

BOOK REVIEWS

KARIN BARBER, *I Could Speak until Tomorrow: Oriki, Women and the Past in a Yoruba Town* (International African Library 7; gen. eds. J. D. Y. Peel and David Parkin), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1991. xi, 328 pp., Bibliography, Glossary, Index, Maps, Figures, Tables, Plates. £40.00/£14.95.

Yoruba *oriki* comprise a literary genre that parallels Yoruba society in many interesting ways: they celebrate difference and social hierarchy at one and the same time, and achievers are praised and their competitors denigrated by being equated with a natural order or hierarchy. *Oriki* praise individuals, places of origin and deities (*orisa*). By chanting an *oriki* the performer both enhances the status, power and reputation of the addressee (of whatever kind) and affirms her own allegiance to that person, place of origin or *orisa*. Everything is possible in this individualistic melting-pot, but the goals achieved time and again across the generations recreate familiar social structures. Karin Barber traces the way *oriki* are part and parcel of the fabric of Yoruba life. This book is far more than an analysis of a 'mere' literary genre. At the beginning of the book she asks what *oriki* can tell us about Okuku (the town where she conducted her research) and what Okuku told her about *oriki*. The answering of these questions makes for fascinating anthropology of the best, and very readable, kind.

Oriki comprise a genre to make most literary critics despair. They lack most sorts of unity; the women who chant them are *bricoleurs* of the first water, using elements from other *oriki*, proverbs and other Yoruba genres. Performatively, they are distinguished by the insistence with which they are chanted (shouted or screamed) at the individual being addressed (which may be a living individual, ancestor, household, lineage or deity). The performer weaves a web of allusion by combining many disparate elements. The more skilful the performer the more radical the breaks and twists she can succeed in introducing, while continuing to maintain the thread—the frail links between one phrase and the next: 'any kind of resemblance (including opposition and strong contrast) can be used to bring two utterances into conjunction: syntactic, semantic, lexical, tonal; through sound, through structure or through meaning' (p. 269). A performance may increase this still further. For example, a performer may be addressing an *oriki* at one man when a more a senior man arrives. Without a clear break, she will switch to the newcomer's *oriki*. Where then the unity of performance or narrative? The notion of a dialogic, which Barber takes from Mikhail Bakhtin, proves helpful. In *oriki* there is a continual shifting of the inferred voice: the first person moves without pause or comment from the woman speaking, to the addressee, to either or both of their ancestors, their lineages as a single unit, and then may change into second or third person and back, with all of this being done in the space of five lines (p. 260). The performance of *oriki* is also part and parcel of both the acquisition and maintenance of status and power. Indeed, the performance of *oriki* is (in part) constitutive of status and power; to understand *oriki* in Yoruba society one must

understand status and power, and vice versa. It is in this reciprocal (though indirect) relationship that the dialogic lies. A similar fluidity may be found in the different types of history that Barber explores. The history of the town is intermeshed with the history of the Oba and the royal family. The history of the place leads to that of the people resident there and vice versa. *Oriki* exploit and explore all such possible intermeshings.

The title of Barber's first chapter, 'Anthropology, Text and Town', could well have been used for the entire book. A later chapter discusses *oriki orile*, the *oriki* of the place of origin (*orile*). The residential/domestic kin groups that comprise the town identify themselves with, and distinguish themselves from one another by referring to their places of origin. An *oriki orile*, therefore, is about the residential units in the town by which individuals are identified, and through which, for example, they gain rights to land (and, for some, through which they may inherit titles).

Oriki orile lead Barber to a protracted discussion of the Yoruba *ile* (pp. 153–65). She discusses both P. C. Lloyd's account of them as patrilineal descent groups and Jerry Eade's more recent residence-based analysis. Her discussion is anthropology at its most sensitive; both to the particular and to the need to generalize. *Ile* in Okuku (at least) emerge as units of identity in which both residence and kinship play vital roles. Different elements are important on different occasions, so the overall picture is complex. At the core of each *ile* is a (small) agnatic descent group—among whom titles are transmitted. (How significant is it that despite this kin group at the core, Okuku people talk of them in terms of their common town of origin?) To this may be added strangers and cognatic kin, who acquire rights to hold and to transmit land by dint of long residence. They need not, however, be fully merged with the core kin group—separate origin accounts may be preserved (in *oriki orile*). Moreover, rules of exogamy may also distinguish core members of an *ile*: co-residence implies exogamy, so no one in a compound may marry. However, this principle extends back in time, so that groups that were once co-resident do not intermarry long after they have ceased to be co-resident. This means that two groups from one town who become attached to two different *ile* in Okuku may not marry, although other members of their *ile* may. Conversely, co-residence alone does not imply unity. Barber records cases of different *ile* occupying the same compound for generations and retaining separate identities. The final twist (pp. 165ff.), which links this anthropology firmly to the text, is the way in which *oriki orile*, the *oriki* of each *ile*, are shown to be constitutive of *ile* membership—knowing and reciting a particular *oriki orile* demonstrates and (in part) creates membership of the *ile*.

Another chapter explores the concept of 'bigmanship' in its Yoruba incarnation, from the period of warring uncertainties of the nineteenth century to the entrepreneurial possibilities of the twentieth. *Oriki* were a mark of success, and give clues to how the big men wished to be seen. There were 'big' women too, but they tended not to have *oriki*. Barber gives a sensitive account of why and how this came about. In the course of this she mentions Fakemide, who became

a *babalawo* (*ifá* diviner), not only knowing the *ifá* verses but nevertheless actually practising as an *ifá* diviner (p. 289). None of the other literature on *ifá* has described female practitioners.

It is unfortunate that a number of the index entries, especially those indexing items in the end notes, refer to the page before the actual reference. That the index is occasionally correct makes this all the more irritating. Readers unfamiliar with Nigerian English should be told that *ila*, which Barber translates as 'okra' is *Hibiscus esculentus*, called 'okra' in other parts of the English-speaking world.

DAVID ZEITLYN

RUTH BARNES and JOANNE B. EICHER (eds.), *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning* (Cross Cultural Perspectives on Women Vol. 2; gen. eds. Shirley Ardener and Jackie Waldren), Providence and Oxford: Berg 1993 [1992]. viii, 293 pp., Index, References, Tables, Figures, Plates. £12.95.

This innovative collection of essays is the product of a workshop held in April 1989 at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research on Women at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford. In their introduction Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher assert the significance of the role of dress in marking both ethnic and social identity and gender roles. They note, for example, that before they are old enough to dress themselves infants are decorated appropriately by their elders. Their characterization of 'gender distinctions' as 'a crucial part of the construction of dress' (p. 2) is, though, somewhat surprising as it leaves room for doubt as to which they think is the more deeply rooted category.

Most contributors to the book happily avoid this ambiguity. Given their concentration on particular ethnographic material, it is perhaps easier for them to demonstrate the way in which it is gender identity that is at least partly constructed by conventional modes of dress. This is evidenced not least by the way in which dress is shown to change over space and time in accordance with changes in the conception of gender roles. In his essay on 'Continuity and Change in Hindu Women's Dress' O. P. Joshi notes that women from agricultural castes in rural areas in central India wear a form of dress that is slightly different to that worn by urban women, allowing them greater freedom of movement in the fields, yet also allowing them quickly to become modest in the presence of men. The way garments are produced is often itself gendered. Cheri Pancake documents male and female production of different kinds of textiles in Guatemala, noting that while 'male weavers typically generate quantities of repetitive items, such as yard-goods, linens, and blankets...women...are likely to weave highly individualistic garments or decorative cloths' (p. 86). A third category of 'generic garments' and 'tourist products' exists, and these are produced by both men and women. Writing about

the Naga and Southeast Asian contexts, Ruth Barnes identifies what she sees as a complementarity between womens' textile production and male head-taking, with its associations of fertility, acquisition and expression. In her essay on the 'Jewish *Kippa Sruga*' Suzanne Baizerman discusses a context in which two systems of meaning operate. One surrounds the production and giving of this kind of skullcap to men by women. The other relates to its use by men to make religious and political statements about themselves. The social context is shown to be definitively important, with the same *kippa sruga* being capable of expressing more than one kind of meaning. Conventions in dress encode many meanings on different but interacting levels. The fundamental gender division is highlighted and then qualified by the indication of religious, social and political differences.

The theme of authority or power recurs. Julia Leslie documents the way in which for orthodox Hindu women, dress can be read predominantly as an assertion of their religious and social subordination to their husbands. It is this same relationship, however, which offers them a certain amount of authority in the context of the home. Helen Callaway identifies the British colonial ritual of 'Dressing for Dinner in the Bush' as having a twofold political objective. First, the 'asymmetry of gender roles' was reinforced, and second, 'the uniforms and prescribed clothing brilliantly enhanced the imperial spectacle and the dominant power this represented' (p. 246). It is, however, in the two essays on Western societies that the issue of power is most clearly articulated. In her discussion of maternity clothes in the USA from 1850 to 1990, Rebecca Bailey shows that the clothes deemed appropriate for pregnant women were those that fitted with the new medical ideology of pregnancy, controlled by almost exclusively male doctors. Pregnant women were discouraged from wearing the kinds of garments that would allow them to participate in whichever new and popular activity they had just been advised against. This physical constriction is reminiscent of the injunction on Hindu women noted in Joshi's essay: 'the sari encourages them to neither walk quickly nor run, but to move with dignity; it enhances the view Indian society has regarding women' (p. 225). The marginalization of pregnant women in America is matched by the marginalization of women in the British police force as presented by Malcolm Young, police officer and anthropologist. His sometimes shocking essay demonstrates that the appearance, and therefore the identity, of women in the police force is controlled by competing men. These male peers and superiors are privy to an unofficial, as well as an official, discourse relating to women within the organization. Abuses of power and the manipulation of the identity of the marginalized female group are therefore possible. Perhaps more than any other contributor, Young engages squarely with the gender issue in a way that never subordinates it to the theme of dress.

