

BOOK REVIEWS

POLLY HILL, *The Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana: A Study in Rural Capitalism*, Oxford: James Currey 1997. xxviii, 265 pp., Appendixes, References, Index, Plates. No price given.

Polly Hill's material on migrant southern Ghanaian cocoa farmers was first published in 1963. The main thesis of this work was that a large number of these farmers ran their enterprises according to a successful capitalist logic during the first decades of the twentieth century. An assimilated market consciousness regulated their acquisition of land rights, labour employment and use of profits.

Hill's work was highly innovative. It pointed out the importance of immigrant farmers' companies in the process of land acquisition. Patrilineal and matrilineal groups were compared in their establishment of farms and transfers of plots. The delicate issue of land alienation was addressed. Finally the migration process was described. An economic perspective was integrated with a methodology comprising genealogies, local surveys, territorial histories, family biographies, an insightful use of maps, and a glossary of economic terms. The ethnographic evidence presented in the appendixes revealed both thorough fieldwork and outstanding anthropological competence. The success of Hill's study rested on an interdisciplinary approach which rendered it relevant to different approaches, its ability to explain the success of enterprises run by indigenous initiative with little or no support from either government or European agents, and its refutation of dominant ideas concerning the irrationality of African peasants. The International African Institute's decision to reprint this masterpiece in its 'Classics in African Anthropology' series is therefore most welcome.

As Austin points out in his introduction, Hill's conclusions were widely accepted and influenced many subsequent works. Current studies on cocoa production largely adopt Hill's propositions and often openly acknowledge their intellectual debt to her path-breaking study. Hill's work may therefore be valued for its effect on the literature which followed. Two concepts discussed by Hill were subsequently developed: the importance of migration in the spread of the cocoa industry, and the use of the term 'capitalists' to refer to cocoa farmers.

Following Hill's work, migration became a relevant theme in studies of cocoa production both in Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa. Since the early 1970s, scholars examined the relevance of migration to the spread of a capitalist-oriented cocoa industry. As both landlords and workers travelled to turn new forest areas into cocoa farms, the relationships they established in offering and acquiring land and labour were centred on monetary exchanges rather than social obligations. The migration process linked to cocoa production was seen as more specifically market-oriented and as a partial liberation from family and community constraints. These studies are valuable, as they concentrate on the migration of labourers as well as landlords, an

issue that Hill did not fully explore. They lack, however, Hill's ethnographic insights, which are not convincingly replaced by the use of quantitative data.

Hill's use of the term 'capitalist' preceded the Marxist literature on cocoa production, which, in the late 1970s and 1980s, made use of the same term with a slightly different meaning. For Hill, cocoa farmers were capitalist because they had a business outlook, besides the fact that they re-invested their profits through market enterprises. Later, the term was used in a more orthodox Marxist fashion. Migrant farmers were termed 'capitalists' and were thought of as forming a class monopolizing land and labour. The Marxist framework impoverished Hill's insights in many ways, the use of a predetermined theory and the stress on the monetized aspects of relationships producing a neglect of the cultural specificities of the cocoa industry and its wider social context.

Hill's study stands out in comparison to both of these subsequent bodies of literature. Not only did it precede trends which were developed in later decades, it also remains exceptional for its thorough methodology, its attention to detail, and its profound understanding of local dynamics, which are at times overlooked by later works. It is perhaps the fate of the great monographs to anticipate future research trends without sharing their flaws.

STEFANO BONI

POLLY WEISSNER and WULF SCHIEFENHÖVEL, *Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, Providence and Oxford: Berghahn Books 1996. vii, 294 pp., Notes on Contributors, References, Index, Photographs. No price given.

Since 1978, the European Commission on the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences has organized sixteen symposia on food and nutrition, considered from the viewpoint of both the social and biological sciences. This edited volume is the outcome of the symposium held in 1991, sponsored by the Max Planck Society and convened by the two editors. The topic of the meeting was the use of food to enhance status.

Most of the papers in this collection share the strong interdisciplinary and cross-cultural stance defended by the editors. The thirteen chapters forming the core of the volume may be viewed as divided into three sections: the first comprises ethological and primatological studies; the second is composed of archaeological analyses; the last includes works of social and cultural anthropology. In the first chapter, which precedes the ethological section, Weissner presents the various contributions and justifies the interdisciplinary approach, linking biological and sociocultural perspectives. In the last chapter, which follows the anthropological section, Gross and Dresrüsse discuss the issue of food intervention programmes in developing countries.

The ethological section comprises two chapters on primates (by McGrew, and Hohmann and Fruth) centred on issues of status, food, and mating success. The remaining three chapters of this section (Hold-Cavell, Eibl-Eibesfeldt, and Grammer)

link ethological observations of animals (mostly primates) and humans (particularly children), focusing on attention structures, food transferrals, and mate choices. The methodology adopted is predominantly that of the natural sciences, and the aim is to present the status quest as a 'natural' and 'universal' feature of both primates and humans.

The archaeological section is composed of three papers (Dietler, Hayden, and Damerow). The first two examine the use of feasts and prestige foods in prehistoric Europe to enhance status, often referring to the anthropological literature to suggest possible interpretations of the archaeological evidence. The other chapter discusses patterns of food and work transaction in 2250–2000 BC Mesopotamia by deciphering cuneiform texts. The three authors consider the relationship between food and status as crucial in both identifying stages of human development and understanding possible causes of cultural evolution from one stage to the next.

