculous image of El Señor del Rescate assumed greater importance than that of the feast day of the town's patron saint, after the former was credited with saving the town from a smallpox epidemic in the late nineteenth century.

Not only does Brandes describe the fiesta system as an open institution subject to different internal and external exigencies, but, he argues, the competition and mediation of these diverse influences provides a rich medium for examining the power relations between different groups. Brandes offers a functional explanation for the fiesta system, arguing that it provides a means of reiterating the ideal parameters of socially sanctioned behaviour that are contrasted with their antithesis: a world of disorder, evil, ill-health and, ultimately, death. The fear in which villagers hold evil constrains their everyday behaviour.

Studies of such communities as Tzintzuntzan, where the working of social forces has been well documented over a protracted period, provide examples of how the effects of the indigenous encounter with the modern world might be better appreciated and of how the mechanisms underlying incorporation, rejection or partial assimilation might be explained and more general models of change devised. They may also eventually be able to help us explain changes in the

consciousness of identity, away from village or insular affiliation towards acceptance of a wider national identity. Brandes's work is an important contribution to the history and ethnography of Tzintzuntzan in particular, while providing a timely corrective to some widespread and false assumptions about Mexican fiestas in general.

ANTHONY SHELTON

CHRISTOPHER ALAN WATERMAN, *Jùjú: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1990. xii, 242 pp., Glossary, Bibliography, Index, Maps, Plates Figures. £35.95/£17.50/\$51.75/\$19.50.

Waterman's study of Jùjú, based on fieldwork conducted between 1979 and 1982, is a big book for its 242 pages. Each paragraph is saturated with description and argument, his summaries of anthropological and ethnomusicological theory are studies in precision, and he possesses a descriptive and analytical style, often drily humorous, that cuts to the quick.

The text consists of two quite distinct halves. The first is a history of Jùjú that situates documentary sources and oral accounts in the wider history of West Africa's political and economic transformation. Lagos itself was a complex urban environment before colonization. Its distinct class and ethnic make-up in the early twentieth century structured the emergence of a proliferation of popular genres: the Brass Bands, Highlife, European popular and classical genres favoured by the 'Black Europeans', Brazilian popular musics adapted by returnee Yoruba slaves, and Christian church and north Nigerian Muslim styles. Rural-urban migration began to transform Lagos in the 1920s and '30s, and guitar-based 'Palmwine' music, which emerged in new migrant recreational contexts in the city, began to bring together diffuse stylistic currents, named Jùjú, in 1932. During and immediately after the Second World War, musical entertainment in the 'hotels' (bars-cum-brothels) of Lagos, and the emergence of new Nigerian élites provided patronage and performance contexts for Jùjú musicians. Waterman describes how the genre was subsequently transformed by the technologization of instruments (allowing for the expansion of the bands to incorporate electric guitars, talking drums and vocal choruses), and its involvement with foreign recording companies and the Nigerian media.

Ethnomusicologists have often talked in a simplistic fashion about the socio-economic context of music. Waterman points out that this not only reifies music as an irreducible object or essence, but it also ignores the fact that music is itself a context in which other things can happen. The second half of the book, an ethnography of musicians in Ibadan, examines this assertion. Jùjú is an

essential component of *àrìyá* rituals, neo-traditional events that celebrate births, deaths, weddings, namings and business launches. The ability of musicians to sustain the spatio-temporal 'textures' of the *àrìyá* is critical to the success or failure of the event, in which statuses and identities are transacted and negotiated through competitive 'spraying' (covering musicians and hosts with bank notes) and dancing. The aesthetic vocabularies and performance techniques that make Jùjú time 'roll' are complex, but Waterman's own experience as an evidently accomplished Jùjú bassist is a fascinating key to his discussion of Jùjú aesthetics and techniques.