Overall this is a rich and diverse collection of essays, with a wide ethnographic and historical range that makes it a valuable and useful book for those interested in either dress or gender, and indispensable for those interested in both.

TANIA KAISER

SARA COHEN, *Rock Culture in Liverpool: Popular Music in the Making*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1991. vii, 245 pp., Discography, Bibliography, Index, Figure. £13.75.

Writing on popular culture and popular music has moved into the academic mainstream, but it has remained awkwardly poised between the mass cultural critiques of Adorno and Horkheimer and romantic celebrations of 'popular' resistance. In spite of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies' advocacy of ethnographic techniques, there are surprisingly few accounts of band life based on detailed observation of groups of musicians. As the title of Sara Cohen's book suggests, it is the 'making' of popular music that has been ignored consistently in this field. The need for an anthropological voice has consequently become more and more pressing. Cohen's ethnographic study of two Liverpool bands, The Jactars and Crikey It's the Cromptons!, is a highly persuasive demonstration of the existence of a gap and the means by which it might be filled.

Cohen's choice of Liverpool, as well as her choice of 'alternative', 'hard' and 'angry' bands, means that the book focuses on the post-punk 'Indie' aesthetic in a local context that has an intense commitment to popular culture, in particular music and sport. Cohen first situates Liverpool's extraordinary musical creativity; there are currently some 1000 bands in the city. Until its relatively recent economic decline, the city of Liverpool was an outward-looking port. Courtesy of the American servicemen stationed nearby after the Second World War guitars and records found their way to Liverpool to an extent unrivalled elsewhere in Britain. Liverpool's relative wealth and the transient nature of much of its population resulted in a vibrant nightlife that was highly receptive to the influx of recorded North American popular music. After the heyday epitomized by the Cavern in the 1960s and Eric's in the 1970s, economic decline in the 1980s did not lead to any appreciable diminishment of the city's musical life. If anything, the success of The Beatles and other Liverpool bands, the respectability that rock had attained among the city's working class, and the time made available by mass unemployment were highly conducive to the formation of a new rock culture. As Cohen points out, this rock culture is one which thrives on thrift and making-do. Much of the creativity of the bands studied by Cohen was channelled into keeping in touch (when no band members had telephones), organizing rehearsals, travel and gigs, and raising funds for instruments, amplification and demo tapes (when most band members were unemployed). The social fabric of band life, the ties of friendship, shared musical experience, kinship and debt, forms the core of Cohen's ethnography. Their music making 'not only unites, but divides' (p. 43), constituting a medium through which a wide-ranging net of relationships are reinforced, explored and deconstructed.

Cohen's book focuses in turn on the organization and management of bands, on performance, and on the efforts to secure a contract with a recording company. The contradictions experienced by both the bands studied between imposed, media-industry values and locally generated constructions of aesthetic worth

emerge from the ethnography in terms of a number of pressing practical problems. Later chapters widen the theoretical frame, looking at the musical and lyrical organization of performance and at the construction of meaning, in particular the contradiction-laden aesthetic of organized 'disorder'. Post-punk Indie rock musicians have encoded what Simon Frith has called the 'rock ideology' in ways which relate directly to, and emerge from, the social circumstances of the musicians. An ethos of 'non-musicality' prevails, in the present case in opposition to the bands in a rival studio contemptuously referred to as 'musos' and the technological sophistication of 'commercial pop'. Ideas about musical style and the powerful experiences of performance underpin the band members' social relationships, enabling them to say things about one another, and to one another, which could not be said in any other way, and positively transforming a contradictory relationship of exclusion from and dependence upon the world of music commerce. The book concludes with a discussion of the ways in which women are excluded from Liverpool's rock culture, and develops a critique of the gender-blindness of subcultural theory.

Cohen's discussion of the ways in which musical disorder is organized focuses heavily on performance and rehearsal techniques. The discussion here is slightly marred by an uncertainty about where to draw the line between anthropological and musicological analysis (p. 90), suggesting that there might in fact be an appropriate moment for musicology to step in and complete the picture. The affective experience of musical performance is undoubtedly a key to why the bands Cohen studied keep at it, in spite of repeated failures. What allows this experience to attain its full significance is the pattern of social relations it organizes and articulates, and the metaphorical (verbal) languages spun round it. There is little here that an anthropologist cannot do, and Cohen's book demonstrates this admirably. Understanding composition, and the performance moment, may indeed require a more detailed technical discussion than Cohen ever provides, for example how Tony's 'upside down' aesthetic (p. 167) is worked out in constructional details, but this is a relatively minor criticism of what constitutes an effective anthropological analysis.

The detail and thoroughness of Cohen's ethnographic approach constitute a significant challenge to those academic disciplines engaged with 'the popular'. The significance of this kind of local-level study lies partly in demonstrating the sheer quantities of time, effort and social creativity involved in music-making in contemporary British cities, and partly in reminding theorists of popular culture of the significance of performance as a medium through which the often contradictory experiences of identity are simultaneously formulated and transformed.

MARTIN STOKES

LIBBET CRANDON-MALAMUD, *From the Fat of Our Souls: Social Change, Political Process, and Medical Pluralism in Bolivia* (Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care), Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1991. xix, 267 pp., Glossary, References, Index, Tables. \$45.00.

If there is a book that has been on the shelves of every *recherché* medical anthropologist of social persuasion since its publication, it must be *From the Fat of Our Souls* by Libbet Crandon-Malamud. The souls in question are the 1000 or so living in 'Kachitu', a windswept *municipio* in the altiplano of Bolivia, where the author spent eighteen months from February 1977 in the company of her daughter, whose drawings illustrate the book.

The book represents medical anthropology's attempt to take the intellectual high ground. Medicine is one of Paul Unschuld's 'primary resources [which] are, like capital, fungible. They can be used to acquire something else or transformed into something else. Secondary resources are those things acquired or created through primary resources' (p. ix; repeated p. 11). Dominant amongst such secondary resources is the enhancement of social status, which is premised on class, which is in turn premised on ethnicity. All are fluid. Medical choice in Kachitu, Crandon-Malamud argues, is principally motivated by the process of identity negotiation rather than by any belief in efficacy. Thus, 'medical dialogue can be used to both redefine the content of ethnic and religious identity, and to create alliances across boundaries that are, in fact, permeable, and effect changes in social class—to redefine cultural identity' (p. 22).

The 'can' in this statement should be noted, as should the 'a' in the following: 'a principal means by which people negotiate identity and shift affiliation is through medicine' (p. 202). Later, Crandon-Malamud is forced to temper further the boldness of her argument: 'medical traditions are *as much* a dynamic of Kachitu as are other aspects of culture, such as the economic, political, legal, and religious processes that inform them and are transformed by them.... The physicians in Kachitu demonstrated *as much as anyone else* that through medical dialogue, shifts in medical beliefs are frequently made, and as a result, nonmedical ends are achieved' (p. 204; emphases added). No attempt is made to evaluate the *relative* importance of medical traditions in the Kachitu dynamic, or in the achievement of secondary, nonmedical ends. Other roles of medicine tend to be underplayed by Crandon-Malamud in her emphasis on medical dialogue as a quest for identity. There is ample evidence from other parts of the world to suggest, for example, that people may also go to medical practitioners because they are sick.

Thus it is not for its theory, nor for its analysis, that the book might be lauded (even though many medical anthropologists might want to believe that what Crandon-Malamud says is true). Instead, it is because much of the ethnographic writing it contains is richly evocative. Indeed, it is tempting to believe that the book's rather long gestation period was necessitated by a misguided attempt to patch together these often excellent vignettes with a somewhat overstretched theoretical overlay. The book is obedient to narrative and reflexive imperatives,

and those who like such headings as 'Cast of Characters' and 'Locating a Theoretical Perspective: Or How the Physician, the Preacher, the Peasant, and the Khan Achachi Came to Terms with One Another' will be charmed by its structure and approach. There is undoubted craftsmanship and vitality in the narrative style. There is also an admirable reflexive candour. High spots include an unfortunate episode with local dogs, which forms the personal context for Crandon-Malamud's experience of a boy blowing off two fingers and a thumb with a firecracker, and the explication of her economic relations with individuals in the community, which creates a backdrop to the illness and death of her research assistant's father.

The ethnographic vignettes amply illustrate the thickness and multifacetedness of medical experience in Kachitu, where 'the determinants of etiological and diagnostic choices are a complex set of elements that form an open and flexible system' and 'the relationship between these elements and their significance within the systems change over time as they change in the lives of the individuals concerned' (p. 150). Unfortunately, when this same imprecision impinges outside the domain of narrative ethnography it is less appealing. For example, there are problems in trying to use the appendixes for any kind of quantitative or comparative work. One wonders about the 'Catholic cholos', an ethnic category that forms 37% of the adult population of Kachitu according to Table 1 (p. 212), but which is barely mentioned in the main body of the text. One also wonders about such random characters as the 'young European volunteer' (p. 162), who appears in the amputation incident but is not mentioned elsewhere.

There is also some sloppiness in the editing, which is surprising considering the prestigious series in which the book appears. For example, a kinship diagram (p. 165) is untitled, and a reference (p. 262) to an article by Allan Young, which all socially inclined medical anthropologists should read, is incomplete. It is actually to be found in *American Anthropologist* (Vol. LXXVIII, no. 1 (1976), pp. 5-24).

ANDREW RUSSELL

MICHAELA DI LEONARDO (ed.), *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1991. 422 pp., Bibliography, Index. \$45.00.