Musicians in Ibadan today are entrepreneurs, obsessed with technological modernization, the creation of new genres, and the crossing of religious and ethnic boundaries. Their role in successful *àrìyá* celebrations is vital to the social mobility of Nigerian entrepreneurial élites. Since the establishment of electoral politics in Nigeria, these élites have made intensive use of Jùjú musicians in their creation of clientage networks. Consequently, successful bands are highly dependent upon them for patronage—kitting out a nine-piece Jùjú band is an expensive business. It is not surprising that Waterman concludes that Jùjú performance encodes and perpetuates the values of this élite. Jùjú bands provide a model of a hierarchically organized whole, consisting at each level of interlocking instrumental textures united by a leader/soloist. This, Waterman argues, provides an apt metaphor of the unified heterogeneity of an idealized Nigeria: a hierarchical society whose inequalities are mitigated by the generosity of the rich and possibilities of social advancement for the poor. This is endorsed through the rags-to-riches mythologies of the 'commanders', 'kings' and 'admirals' of Jùjú, which obfuscate processes of class stratification in Nigeria's oil-boom economy. Waterman's final statement is, however, one of an ambiguity that lies at the heart of any performance, for musicians are indeed engaged in the hegemonic reproduction of dominant values, but at the same time their performance 'preserves as well as conceals alternative readings'. Music can transform as well as reproduce.

The question is how. Waterman is less convincing here. Partly this is due to the fact that his study is essentially an ethnography of Jùjú musicians. Seeing Jùjú from this angle has the evident advantage of Waterman's insider experience, and any ethnography is bound to select certain angles and perspectives at the expense of others. This approach, however, is inclined to under-represent the way in which the music is experienced by its fans, most of whom are the urban dispossessed, and (since band members are all men) the ways in which gender must affect the experience of Jùjú. 'Listening' is itself a performed event in which alternative readings are always possible. A phenomenology of fanship, for example, might have provided a view of how different popular genres (such as Muslim Nigerian Fuji) are seen in relation to one another, and the hopes and fantasies embodied by particular musicians. An account of how women experience Jùjú might have provided a means of assessing the socially transforming potential of a music that seems firmly embedded in male sexual ideology.

Waterman's description of the way in which popular musicians shape notions of power and identity fills many gaps in the anthropological and ethnomusicological literature. The idea of a detailed ethnography of a popular genre itself breaks new ground. It will also be of value outside anthropology and ethnomusicology, in that variety of disciplines that share an interest in, and a stake in defining, 'the popular'.

MARTIN STOKES

LORRAINE NENCEL and PETER PELS (eds.), *Constructing Knowledge: Authority and Critique in Social Science* (Inquiries in Social Construction; ser. eds. Kenneth J. Gergen and John Shotter), London etc.: Sage 1991. xvi, 202 pp., References, Index. £12.95.

*Constructing Knowledge* is a collection of papers delivered at the conference on critical anthropology sponsored by and held at the Department of Cultural Anthropology, University of Amsterdam, in December 1988. Generally, the papers address the present situation of uncertainty in anthropology, which some have labelled the 'crisis in anthropology'. They deal with such issues as anthropological authority, the identity of the anthropologist in the field, feminist critique, grand theory, cultural relativism and ethnocentrism. In other words, they address the problems created by anthropologists' endeavours to acquire systematic knowledge of 'other' people.

One of the better papers is the editors' introduction. Instead of the standard synopsis of each paper they have opted to contextualize them by providing a brief history of critical anthropology that could easily be extended into a book. Beginning with Malinowski's critique of science their narrative progresses through anthropologists' use of Thomas Kuhn's idea of paradigm shift to attack anthropology's scientific presumptions, to the founding of the critical anthropology movement with the publication of Dell Hymes's *Reinventing Anthropology* (1974). They continue with a comparison of Marxist and feminist critiques and end their history with the critique of ethnography and the breakdown of anthropological authority in the 1980s. Their thesis is that postmodernist thought, with its tendency to undermine efforts at legitimation of the scientific project (i.e. anthropology's crisis) is the product of a history of critical reflection. In other words, it is critical anthropology itself that has caused the crisis in anthropology.

In an interesting essay entitled 'Anthropological Doubt', Tom Lemaire deals with the contradiction at the heart of anthropology: it is a science rooted in a particular culture that claims to be universal in scope. He argues that fieldwork exposes one's habits, ideas, concepts and values to other societies, and that in order to understand these alien categories one must entertain doubts about the