This book is a wide-ranging *tour de force* of feminist anthropological analysis, comprising a collection of articles by some of America's most prolific anthropologists. In her introduction, Michaela di Leonardo gives an overview of the writings of feminist anthropology since the early 1970s. As she points out (p. 30), one of the developments has been the realization that women cannot all be lumped together and studied in isolation, or even in relation to men only. She writes: 'In

any particular population, major social divisions—race/ethnicity, class, religion, age, sexual preference, nationality—will cross cut and influence the meanings of gender division’ (ibid.). It is also abundantly clear, from this book, that feminist anthropology cannot all be lumped together either, as each author in turn presents a thorough rethinking of previous theories and interpretations, overturning and replacing them.

There is always the problem of whether to refute the definitions that have been imposed on women’s supposed attributes, activities and ways of operating, or to assent and provide explanations for them. So Stoler, in a very interesting article about the shifting perceptions of women, both native and European, in the colonies, writes that the ‘universally negative stereotype of the colonial wife’ has been challenged ‘either by showing the reasons why they were racially intolerant, socially vicious...or by demonstrating that they really were not’ (p. 65). Thus Peacock, in a discussion of work and reproduction among the Efe, writes that ‘models derived from feminist perspectives, in an effort to negate earlier emphases on sex differences in physical strength as determinants of task assignment, have tended to ignore the very real energetic constraints imposed by pregnancy and lactation’ (p. 354). By carefully measuring what pregnant Efe actually do, she finds that they do in fact carry loads less often than their non-pregnant counterparts.

The book is divided into four sections of three chapters each. The first section examines gender as it has been viewed in history, anthropology and archaeology; the second examines the part played by gender in studies of cultural politics; the third examines gender and labour, including ‘development’ in the Third World; and the last (does this signify its devaluation?) examines issues to do with childcare and labour, kinship (deconstructing the kinship deconstructors), and whether the recent reproduction technology represents control for women or ‘anxiety-provoking responsibility’ (Rayna Rapp, p. 389). Throughout, the reader is rightly reminded, in good postmodern fashion, that ‘no ethnography is entirely non-evaluative’ (di Leonardo, p. 27), that ‘technology is not autonomous and neutral’ (Warren and Bourque, p. 300), and that ‘ethnographic inquiry begins and ends as a value-laden act of comparison’ (Scheffler, p. 367).

It is also pointed out that self-reflexivity is needed to enable analysis ‘that does not take white, middle-class women as its normative subject’ (Patricia Zavella, p. 332). This last point is interestingly argued by Warren and Bourque in their discussion of Lim and Salaff’s work. Lim and Salaff, in separate studies, argued that in the 1970s the multinational companies in Hong Kong gave young single women the relative freedom of wage labour, while at the same time enabling them to remain within the framework of the traditional Chinese family structure, albeit with a slightly elevated status. Warren and Bourque contrast this view with that of Fernandez-Kelly and Nash, who maintain that in Mexico multinationals have not provided women with any long-term possibilities, but have merely reinforced the iniquities characteristic of industrialized and industrializing countries. While Warren and Bourque point out that the two places are very different, they fail to

mention that whereas the young women in Mexico must surely measure their standard of living against that of their equivalents in the USA, in Hong Kong the point of comparison (at the time) was the limping economy and restricted society of China, from which many of the young women's parents were refugees. Salaff pointed out that the workers' point of reference was not their brothers, who were undoubtedly more privileged than they, but their mothers and grandmothers who had extremely restricted lives.

This thought-provoking collection of articles will be read with great benefit by anyone interested in feminist perspectives in anthropology. Its very valuable lessons are that the 'same things' look and are totally different in different contexts and that it is crucial to try somehow to sort out what is out there from what we want to see out there.

DIANA MARTIN

TAMARA DRAGADZE, *Rural Families in Soviet Georgia: A Case Study in Ratcha Province* (International Library of Anthropology; ed. Adam Kuper), London and New York: Routledge 1988. xii, 226 pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations, Maps, Figures, Tables. £35.00.

The author describes this volume as 'a case-study of a regional enclave of traditional culture which has retained its character despite the impact of the ideology, economics and politics of the Soviet Union' (p. 1). It is based on fieldwork conducted before the recent dramatic changes in eastern Europe, which occurred only after this review was accepted for publication. The traditional culture in question is that of rural Georgia. At the national level, universal education has facilitated a popular discourse that stresses Georgia's role as a birthplace of (Indo-European) civilization, its ancient links with Greece and Rome, and its early conversion to Christianity (around AD 337; 600 years before Russia). Such facts are deployed in a context of self-assurance about Georgia's cultural superiority over its Russian master. The links to classical civilization are indeed borne out by much of Dragadze's ethnographic description. Thus, virilocality and the co-residence and co-operation of brothers, the authority of age, gender roles, the complexes of patronage and spiritual parenthood, the importance of modesty and reputation, and the features of vernacular Christianity and morality, all take fairly recognizable Mediterranean forms. The book should thus be of interest to those interested in Mediterranean comparativism. Dragadze is well-aware, however, that ethnographic descriptions that simply assert cultural continuity would remain implausible, given Western perceptions of the strength and iconoclastic nature of the Soviet state. She therefore tries to show how the conditions of Soviet life in Georgia have facilitated and unwittingly encouraged the persistence of the

traditional form of social structure and the ethic it supports. These are the most interesting parts of the book.

Economic conditions within Soviet Georgia make the traditional family structure a highly effective outfit. The family elders deploy the labour of family members so that some are in wage labour and some fulfil the collective farm obligations, while others are free to cultivate the private plots from which most fresh food is obtained. Though family unity and village life are cherished, it may be decided to send a son into education and the city, both for the money he will make and the contacts he will establish. The joint family also serves as a resource pool in a context of few banking facilities. In particular, the erratic Soviet distribution system often necessitates having large sums available to buy in bulk when some product does at last turn up. Such sums are also needed in a bureaucratic system lubricated by bribery. Family continuity is also bolstered by Soviet law. The system of residence permits makes mobility difficult, while inheritance law, notably of rights to a private plot, attach to residence in a household rather than to unilineal blood ties.

Overall, Dragadze makes a reasonably persuasive case that structural features of the Soviet system make villagers' reliance on traditional family units both morally desirable and materially feasible. Nevertheless, Dragadze's argument would have been strengthened had she not restricted her focus so closely to domestic life. If she had explored in more detail the local manifestations of the State her claim that its ideology and apparatchiks have a negligible impact on people's ideas and values would have been more convincing. We are told that the villagers are nervous of bureaucrats and use appeals to shared Georgianness, that tensions arise within the home concerning the delicate matter of both encouraging children to be pragmatically fluent in the political discourse they learn in school and to disabuse them of that discourse's wider claims, and that villagers view grass-roots political participation as opportunities for self-promotion. Yet in fact we are told little about contacts with bureaucrats and cadres, or the attitudes of schoolteachers, or the nature of political participation. Aside from the broadest features of its economy and a few statutes of law, the socialist State retains such a shadowy presence in this monograph that one wants to know far more about its impact in everyday life and the praxis of villagers' response to that impact. For instance, many villagers go to work in light industrial plant, but there is no mention of their roles in, or responses to, the inevitable workers' committees and rallies. In short, we would have understood more about both cultural continuity and the phenomenology of socialist life had the family structures Dragadze describes been placed more intimately within a detailed account of the state's presence and intervention. This would have made this interesting volume a more genuinely Soviet Georgian ethnography.

JULIAN WATTS

TARO GOH, *Sumba Bibliography* (with a Foreword by James Fox), Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University (Occasional Paper) 1991. 96 pp., Photograph. Aus\$15.00.

Until now the best published bibliographic guide to the eastern Indonesian island of Sumba has been Raymond Kennedy's *Bibliography of Indonesian Peoples and Cultures* (New Haven, 1962), with its seventy-four entries. This new bibliography extensively supplements Kennedy's material and is in a number of other ways a considerable improvement. It deserves to stand beside Kevin Sherlock's *A Bibliography of Timor* (Canberra, 1980) and the various specialized bibliographies of specific regions of Indonesia commissioned by the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Leiden, The Netherlands, though Goh's bibliography is shorter than they are. This may be due, in part at least, to the untimely interruption of Goh's work in 1988 when as a young ethnographer working on Sumba he unexpectedly died after a short illness. Necessarily his bibliography ends in that year, though a supplement brings it up to 1991. In his Foreword, James Fox notes that Goh had every intention of updating his work and, in a previous version he had circulated, he had already requested additions. In this spirit I offer an item from my own shelves: 'Door Soemba' in Herman ten Kate's *Over Land en Zee: Schetsen en Stemmingen van een Wereldreiziger* (Zutphen: W. J. Thieme, 1925, pp. 150–88).

R. H. BARNES

JACK GOODY, *The Oriental, the Ancient and the Primitive: Systems of Marriage and the Family in the Pre-Industrial Societies of Eurasia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990. xix, 507 pp., References, Index, Maps, Figures, Tables. £37.50/£13.95//\$49.50/\$14.95.

As its sub-title indicates, this study is concerned to compare pre-industrial societies across Eurasia in terms of the relationship between their political economies and their systems of marriage and inheritance. It concentrates also on the mass society rather than on 'peripheral tribal groups', with major sections on China, India, the Near East, and the Greece and Rome of antiquity. This means—as was intended—that the social systems being examined are hierarchical, in the sense that unequal rights in land are intimately linked with status. Although a macro-study, Goody explicitly eschews grand theory in the manner of Marx, Weber or Lévi-Strauss in pursuing his argument, preferring to content himself with something more akin to Merton's middle-range theories which, he says, 'might well constitute the upper limit of fruitful hypotheses in the social sciences'. A

major concern is to counter the academic and other 'primitivization of the East' which the divergent development of modern Europe has encouraged. This in effect means that the further west we come the more historical becomes the study, as Goody seeks to find in the past the correlations lacking in the present. More specifically, the book 'is aimed at modifying notions of uniqueness in respect of modes of reproduction, just as elsewhere I have tried to do with modes of production and modes of communication'. One aspect of this unsatisfactory dichotomy has been the conventional treatment in anthropology of kinship as 'a thing in itself'. This is partly reflected in the traditional concern with tribal societies, in which kinship has seemed all-important—wrongly, according to Goody, since 'it is difficult to point to a specific kinship domain that is not also an economic, political and religious one'. This charge is developed not only against Dumont and other structuralists, who are often accused of stressing the underlying at the expense of the surface, but also against such culturalists as Fruzzetti and Östör, who in a sense privilege the surface at the expense of the hidden (by which I mean the systems theory aspects which the actors may be aware of, but only dimly, rather than the subconscious mentalities beloved of the structuralists). The charge is also thrown, rather more surprisingly, at Meyer Fortes, presumably for his over-sharp distinction between the politico-jural and domestic-kinship domains. For Goody, in fact, both descent and alliance theory stress the lineage at the expense of the household or family. The 'tribal society—industrialized society' dichotomy that tends to result from this isolation of kinship from other factors, and which in other discourses may become one between traditional and modern or primitive and civilized, also leaves out 'the enormously important "intermediate" category of agrarian states...the very gap this book tries to fill'.

It is particularly the position of women in such societies that interests Goody, and he is also concerned to relativize the usual conceptual boundary between marriage payments and inheritance. The two strands implicate one another in these stratified and supposedly purely patrilineal societies, since women ensure the reproduction of groups but are often accompanied by property when being transferred between them. This has adverse implications for seeing inheritance, at any rate, as basically patrilineal. Goody also seeks to soften this view of extreme patrilineality by challenging the idea that women are so firmly incorporated into their husband's group after marriage that they lose all ties with their natal families. In fact, they frequently retain not only ties with but also claims upon the latter, and in particular can acquire property in the form of their dowry, which amounts to their 'lot' or 'portion'. Their ability to do this reflects the status of their natal families but dilutes the sense of lineal continuity through inheritance. This in its turn means that the usual dichotomy between brideprice and dowry is also unsatisfactory: what happens to marriage payments after their transfer is equally important, since the brideprice received by the father may help make up the daughter's dowry. As a result, Goody regularly speaks of 'indirect dowry' instead of 'brideprice', the latter often being considered unsatisfactory, of course, for other

reasons. The fact that in India and elsewhere some of a woman's dowry may come from the bride's mother in itself indicates the extent of a woman's possible control over it. As regards the correct interpretation of dowry, it is clear that Indian thought itself provides a conflict: in the Dumontian view, "dowry" is seen as an affinal prestation, a concept in keeping with brahmanical notions of marriage, but quite out of keeping with sastric conceptions of *stridhana*. In Goody's hands, the apparently exceptional bilateral inheritance of Sri Lanka becomes just the extreme end of a spectrum involving essentially parallel inheritance in South Asia generally.

Still with India, Goody develops his theme by arguing, against the normal assumptions of alliance theory, that the brother-sister tie remains important after a woman's marriage, at least until her brother himself takes a wife. Even in upper-caste groups he is to some extent an exception to the normal rule whereby no wife-givers should visit or accept hospitality in the house of their wife-takers, and Goody brings from his own personal experiences of Gujarat the story of how, at the festival of *Rakshabandhan*, women move wholesale from their conjugal homes back to their natal ones in order to honour their brothers. For Goody this tie has an extra meaning in south Indian kinship: with cross-cousin marriage, 'it is not continuing affinity that is stressed [pace Dumont]...but...the reaffirmation of the tie between siblings of a different sex, separated by their own marriages but united by the marriages of their children'. While acknowledging the importance of affinity, Goody is clearly trying to steer the rudder back towards descent theory, or at least towards an equal assertion of consanguinity; the continuity, if any, now becomes a matter of sibling ties, not affinal ones, as with Dumont. In Europe and the Near East, the tie becomes significant as the ultimate form of in-marriage, now a historical phenomenon as regards siblings but one which has given way in the Near East and North Africa to FBC marriage, equally endogamous of unilineal descent groups. Goody links this with women having access to land, not just to movables, as dowry, as is usually the case in South and East Asia. In such circumstances the integrity of any lineage whose identity is at all territorial would be threatened by exogamous marriages, which would lead to the loss of at least some of this land. Here we also see close marriages being defined unequivocally as endogamous in Europe, not as cross-cousin marriages and therefore exogamous, as some have been misled into thinking from some of Goody's previous work.

Throughout Eurasia, therefore, the marriage-inheritance nexus has certain basic similarities, which invite a structural explanation and cannot be seen as culture-specific, despite acknowledged ideological differences at a more conscious level. The whole book is really about 'societies where women inherit or act as channels for status and wealth'. This contrasts with Africa, 'where the type of agricultural production, the nature of technical and knowledge systems, and the oral mode of communication make for significant differences not only at the level of the political economy...but also at the level of family and marriage'. This basic difference comes down to the greater surplus obtainable from plough agriculture compared with hoe agriculture, which means that there is less differentiation in

Africa in property terms; thus women are of equal value in transactions between groups, and there is a more exclusive stress on marrying out. In Europe, on the other hand, surpluses generate inequalities, which are mediated or expressed through women, who themselves attract different values. This causes the conjugal unit to acquire more value in itself, and not just the natal unit, as do women in themselves, despite the very real patriarchal dominance. This produces, among other things, a greater stress on mutual love between partners, as well as meaning that in certain circumstances marriages become endogamous in order to retain property within the group. A further difference relates to the strategies adopted where there is no male heir. In Africa this leads to the taking over of rights and duties by collateral lines, but in Eurasia this is avoided in favour of adoption, concubinage, uxorilocal (or in Goody's phrase filiacentric) marriage, etc., according to status. It is for this reason, says Goody, that anthropologists' occasional application of African models to Asia, though less ethnocentric than applying modern European ones, is still problematic—a welcome recognition, one might think, given past conflicts between descent and alliance theory, which were also largely ones between Africanists and Asianists.

This massive, well-researched and intelligently written book, the result of some twenty years of thought and research, deserves to become a major work on its theme. It will inevitably attract the criticism that it has over-corrected 'exchangist' explanations of the marriage–inheritance nexus in a 'descentist' direction. Viewing bridewealth as indirect dowry or dowry as inheritance will seem equally problematic to many. This is because they are generally conceptualized as single events—the exchanges may take generations to complete, but they are all of a type. But Goody is taking the long-term view, charting not only transfers between affinal groups but also their ultimate destinations. This processual view is at once a reflection of the acknowledged example of Bourdieu, who has advocated a similar revision of Mauss's treatment of gift exchange, and of the approach in terms of whole social systems, which Goody chooses to follow. This acts to distance him from the structuralist, exchangist approach to the analysis of kinship systems, since his holism is not of the kind which incorporates symbolism and other values (as with, for example, Needham). In this sense, Goody represents the Durkheimian rather than the Maussian part of the tradition of the *Année Sociologique*.

ROBERT PARKIN

JENNIFER LORNA HOCKEY, *Experiences of Death: An Anthropological Account*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1990. 205 pp., References, Index, Figures. £30.00.

In her own contribution to *Mortality and Immortality* (London etc., 1981), the volume she edited with Helen King, Sally Humphreys remarks that while there is

plenty of ethnography concerning death itself, we lack much in the way of a true ethnography of dying. It is this that Jennifer Hockey seeks to provide here, based on different periods of fieldwork in a residential home for the aged, a hospice, and with a bereavement support organization, and partly through working herself as a helper and counsellor. The project arose out of her own experiences in having to face bereavement earlier in life, and the subjectivity this gave her is freely exploited in her interpretation, as an alternative to the more usual objective and policy-oriented studies of ageing and dying. The main purpose is identified as determining 'how concepts of death, and their associated ritual or institutionalized forms, actually work to produce a particular quality of experience in people who are ageing, dying or bereaved', and the main conceptual material is envisaged as sets of structured but flexible metaphors arising out of shared cultural experiences.

In a society that no longer ritualizes death overmuch, nor has any clear, generally accepted eschatology, a focus on the process of dying and the psychological readjustment of the bereaved is perhaps to be expected. This is not to be found in the same way in all Western societies, as earlier work by Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf on the USA and others on Mediterranean Europe has shown. But Britain clearly exemplifies a trend towards anticipating the necessity of separating the living from the dead—something which all societies must face—by isolating the dying from the society at large, and largely even from those shortly to be bereaved. This is partly traceable to the loss of meaning the absence of death ritual brings about, but it has also been encouraged by what Illich calls the 'medicalization' of death, and the influence of science and bureaucracy generally over its administration.

One can still find parallels with the treatment of death more often encountered in non-Western societies in this material, though the motivations may differ. There may still be the isolation of the bereaved as well as the dead, not in order to associate them temporarily with the dead but to allow them to cope with their grief out of the public eye. This coping is itself often said to necessitate a recognition of the need for readjustment, something which in non-Western societies is more usually signalled by ritual than achieved through grief-counselling. Of course, such counselling is itself a response to the inadequacy of the bureaucratic and scientific taking-over of death, though it can hardly attempt to restore meaning to death in the manner of a true eschatology. It is, of course, also individualized, focused on private, intimate, face-to-face interaction between counsellor and grief-stricken, and in this sense maintains the 'social invisibility of death' that Martins has identified as characteristic of the modern West. This very individualism can be seen as parallel to the case-by-case control of sickness, fatal or otherwise, that scientific method makes possible, but which has aided the very desocializing of death that makes counselling necessary for some.