validity of one's own categories. Self-criticism allows one to perceive or contemplate the existence of an alternative. In other words, for anthropology to be possible it must necessarily be self-critical. In a rambling essay drawing on his experience with Latin American and African peasants Gerrit Huizer asks 'whether anthropology in crisis can learn from the way "men and women in crisis" [i.e. peasants] deal with crisis' (p. 41). Peasants deal with it by understanding the causes of their situation and by a continuous spiritual revitalization. Unfortunately, it is the latter that Huizer stresses. Robert Pool presents the text of a fieldwork interview as the basis for some critical remarks about ethnographic representation. The author 'participates' in the interview as an observer, the interview itself being conducted by an interpreter. Pool points out that the use of interpreters is common, especially during the early months of fieldwork when the researcher lacks the necessary fluency, but that little mention of their contribution is made in the resulting ethnography. He discusses some of the problems of this method and suggests that the interpreter should, at the very least, be recognized as making a creative contribution in constructing the ethnography. After a couple of pages of babble Stephen Tyler settles down to make an obtuse comparison of the abstract 'essentials' of modernism and postmodernism. His dense poetical style, however, is a turn-off. The next essay, by Jonathan Friedman, is little better. Also written in a dense style, it takes anthropology's concern with the 'other' as a search for Western identity, an identity which, he asserts, has been disintegrated by postmodernism. The next two chapters deal with feminist anthropology's encounter with postmodernism. Annelies Moors compares the construction of difference in feminist studies in anthropology with that typified by Said's *Orientalism*. Particular emphasis is placed on the characterization of Middle Eastern (Oriental) women in the anthropological literature. Annemiek Richters fails to deliver on her promise to answer the question whether postmodernism is 'yet another masculine invention engineered to exclude women' (p. 125) and instead provides a feminist critique of modern mental health diagnosis.

Perhaps the best essay in the book is that by Olivia Harris. In 'Time and Difference in Anthropological Writing' Harris begins by pointing out that although it is the individual who conducts fieldwork and encounters the world of the 'other', what is at issue is how the society of the 'other' and the anthropologist's own society are juxtaposed, compared and brought into some sort of relationship. The fieldworker acts as a mediator. Time is a powerful metaphor of otherness that such anthropologists as Evans-Pritchard, Geertz, Whorf, Lévi-Strauss and Leach, among others, have used to construct difference and establish the relationship between their society and 'ours'. Harris is not concerned with the 'other's' conception of time, however, so much as she is with 'ours'. She discovers that not only do anthropological discussions of time depend on (usually) unexamined comparison with 'our' time but that among anthropologists the concepts of 'our' time differ. This raises the important question, 'What do we mean by "our" or "we"?' All anthropologists invoke a broader collective self and Harris goes on to examine the implications of this invoked 'we'.

Joke Schrijvers actively assisted a group of poor women in Sri Lanka escape their poverty by organizing a small collective farm. In the penultimate essay in the book she discusses the change in these women as they learn to stand up for themselves and the difficulties in dealing simultaneously with people in different positions of power, i.e. the Dutch government agency employing her and the women she was helping. The final article is a personal account by Johannes Fabian of some of the problems—such as revealing secrets, identifying informants, taking sides, exposing information to the powers that be, and so on—he struggled with in his initial fieldwork among the Jamaa of Zaïre. He has few new insights to offer. I do agree, however, with his final statement, which seems to epitomize the entire collection of essays: ‘we need critique (exposure of imperialist lies, of the workings of capitalism, of the misguided ideas of scientism, and all the rest) to *help ourselves*. The catch is, of course, that ourselves ought to be them as well as us’ (p. 201).

CHRIS HOLDSWORTH

SCOTT ATRAN, *Cognitive Foundations of Natural History: Towards an Anthropology of Science*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press/Paris: Maison des Sciences de l’Homme 1990. xii, 320 pp., Index, References. £35.00/\$49.50.

Many anthropologists, especially perhaps from Oxford, locate classification at the core of their discipline. Thus, in their introduction to ASA 27, *History and Ethnicity* (London, 1989), Chapman, McDonald and Tonkin write of subsuming the classification of people within ‘classification in general—an area of expertise that anthropology has made its own’; and the word recurs many times in their brief text. Without disputing the suggestiveness and value of the term itself, one might wonder just how wide-ranging and well-articulated is that expertise. Atran’s book is about one of the most obvious sorts of classification, that of living kinds (plants and animals), but the issues it raises could not be called hackneyed.

Just as a kinship analyst can reasonably (I think) choose to concentrate on formal analysis of the classification of relatives while ignoring the practical significance of the categories, so Atran bypasses classifications based on the use or value of living kinds for humans (i.e. such taxa as fruit, weeds, pets, beasts of burden), as well as issues of symbolism. His concern is rather with the nature of folk biological nomenclature or ethnotaxonomies (sparrows and birds, oaks and trees), and with the relationship between these taxonomies and scientific ones. He is not an ethnographer, but an explorer, rather in the tradition of Dan Sperber, of the borderlands between anthropology, psychology and the history and philosophy of science.