Hockey also deals with the place given to serious illness in relation to death in the West, showing how the resistance to curing of such diseases as cancer and AIDS challenges what she calls 'the myth of medical infallibility' and encourages officialdom to shift the blame on to life style or environment, that is, on to the

victim or on to society generally. Certainly the medical profession may itself contribute to the growth of taboos surrounding such illnesses, which are just as strong as those surrounding death itself in Western society, although other conditions, such as heart disease or alcoholism, may equally lead to the victim being blamed without such evasions taking place. The difference is perhaps that cancer and AIDS, like death, are given an image of finality and helplessness which is all that a rational, scientific approach can find to replace the cultural meanings that non-Western societies are wont to apply to such cases, where death is commonly seen as a transition to another existence and may even be exploited as a metaphor for change in other rites such as initiation.

It is here that the hospice movement finds its justification, in that it removes the taboos by exploding the myth, thus freeing both patients and carers for the task of improving the quality of life rather than its quantity, which is what a purely instrumental, medical approach does. In this, the hospice also differs from a conventional old people's home, where the nearness of death is typically glossed over, with consequent tensions for staff and patients alike. Yet there were also tensions between staff and patients in the home where Hockey worked, the patients being on the whole more ready to admit the nearness of death, while the staff regularly tried, mostly through humour, to counter such admissions as subversive of officially imposed taboos. In the hospice environment, it was the staff who not simply encouraged but demanded that the truth be recognized: indeed, such recognition, which initially took the form of the explicit diagnosis of a terminal illness, was a prerequisite of admission. However, this key difference, namely that patients in the hospice are more likely to have such illnesses than to be merely fading out of existence, as in the home, may itself have triggered the difference in philosophy that Hockey tends to see as purely ideological in an abstract sense. In other words, the old people's home and the hospice can only really be compared in terms of their association with impending death. For the cancer patient the alternative to the hospice is most likely the general hospital, whose focus is primarily curative, not terminal. For the merely infirm the alternative to the residential home is their own homes, which they have had to leave not because of illness so much as a growing inability to cope. The difference thus lies not simply in the philosophy of handling those close to death, or in the middle-class and Christian ethos of the hospice versus the working-class and agnostic ethos of the residential home. It lies on the one hand in the attribution of a painful and horrific cause to the foreseen demise, and on the other in the inability to fix any specific cause for it beyond the generalized notion that we must all die some time and that the older we get the nearer it comes. Of course, both institutions have a degree of control over those in their care. But while the hospice must base this on the administration of drugs—a very clear purpose that involves specialist knowledge—in the residential home this becomes generalized care whose expertise is less visible, involving cajolery not always backed up by clear necessity from the inmates' point of view, and thus blurring the distinction for them between care and control.

The identification of ageism, which relegates the elderly to increasingly low statuses and which the idea of 'care' can all too easily patronizingly reinforce, is only one of the messages to emerge from the book. The hospice that Hockey studied was certainly different from the home in its clearly structured space, which literally increased the association with death from the front to the back of the building, and in its clear signposting of a future boundary between life and death which all must cross. Those involved in hospice work did not in a general way seem marginal themselves, but they could be distinguished from the staff in the home by their willingness to transcend the boundary, if only, for them, conceptually; and in order for it to be transcended, it must be recognized. It is in such senses, rather than in its vaguer association with Christian tradition, that the hospice movement seems to represent a return to a pre-scientific approach to death. Yet it is just as deeply involved in modern medical techniques, at least as regards the relief of pain. More accurately, then, it represents not a rejection of modern medicine but a frank recognition of its limitations, of its inability ever to control death, of the ultimate temporality of its claims to cure that are its central justification. It also surely suggests that in introducing 'the social invisibility of death', the West has, here as in other respects, gone too far in a dehumanizing direction.

Lastly, a remark about the book's cover, which carries a photograph of a sitting and forward-leaning figure that is obviously intended to summon into our hearts the idea of grief over a death. Grief-stricken she may be, but on closer examination she proves to be begging. The painting is actually *Russian Female Mendicant* by the German artist Ernst Barlach. Publishers do take liberties sometimes.

ROBERT PARKIN

LADISLAV HOLY, *Religion and Custom in a Muslim Society: The Berti of Sudan* (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 78), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991. x, 221 pp., Glossary, References, Index, Map, Figures. £30.00/\$49.50.

Ladislav Holy's study of the Berti of Northern Darfur in Sudan is a detailed account of the interdependence of customary and Islamic ritual and belief in a society that has experienced Islamicization and Arabization over the last two centuries. Amongst the Berti, customary rituals, 'ada, are distinguished conceptually from Islamic prescriptions, din, but it would be misleading to assume they exist in juxtaposition to one another or embody the antithesis of one another since, as Holy illustrates, they are to some extent indivisible in Berti consciousness and each often serves to reiterate the sentiment afforded by the other.

Holy attempts to divorce his analysis from an Orientalist agenda that reduces community studies to a compendium of Islamic versus traditional, and hence pre-

Islamic, beliefs and practices. There is little point, he suggests, in making assumptions about origins, or in classifying societies according to how closely they embody a textual ideal. He attempts to explore the parameters of local orthodoxies and the ways in which custom and religion are seen as interdependent amongst different sections of the population. The plurality of orthodoxies results from differential access to religious learning, the most salient determinant of which is gender.

As in many Muslim societies, custom is generally viewed as the arena of women, in contrast to the male world of religion. Although he premises his discussion on this complementarity, we discover that amongst the Berti men participate extensively in customary rituals, and that although women are equally members of the *umma* they generally observe the five pillars with greater laxity. Although the two systems are viewed as harmoniously guiding the social order, they appear to be based on disparate conceptions of gender roles. This apparent contradiction is of central concern to Holy as he asks how custom, which is premised upon the conception of the dependence of men upon women, is reconciled with Islam, which may arguably be understood amongst the Berti as a male model. In an exploration of gender relations through myth and ritual symbolism, he proposes that the sexes are involved in a form of mutual deception whereby each sex possesses its own view of gender relations. By the very fact that custom is regarded as the domain of women, it poses no threat to the perceived male model of Islam. While customary rituals accompany the agricultural cycle, *'ada* and *din* operate in conjunction with each other throughout a series of life-cycle rituals, accompanying birth, marriage and death. In viewing these three events as rites of passage, Holy attempts to show how within both customary and Islamic ideology a transition is made from a state of ambivalence (or even danger and pollution) to one well grounded in the moral order—a transition into social and hence religious life as a member of the community of believers.

Doubts about Holy's account of the harmonious alliance of *'ada* and *din* begin to arise when he attempts to explain those few customary rituals that cannot be accommodated within Islam. Circumcision is set aside from other life-cycle rituals for two reasons. First, because although popular opinion largely regards the practice as Islamic, it is not supported by Qur'anic evidence. Secondly, with awareness derived from an active campaign in the Sudan against circumcision, it is regarded by local religious scholars and pious community members as unIslamic. Holy might have done well to pursue the significance of the greater intolerance shown towards circumcision than towards other rituals, as well as the challenge this poses to his presentation of a harmonious system of ritual and belief. This might have been explored with reference to what he notes in his final chapter, namely the differential access to religious knowledge, particularly predicated on gender.

With growing literacy, attendance at Qur'anic schools and labour migration, the disparity between the educated and literate and the non-educated and non-literate is primarily developed along gender lines. If Holy had portrayed something of a

less static and complementary system, he might have been able to suggest that it is increasingly likely that other customary elements will come to be regarded as antithetical to Islam. Without any historical evidence, we have no way of measuring the extent to which customs have lost meaning or validity in Berti cosmology, or whether existing customs in fact developed concurrently with the adoption of Islam. Without contextualizing his study with reference to larger political movements in Sudan, we have no indication of the pressure potentially exerted by the National Islamic Front to eradicate elements of 'pagan' or 'folk' Islam.

The final set of rituals Holy analyses are those he terms 'retributive', in opposition to the previously discussed preventative rituals designed to circumnavigate potential danger and harm. As with circumcision, Islamic orthodoxy is unable to accommodate this body of ritual, which concerns itself with accidental and unintentional transgressions between social versus asocial states. Unlike preventative rituals, retributive rituals, which aim to restore the natural order, implicate everyone in the community, including religious scholars and the pious. They are thus seen as posing a threat to Islam insofar as they are seen to affect the entire social order, and are subsequently dismissed as superstition.

By leaving those rituals of circumcision and retribution aside until the end of his discussion, Holy seems to treat those rituals that are less tolerated by the system as residual elements. In effect, they do not fit sufficiently into the model of Berti cosmology that he has developed. It may be more meaningful to start with those rituals that are incompatible with Islamic ideology and attempt to explore the implications of this. Despite a plea to regard Berti cosmology as being founded on a system that is not more heavily weighted in favour of *din* than *'ada*, by leaving until the end those customs that challenge or conflict with Islam, Holy provides us with an implicit assessment of rituals according to textual orthodoxy. The analysis does not allow for the obverse assessment, that is, measuring these elements of Islamic practice as somehow deviating from customary orthodoxy, and there may be as much utility in understanding the operation of Berti cosmology in these terms.

Holy's analysis provides us with a somewhat static and ahistorical account, which merely leaves us to speculate about the implications of this particular current configuration of *'ada* and *din*. We might infer that the unequal values attached to customary rituals, their graded incorporation into Islamic ideology and the differential access to Islamic scholarship within the community indicate a transitional stage in Berti cosmology. Although systems may in fact best be viewed as involved in a continuous process of negotiation and modification, Holy's analysis, lacking information regarding recent local history and recognition of the wider trends in the religio-political climate of Sudan, gives us no context in which to understand or even accommodate change in the religious life of the Berti.

CAMILLA GIBB

JACK W. IVES, *A Theory of Northern Athapaskan Prehistory* (Investigations in American Archaeology; ser. ed. Paul Minnis), Boulder and San Francisco: Westview Press / Calgary: University of Calgary Press 1990. xx, 403 pp., References Cited, Index, Tables, Figures. \$34.95.

The reader might not be prepared by the title of this book for what he gets. This is not a run-of-the-mill bit of speculative archaeology. Instead, it is an exhaustive and determined attempt to establish the existence of Dravidian kinship terminologies among Athapaskan-speaking peoples of northwestern Canada and to describe their role or roles. It is deeply influenced by, among others, Thomas Trautmann's book on *Dravidian Kinship* (Cambridge, 1981) and takes as one of its starting-points Asch's recognition of the formal identity between Wrigley Slavey terminology and Dravidian systems. Above all, it attempts to relate Dravidian terminologies, and deviations from them within Athapaskan communities, to the substantial variation in local group formation along a continuum, the poles of which Ives labels as Slavey and Beaver.

The Beaver variety is one in which small local groups are comprised of people grouped around a core made up of opposite-sex siblings. Older men practise polygamous gerontocracy by marrying younger women. Despite his reference to the distortion of Dravidian logic through intergenerational marriages, Ives does not strongly emphasize sister's daughter marriage, which figures prominently in the ethnology of similar systems among the Tamil and in Amazonia, although it is plain from his evidence that it does take place. Over time Beaver groups naturally fluctuate fairly widely in size, from small families to large groups with ten to twenty conjugal pairs and ancillary relatives. They have, therefore, a potential for significant growth, and for enduring beyond a single generation. Such groups favour group endogamy over inter-group alliances. Political control of the group resides with a single or very few senior men, who control marriages. Such groups are at least potentially hostile to other local groups, including neighbours to whom they are related. Such hostility stems in part from their endogamy and weak facility for alliances, from the economic demands on the environment made by a growing group, and from the expression of personal power through medicine fights.

Slavey groups tend to be focused on same-sex sibling cores. They do not practise intergenerational polygamy, and the children of these groups regard themselves as unmarriageable. Such groups are relatively exogamous, readily forming alliances with similar groups. Senior men do not have coercive powers over marriages, but alliance decisions are arrived at by consensus. They have relatively peaceful relationships with neighbouring and distant groups. Unlike Beaver groups, Slavey groups have restricted growth potential and are transitory, self-destructing as the adults age. They range in size from between two and ten conjugal pairs with ancillary relatives.

Both Beaver and Slavey communities exhibit Dravidian terminologies and practise bilateral cross-cousin marriage, which Ives takes to be the basic

Athapaskan arrangement. However, some Slavey groups terminologically assimilate cross-cousins to parallel cousins and siblings, and also prohibit cousin marriage. Ives interprets this situation as a distortion of the underlying Dravidian logic, which is a concomitant of an emphasis on group exogamy and the value placed on establishing alliances with other groups.

Some Beaver groups, on the other hand, make cross-generational equations among the affinal categories in medial levels. Thus, the term for sister's daughter may be applied to female cross-cousins, while that for female cross-cousins and brother's wife may also be applied to father's sister, mother's brother's wife and spouse's mother. Ives relates this shift to group endogamy and inter-generational marriage and draws attention to Trautmann's discussion of South Indian parallels. Among the Fort St. John Beaver, young men typically marry older widows (father's sisters and mother's brother's wives), while older men typically marry younger sibling of a previous wife or girls of a first descending generation, whom they call *saze*, i.e. 'sister's daughters'.

Ives sets out the following eight empirical generalizations (pp. 301–6): (1) 'where unlike sex sibling cores are allowed or favoured, the local group will be predisposed toward endogamy'; (2) 'where like sex sibling cores are favoured, local group exogamy is virtually ensured'; (3) 'when local group endogamy prevails, local groups will have a significant growth potential'; (4) 'when exogamy is the objective, local groups will ordinarily have attritional and structural limitations over their growth'; (5) 'when significant local group endogamy takes place, there are insufficient affinal ties available to fashion systematic external alliances'; (6) 'when significant local group exogamy takes place, affinal ties will provide the basis for intensive or extensive external alliances'; (7) (in the Beaver pattern) 'endogamous growth potential is emphasized, so that the people required for political and economic accommodations come from the local group itself'; and (8) (in the Slavey pattern) 'external relationships between local groups are stressed, so that the source of people required for political and economic accommodations is the regional group'. Ives infers that the Slavey groups along the tree line preferred to gather together seasonally in larger numbers in order to undertake specialized communal hunting, involving the driving of game. Beaver groups too small for communal hunting would forage in the forests, but as they grew in size communal hunting became an option. Both patterns should leave archaeological evidence. In the Beaver case, there should be signs of decreasing breadth of diet and increasing sedentism around hunting locations. In that of the Slavey, there might be evidence of increasing duration of seasonal gatherings. Despite the poor archaeological record and conditions, Ives discusses the possibilities that his propositions may be put to archaeological test, about which he is moderately optimistic.

The virtues of this study include the fact that it very considerably advances our knowledge of the evidence for Dravidian or symmetric prescriptive terminologies in North America. Although earlier generations of anthropologists attributed bilateral cross-cousin marriage systems to some Athapaskan peoples, the evidential

bases for their claims were always extremely poor. Published terminologies were fragmentary and failed to include decisive specifications, while the evidence for marriage patterns was at best anecdotal and never systematic. Perhaps these faults were in the part the result of the conditions under which the ethnographic work was done. Bands were small and widely dispersed. Nevertheless, there was typically little idea that terminologies and marriage systems had to be investigated holistically. Furthermore, some of the terminologies that were available contained features that were incompatible with cousin marriage. Ives has now analysed, and in some cases made available for the first time, a fairly extensive range of evidence that puts the whole question on a new footing. Some of this evidence is recent and of much better quality than we had before. Much of it is difficult to get access to outside of Canada, and some of it is unpublished. However, Ives also presents a theory, and the theory is at least potentially testable. If eventually the theory and the hypothesis of a Dravidian pattern in proto-Athapaskan social organization is in large measure substantiated, they will have implications for trying to account for other, non-Dravidian, societies in North America. Ives gives a good deal of attention to non-Dravidian arrangements among some Athapaskan groups, and some of these ideas too might be extended.

Another important aspect of the book is its attempt to make a methodological and theoretical contribution to anthropological archaeology. Here Ives's allegiances are to Lewis Binford, whose 'positivism' has in recent years been the object of attack from Marxist archaeologists. I am not able to assess the archaeological claims of *A Theory of Northern Athapaskan Prehistory*, but I can say that if archaeologists wishing to use ethnology for their purposes were to match the standard achieved by Ives, they would be most welcome.

R. H. BARNES

BERNARD JULLERAT (ed.), *Shooting the Sun: Ritual and Meaning in West Sepik* (Smithsonian Series in Ethnographic Enquiry; ser. eds. William L. Merrill and Ivan Karp), Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press 1992. x, 310 pp., Glossary, References, Index, Tables, Figures, Plates, Maps. \$35.00.

This is a collection of essays focusing on the Yangis ritual of the Yafar people (West Sepik, Papua New Guinea), an imported version of the Umeda Ida ritual analyzed by Alfred Gell nearly twenty years ago in his classic monograph *Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries* (London, 1975). Yafar ethnographer, Bernard Juillerat, provides a detailed description and interpretation of Yangis in the first chapter (pp. 20–124), which is then subjected to extensive reinterpretation and criticism by a range of distinguished anthropologists, including Alfred Gell, and two leading psychoanalysts (André Green and François Manenti).

The volume's title recalls a lively debate in the correspondence pages of *Man* back in 1980 (Vol. XV, no. 4, pp. 732–7) between Juillerat and Gell, concerning the role of indigenous exegesis in the interpretation of Ida and Yangis. Both rituals conclude with the shooting of arrows into the sky. Gell originally interpreted this act without reference to exegetical commentaries, by focusing on the destination of the arrows (the forest); however, Juillerat argued that the significant feature of the rite was that the arrows were aimed at a heavenly target (the sun), a discovery apparently facilitated by local exegesis. The article that initially stimulated this debate, Ron Brunton's 'Misconstrued Order in Melanesian Religion' (*Man*, n.s., Vol. XV, no. 1, (1980), pp. 112–28), haunts the pages of *Shooting the Sun*. However, the implications of Brunton's other main example, Fredrik Barth's analysis of Baktaman initiation, are not adequately explored. Herein lies my principal criticism of the present volume, to which I will return at the end of this review.

The central problem for most contributors is how best to delineate the nature and limits of anthropological interpretations of Ida and Yangis. Juillerat contends that Yangis may be analysed at three levels (p. 95). At a 'public level', it is primarily a non-verbal performance that, following structuralist analysis, can be shown to focus symbolically on the promotion of natural growth. There is, secondly, an 'exegetical level', wherein symbolic meanings are codified with greater specificity in language. Finally, there is the level of 'anthropological or psychoanalytic interpretation', which can only proceed correctly with reference to the second level. For example, exegesis reveals that, in the ritual finale, the 'bowmen' are directed symbolically by their 'maternal uncles' to shoot not at *the earth* (linked with the mother's womb—the piercing of which implies incest), but at *the sun*, which explicitly represents the mother's breast. Only then, according to Juillerat, is it possible to interpret the ritual symbolism correctly in terms of such themes as the Oedipus complex and the appropriation of the mother's feeding function.