Atran's central claim concerns the plurality of cognitive subsystems. Back in 1975 he had contrasted Piaget, who believed that humans approached all domains of knowledge and experience with the same undifferentiated faculty of general intelligence, with Chomsky, who held that humans can draw on a number of distinct and specific cognitive capacities, for instance the one that enables a young child to master a language in spite of scrappy exposure to it. Atran favours Chomsky, and envisages 'many more or less autonomous psychological sub-systems' going into the making of culture (p. 50). In particular, the domain of living kinds, he argues, is cognized differently from the domain of artefacts, and it is partly for its blurring of the difference that he attacks the prototype theory of Eleanor Rosch and followers. The classification of living kinds conforms to a cut and dried hierarchy and contrasts with the 'notoriously open-textured' cross-cutting classification of artefacts. Are pianos musical instruments or pieces of furniture? Is a wheel-chair or a bean-bag or a car-seat really a chair? We do not ask parallel questions of a tiger, which is unambiguously an animal and which we conceive of as possessing an underlying essence or nature. A chair is a different matter, and here we do more readily think in terms of prototype plus penumbra of comparable objects, bearing a more or less close family resemblance to the focal type.

What general features are typical of folk biological classifications? The genus is often the smallest grouping recognizable without expert study, and in any case, within a given environment, many genera will be represented only by a single species. Thus the basic-level taxon is here called the generic-specieme (e.g. horse), though this is not to deny the sporadic occurrence of finer differentiations. Between the unique beginner (animal, plant) and the generic-specieme, the main level of grouping is the life-form (mammal, bird, tree, bush...) (on which see my review in *JASO* (Vol. XV, no. 2 (1984)) of Cecil Brown's *Language and Living Things*). At a lower level there may well also be 'family fragments', groupings recognized by informants but often unlabelled. These may cross-cut life-forms, and are unsystematic in the sense that they do not form an exhaustive partitioning of a local flora or fauna.

A good two-thirds of the book deals with the history of systematics from Aristotle to Darwin, and some readers may prefer to skip from the end of part I direct to the conclusions. But the history is instructive. Aristotle starts not far from the scale and suppositions of unlettered folk the world over, dealing with fewer than 600 species from his own environment and only 30 exotics. Evidently a major feature of the story is the growth in the number of species included in scientific classifications after the voyages of discovery and the spread of printing. Tournefort in 1694 was already dealing with between 6,000 and 10,000 species of plants, but by reducing them to 600 genera he was harking back to the order of complexity faced by Aristotle. Moreover, in elaborating their hierarchies the naturalists were able to develop the covert 'family fragments' of the folk classifications, as well as draw on such metaphysical ideas as the great chain of being and evolution.



One purpose of the book is to champion the 'common sense' that produces folk taxonomies. Even in the scientific age common sense retains a role, not only for laymen but also for scientists, whose specialities presuppose that they understand the 'naïve' notions from which the speciality developed. In any case, is it naïve to hold that the generic-specieme *dog* is more real to us than the family fragment *canine*? Science is a curious social institution, to which participant observation of behaviour in laboratories is only one among the various possible anthropological approaches. On the basis of his cognitive approach, Atran aligns it, albeit almost in passing, not so much with other subcultures as with other such second-order elaborations of common-sense classification as totemism.

With its considerable range (45 pages of end-notes, 550 references) and its numerous critical comments on other scholars, this is scarcely an easy read. But it is a rich and provocative book that gives some insight into what a lot we should have to know really to be experts in classification.

N. J. ALLEN

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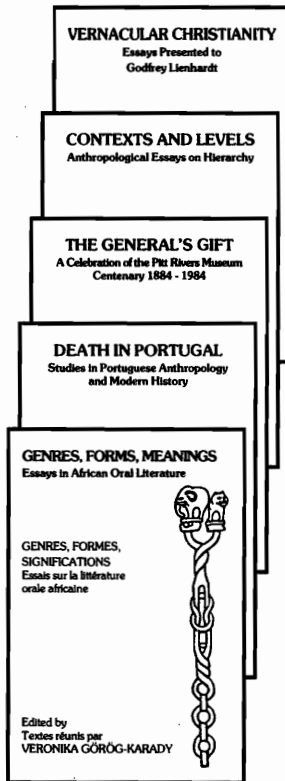
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