One of Gell's main criticisms seems as valid today as when he first expressed it in the correspondence following Brunton's article, namely that the 'public level' of the ritual, which everybody encounters, should be amenable to interpretation without (as well as with) extensive knowledge of the secret exegeses known only to a few senior men (a point reiterated here by Donald Tuzin (p. 254)). Tuzin also observes that if Juillerat's approach were applied to rituals for which there is no local exegesis then anthropological interpretation would be impossible (p. 253). Gell, however, shows (p. 130) that, in the absence of exegesis, an identification between the sun and the primordial mother's breast could be made by the techniques developed in *Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries*.

Following the trajectory of the correspondence in *Man*, the debate shifts to encompass the tensions (more apparent than real) between intellectualist and sociological perspectives. Juillerat maintains that 'the most striking fact about Yangis...is its very low level in practical sociological implications' (p. 93) and that 'when ritual has no direct sociological result, it must be endowed with more

meaning to be perpetuated' (p. 97). The first assertion is contested by Gell on the grounds that ritual owes its existence to a dialectical relationship with nonritual activity (p. 137), and is therefore bound to engender sociological import. However, Gell dilutes this thesis insofar as he concedes that Yangis (but not Ida) is so rarely enacted that its sociological implications might not endure during the long gaps between performances. Regarding Juillerat's second assertion, Andrew Strathern points out that it is internally contradictory (p. 266), insofar as the existence of esoteric knowledge (exegesis guarded by senior men) is a political matter and, by definition, of sociological importance. Other questions are raised. Why should rituals that serve political ends have less need of meaning (p. 97)? Social theorists have long demonstrated the ideological value of rituals, even of ritual in general (a most compelling recent example being Maurice Bloch's *Prey into Hunter* (Cambridge, 1992)). Why should 'more meaning' imply elaborate exegetical commentaries (ibid.)? Barth has shown that Baktaman initiation, which fits Juillerat's hypothesis insofar as the rites are both politically central and lack exegesis, none the less sustains a rich and complex cosmology.

Juillerat's commitment to a specifically psychoanalytic line of interpretation raises many issues. Gell (pp. 141–2) and Tuzin (pp. 257–8), both reproach Juillerat for failing to demonstrate the ways in which Yafar, or at least more generally Melanesian, family life (which is a far cry from anything envisaged by Freud) might engender Oedipal episodes, or other classic complexes. Gell, for example, observes that 'the representation of the mother throughout Melanesia is monotonously geared to the provision of food, not so much milk as vegetable staples' (p. 141), rather than being an object of incestuous desire.

The risks of ethnocentrism are explored further by Marilyn Strathern, who objects to Juillerat's Freudian (and more generally Western) assumptions about Yafar conceptions of 'nature' and 'culture' (pp. 191–2). Perhaps an even more worrying form of ethnocentrism ensuing from the Freudian perspective is its assumption that Yafar society is authentically 'primitive' in the sense that 'its system of collective psychical representations puts us in closer contact with...the primordial' (Green, p. 146). This is more than a pedantic observation about the meaning of the word 'primitive', for it belies the commitment of psychoanalysis to a belief that representations are rooted in human sexuality. Thus, the imagery engendered in shooting the sun at the finale of Yangis, seems more basic or 'in closer contact with the primordial' than 'the vegetal and animal symbolizations that came before' (Green, p. 165). Thus, for the psychoanalyst, the culturally celebrated role of Yangis as a way of understanding and promoting natural growth, especially of sago palms, is assumed to be less primary than its sexual meanings.

Juillerat's analysis of Yangis focuses most substantially around the finale, a bias Gell attributes to our (Western) 'prejudice that makes us think that the end of a ritual (for example communion) is the most significant part' (p. 140), and which several of the contributors attribute to ethnographic variation between Yangis and Ida. However, an obvious reason for Juillerat's special interest in the last phase of the ritual is that it entails a 'frankly human characterization' (Green, p. 165),

which seems to denude human sexuality of its obfuscating 'projections' in the surrounding flora and fauna, most apparent in the preceding symbolism. None the less, there is no compelling reason to privilege the sexual themes of Yangis over those of, for example, sago growth. The cosmological ideas codified in Yangis concern the mysterious processes whereby things sprout from the earth, and gestation in humans and animals is brought into the service of this theorizing. To assume that the process of understanding ends with the discovery of sexual content is to miss the point. As Barth puts it in his *Cosmologies in the Making* (Cambridge, 1987, p. 44), 'when any particular cosmologist works to reproduce and clarify the metaphors of his rituals...particular features of gender and gender roles may be seized upon as apposite, pregnant metaphors for aspects of various other relations, qualities or processes in the world'.

As I mentioned at the outset, the volume does not draw on Barth's insights, in spite of the fact that his work is at the roots of the history that gave rise to it (Brunton's paper on 'Misconstrued Order...' concerned itself as much with Baktaman initiation as with the Umeda Ida). However, Barth's reactions were noticeably absent from the ensuing correspondence, and interested parties were obliged to await the publication of his *Cosmologies...* for a formal critique of Juillerat's, Gell's, and Brunton's positions. Passing (but not very illuminating) reference is made in *Shooting the Sun* to Barth's puritanical line on exegesis, but the most directly relevant aspects of his work are not taken up.

Juillerat collected exegetical commentaries on Yangis primarily from two men. However, as Andrew Strathern points out (p. 262), he does not explain 'what overall systematic differences, if any, emerged in their viewpoints on the system'. Juillerat makes plain that substantial inconsistencies arose, but it is not clear how wide the range of variation might have been among all participants' understandings (nor could it be, given Juillerat's methodology). This leads Green to temper Juillerat's claims about 'the meaning' of Yangis with the dictum: 'meaning is never univocal' (p. 147). Green regards multivocality as evidence of the governance of primary process in Yangis (*ibid.*), and he subsequently couches this observation in language that strongly recalls (but does not acknowledge) Barth's perspective: 'what will be said by the collective psychical representations [of deflowering, conception, pregnancy, and birth]...will tend to refer these various figures back to one another perpetually, stressing their analogical resonances in the imaginary' (p. 149). If the multivocality of ritual symbolism is accepted then, as Wagner observes, this presents a potential problem: 'the range of potential analogies or glosses...evoked by a verbal image or trope, or by a tactile, kinetic, or visual one is indefinite, possibly infinite' (p. 207). Wagner proposes ways in which the field of potential interpretations is constrained, disallowing the extravagances of structuralist analysis. Barth's persuasive solution to this problem, overlooked in the volume, is that the images cultivated in ritual may be cast in 'analogic codes', that is to say in the form of clusters of concrete metaphors for such focal mysteries as natural growth, the semantic properties of which are in a state of flux, though broadly patterned across time and space. This certainly seems

to be true of the way performances of Yangis cultivate images of reproductive energy that builds up beneath earth, bark, skin, etc., to burst forth explosively as vegetation, sago, newborn infant, and so on. This does not imply such a schematization as ground:bark:skin::underworld:sago:foetus/womb. As argued above, still less does it imply the priority of human gestation in these symbolic processes. It is mainly in the context of exegesis that such digital codes are likely to be formulated. For the general ruck of participants, who do not verbalize their experience of Yangis, each concrete metaphor for natural growth may be cognitively generated independently, creating a 'harmony of connotations' (as Barth puts it) rather than a table of polarities.

Shooting the Sun opens up for debate so many important areas that the omission of any sustained discussion of Barth's ideas cannot be regarded as a crippling defect. What distinguishes the volume is the sophistication with which the various contributors seek to criticize, modify, or supplant Juillerat's interpretations. From the shining eloquence of Alfred Gell, to the sober scepticism of Andrew Strathern, this has to be one of the most thought-provoking studies of a single ritual that there is.

HARVEY WHITEHOUSE

THOMAS H. LEWIS, *The Medicine Men: Oglala Sioux Ceremony and Healing* (Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians), Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1990. 219 pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £18.95.

Thomas H. Lewis is a retired psychiatrist and medical anthropologist who was in touch with the Oglala Sioux at the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota at various times between 1965 and 1988. From 1969 to 1972 he worked with Oglala practitioners and patients and completed the manuscript of this book. After 1972, when violent confrontations occurred at Wounded Knee, relations between Oglala and Whites worsened, and further fieldwork had to be forgone. Lewis presents an explicitly personal view of his experiences, disclaiming any intention to make recommendations for change and offering no systematic psychological interpretations.

His highly anecdotal account is very readable and informative, though often grim. On the whole Walker takes an equally discouraged view of both Oglala and White behaviour, and he expresses similar doubts concerning the claims to practical effectiveness of both Oglala and Western medicine. Many of the patients' personal histories are extremely distressing, and in Lewis's account their hopelessness is intricately linked with the historical circumstances in which the Sioux find themselves, where they are neither masters of their own destinies, nor

able or willing to adjust to the expectations and opportunities of the surrounding White society. Such statements are so often made about North American Indians as to be clichéd, but Walker amply substantiates them with graphic summaries and depictions of meetings, conversations, clinical records and so on.

Such darker matter is accompanied by ethnographic information on concepts of power, the sun dance, night sings, herbalism and the multifaceted medical system at Pine Ridge. His chapter on Heyok'a dreamers and the Sioux 'contrary cult' gives an excellent brief synopsis of this topic and an adequate practical demonstration of why the symbolic reversals in their elaborate, backward, disruptive, objectionable, contrary and antinatural behaviours should never be expected to conform to a single logical type. Walker details a number of practices and cults that have been lost. Nevertheless, a century after the end of military conflict with the United States Army, Oglala life is characterized by the retention and renewal of much of the traditional worldview, healing practices, ceremonial structures and social organization. Medicine men continue a system parallel to Western medicine, interacting with the latter, according to Thomas, 'minimally or not at all, and preserving in the process many of the cultural antiquities of the Sioux'.

Walker offers no romantic view of co-operation between medicine men and Western doctors. Sioux, whether medicine men or not, often resist the disciplines and practices of Western medicine, to which they resort erratically, sometimes with dire consequences for their own health. Well-meaning attempts to bring the alternative forms of medicine together in one service collapse under the weight of bureaucratic obstacles, as well as cultural misunderstandings and disagreements. Walker's concluding view is that Oglala practices are *not* 'the art of keeping a patient quiet with frivolous explanations' until nature kills him or cures him. Healing takes place in the context of a structure of mutual belief, but the 'results' are nearly meaningless in any but subjective terms. By his interpretation the main achievement is the neutralization of the anxieties of the individual and the community.

R. H. BARNES

ROBERT PARKIN, *The Munda of Central India: An Account of their Social Organization*, Delhi: Oxford University Press 1992. xi, 276 pp., Bibliography, Index. 380 rupees.

Before this book, Parkin tells us, no ethnographic synthesis existed for the Munda-speaking peoples. As a non-Indianist, I cannot assess this remark but only report it. But even if Parkin accomplishes such a synthesis he does little else.

Witness his treatment of Munda patriliney. Thanks largely to the inspiration of David Schneider and his students, sophisticated analysis of descent groupings nowadays begins with ethno-embryologies, with local notions of how human beings are generated. Whether the published data on which Parkin relies are adequate on this topic I am in no position to say, but it is clear that the gap (if there be one) is of no concern to him. Parkin shows, and this is one of the book's few good analytic points, that descent is logically prior to residence in Munda thought. But having achieved this, he goes no further than Fortes in 1953, or indeed than Radcliffe-Brown in 1935: corporate agnation is by fiat taken to be fundamental to Munda sociality.

Similarly, 'the structure of society' is assumed to be realized by a consideration of connubial relations among patrilineal groups: the most obvious debt is to Lévi-Strauss, vintage 1949. To be sure, there is also a kinship network that transcends agnation, but its behavioural entailments are analysed by appealing not to Munda notions but to Radcliffe-Brown's joking/avoidance dichotomy, in place by 1940 and questioned by Ward E. Goodenough, Roger Keesing and others since the early 1950s. Kin-terminological structure is (mis)handled through ideas pushed by Louis Dumont and Rodney Needham, and challenged by Floyd Lounsbury, Harold Scheffler and myself since the mid-1960s. Needham quaintly dismissed us all as 'American formalists' in 1971, which for Parkin apparently is all that need be said: neither Goodenough nor Keesing nor Lounsbury nor Scheffler nor Shapiro appears in his bibliography—and, for that matter, and despite Parkin's assertion that 'the Munda show exceptionally clearly the inappropriateness of genealogical thinking in recovering indigenous conceptions of kinship' (p. 186), neither does Schneider. And as if all this were not enough, Parkin uses 'symmetric prescription' synonymously with 'bifurcate merging', whereas many of the terminologies isolated as 'bifurcate merging' by Lowie in 1929 and Murdock in the late 1940s have specialized affinal terms and are thus quite different from the systems adduced by Dumont and other Anglo-French structuralists.

Indeed, Parkin's appreciation of the notion of 'structure' is firmly wedded to the limited perspectives of Lévi-Strauss and his admirers across the Channel. Thus 'positive marriage rules' are contrasted with 'considerations of wealth and status' (p. 102), as if structure pertains only to an ethereal world of 'social classification' and is not a property of grosser human behaviour. 'American formalism' has repeatedly endeavoured to unite these spheres since Goodenough's seminal 1956 article on 'Residence Rules', but this is of course *terra incognita* for Parkin. The results are sloppy scholarship and a caricature of the structuralist programme.

The book's concluding, and it might be supposed theoretically most important, chapter 'Munda Kinship in Context', shows much the same scholastic snobbery. The assertion that the pervasive equivalence of alternate generations in Munda thought 'should be seen not as a series of traits linked by a common theme, but as a single idea with a number of possible expressions' (p. 216) is a pledge of allegiance to Lévi-Strauss but not even a semblance of an empirical proposition. Parkin's reliance on Mauss's 1938 essay on personhood ignores the last ten years

of fecund (and mostly American) literature on the subject. The notion that some of the logic of so-called 'two-section systems' of kin classification is 'due to fundamental properties of the human mind' (p. 222) is traceable to Needham circa 1960 but is utterly non-sequitorial. This may be as it should be, for it is presented in the context of a yet more enduring tribute to circular reasoning, namely that view of 'evolution' wherein contemporaneous forms are arranged in a (pseudo-)historical sequence whose earliest 'stage' is held to contain its 'essence'. Much of contemporary social thought is concerned with the demolition of this edifice. That Lévi-Strauss, Needham and others are at home in it is interesting intellectual history (what Robert Nisbet, in his underappreciated contribution to this demolition, has called 'the persistence of metaphor'), but this is no reason to delay the job.

In 1965, perhaps, this book might have been taken seriously as an analysis of 'social organization'. But now that 'American formalists' have come closer than ever to achieving Lévi-Strauss's stated (but never seriously attempted) goal of a structural perspective on human behaviour, aided by ethologists and by what Dell Hymes calls 'ethnographies of communication', it is outstanding only as antediluvian and parochial.

WARREN SHAPIRO

NICHOLAS THOMAS, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press 1991. xiii, 259 pp., Index, Maps, Illustrations. £11.95.

One of the unexpected things about the increasing rapprochement between anthropology and history is that it has been an additional factor in the movement of material culture from the periphery to the centre of the discipline. Objects provide a source of information about historical processes that complements the often woefully inadequate written record of societies during the process of European colonization and the era that followed. They also provide information about the dynamics of the relationships between indigenous peoples and colonists and the way they conceived of each other and their products. The rejection of material culture as a source of evidence has previously been a serious handicap to the development of an anthropology informed by history. In this elegantly written and well-constructed essay Nicholas Thomas does much to establish the ground for future research in the historical anthropology of the Pacific.

This is very much a book written from the middle ground—a book that has the modest aim of developing an intermediate level of theory, but nevertheless makes a number of points that will have to be taken into account in future research on Pacific exchange systems. Indeed, in some respects the book pushes a pragmatic

and, what some may interpret as, an empiricist view of the relationship between theory and research: 'analysis can be seen as a procedure of engagement, a practice that cannot be differentiated into distinct levels of theory and description' (p. 33). Although he engages with the theoretical discourse over exchange, in particular in relation to recent contributions by Chris Gregory and Marilyn Strathern on the relationship between gift and commodity, Thomas does so largely to argue for a middle position in which context and perspective influence the way in which an event is interpreted. I have much sympathy for a perspective that sees elements of commodity and gift in many transactions in most societies, and with his conclusion as to 'the impossibility of speaking generally of gift *or* commodity societies' (p. 9; emphasis added). While it could be argued that at times Thomas dissolves rather than resolves the problems being addressed in the debates over exchange, his analysis of *solevu*, large-scale 'exchange' ceremonies in contemporary Fiji, shows the productivity of his approach. In *solevu* the assertion by the participants of the monetary value of things that are not sold shows the relationship between different dimensions of the value of objects. Thomas concludes that 'people who are entangled at once in a kinship economy and in petty commodity production draw a market metaphor, the notion of price, into the context of the life cycle ceremonies' (p. 200).

Thomas argues that the exchange systems we have data on ethnographically are themselves in part the result of interactions with Europeans during the colonization of the Pacific. And quite reasonably he sees the analysis of such exchange systems as requiring longitudinal research into the processes of their transformation through their articulation with outside systems. He argues that trade was always a two-way process and asserts the equality of opportunity in early exchanges. He argues for trade and exchange as being value-creation processes in which value is the product of the way in which the object is used and conceptualized in its new context. He shows how for both the Pacific Islander and the European consumer the meaning and value of each others' products changes as the objects move from one context to another. The point is a valid one but, as with many arguments in the book, in need of some qualification. It oversimplifies the historical processes by overcorrecting the simplifications of the past. Objects are not quite as malleable and as open to redefinition as Thomas implies. Often they arrived in the Pacific with, in effect, sets of instructions and instructors, in the persons of missionaries and government officials who created contexts for the use and exchange of introduced objects that affected their meaning and value. However, none of this diminishes the significance of the points Thomas makes, in particular as they apply to early stages of the colonial encounter.

Thomas is quite aware that the exchange relationship has ultimately proved an unequal one and that, in the end, the freedom of Pacific Islanders to choose has been constrained by their incorporation into colonial power structures that were orientated towards particular economic and political goals. He documents a move away from curiosity about the products of 'others' to disinterest (in the case of the planters), as European motivations shifted from 'voyages of discovery' to colonial

occupation and appropriation. However, the rhetorical point he is making, by emphasizing the active agency of the colonized in the process of exchange and the apparent equality of early exchanges, is not a trivial one, since it is directed against the view of Pacific peoples as passive victims of colonial processes the outcome of which was predetermined, and perhaps envisioned, from the arrival of the first European ship. As Thomas writes 'any theory which recapitulates the pioneers' ideology of vacant and passive spaces for European conquest and achievement must falsely diminish the prior dynamics of local systems, their relative autonomy, and their capacity for resistance' (p. 205).

Entangled Objects is well written, and many of the central issues of contemporary anthropology are entangled within the skein of its overall argument. Most of the separate arguments have been made before and in some respects the book is an appetizer. Inevitably in a book of this length nothing is pursued to the depth that one would like it to be: the Governor's dining room in Levuka, Fiji, is glimpsed in a photograph; Reinhold Forster's response to Pacific artefacts is quickly noted; and the ethnography of contemporary Fijian marriages is lightly drawn. But Thomas does present a coherent and well-articulated perspective. The main virtues of the book are that it provides, in a very compact form, a general framework for approaching Pacific cultures that shows the relationship between apparently disparate things and that it illustrates how the study of one aspect of social and historical processes provides insight into others.

HOWARD MORPHY

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