The anthropological section of this book comprises five papers. Weissner provides a cross-cultural overview of ways in which egalitarian foraging societies manage to control the status quest, which is viewed as 'a current that runs through all societies' (p. 187). De Garine's chapter focuses on the use of food in feasts and ceremonies in five societies in Cameroon and Chad to argue that 'symbolic advantages may be sought even at the expense of biological fitness': thus not all human behaviours towards food can be explained with reference to its 'positive biological role' (p. 215). Lemonnier's work is concerned with the role of pigs in festive competitions and compensation for human loss caused by marriage or homicide in New Guinea. Schiefenhövel and Bell-Krannhals discuss ceremonial food exchanges in a Trobriand village with particular reference to the 'reproductive success' of individuals. Finally, the paper by Panter-Brick focuses on the relationship between household status and the quest for food, intra-household status and food allocation, and caste membership and nutritional well-being in Nepal.

All chapters deserve praise for the originality of the analyses and the fascinating ethnographic evidence produced. However, an appraisal of the volume as a whole must rest on its attempt to link biological and sociocultural aspects of the relationship between food and status. Although the introductory chapter provides insights into possible complementary contributions of natural sciences and sociocultural anthropology to the examination of the nexus between food and status, one is left doubting the latter discipline's capacity to address biological concerns while maintaining its characteristic methodological and theoretical features. The anthropological section of the volume manages to maintain a link with the first part—centred on ethology and primatology—only by examining specific societies and adopting certain theoretical assumptions. The objects of study consist of—or are presented as—'simple' societies with a low technological level. The role of food and status in complex societies is not discussed, and scant attention is paid to the pervasive economic dynamics of the last century that must have influenced at least some of the groups studied. Moreover, the link between primates and humans is achieved by a partial elimination of human diversity and social complexity: the focus is often on children and on cross-cultural features. The link between natural sciences and sociocultural anthropology ultimately rests on certain debatable theoretical assumptions. Most authors, including some of the anthropologists, assume 'universal' patterns of human behaviour and view the status

quest as one of these natural human features. This stance should have been supported further by empirical evidence, as some anthropologists, rather than placing the status quest in the realm of human nature, explain the diverse expressions of status across societies and history by referring to specific economic and political strategies of dominance. This naturalization leads some of the anthropological analyses to discuss issues such as the universality of the status quest, the biological fitness of certain behaviours, and their reproductive success, while paying scant attention to the material bases of status and its justifications. Status is often defined in this volume as a position individually ascribed or attained rather than as the product of a relational form of dominance. The interdisciplinary approach adopted here to the study of the relationship between food and status proves insightful but leaves the volume's fundamental assumption unresolved. The work offers a range of methodological perspectives which suggest possible links between humans and primates, points out recurrent historical patterns of food use to enhance status, and discusses the biological significance of the status quest cross-culturally. The universality of certain human features is, however, presented as an axiom rather than critically discussed.

STEFANO BONI

MICHAEL EUGENE HARKIN, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians), Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1997. xiv, 195 pp., Maps, References, Index. £38.00.

In a series of related essays, Harkin provides a sophisticated ethnohistory of the early contact and missionization of the Heiltsuk (Bella Bella) Indians of the Pacific Northwest of North America. The better portion of Harkin's work describes the arrival of Methodist missionaries in 1880 and their subsequent missionization of the Heiltsuk, until the time when they were effectively alienated from their land in the early twentieth century. Harkin brings a new perspective to Northwest Coast studies by utilizing recent anthropology on colonialism and the indigenous experience of missionization. This is similar in some respects to Sergei Kan's study of Tlingit missionization and mindful of other ethnohistorical works on identity in the colonial encounter (particularly the work of Karen Blu, Julie Cruikshank, and Jean and John Comaroff). In addition, Harkin contributes to a sparse literature on the Heiltsuk and reopens the door on their culture by re-examining the assumptions of Ronald Olson and other ethnographers that they had all but forgotten their traditional culture well before 1935.

Harkin describes the colonial relationship between Eurocanadians and the Heiltsuk as a Bakhtinian 'dialogue' of accommodation and resistance. He also draws on Foucault's theories about 'technologies of power' to argue that Methodist missionaries used illness, mortuary practices, sexuality, labour, and other practices to mould the Heiltsuk into a 'modern' people. In each domain of knowledge and activity, the Heiltsuk struggled to retain their ideas about interpersonal, spiritual, and social power

against the missionary attempt to impose a 'monological' discourse about the proper conduct of the soul and the body.

Through innovative interpretations of Heiltsuk–Eurocanadian interactions, Harkin draws out an intriguing paradox: the Heiltsuk maintained many aspects of their cultural identity in these encounters by becoming paragons of the Methodist virtues of industry and discipline. Harkin suggests that a basic theme of traditional Heiltsuk society was 'the dialectical relationship between external, uncontrolled, negative forces and internal, structured power' (p. 22), expressed in the symbolism of winter dancing and the mortuary cycle. To understand the cultural importance of this theme in the early contact period, Harkin analyzes the structure and symbolism of a contact narrative provided to him by a Heiltsuk elder during a year of fieldwork in the Heiltsuk community of Waglisla (Bella Bella). He argues that the narrative serves as an 'epitomizing event' (following Fogelson), a moment which symbolically encapsulates the Heiltsuk incorporation and control of European technology and historicity. He also finds this theme later, in the Heiltsuk response to the arrival of Methodist missionaries in 1880. The latter were outsiders with powers that the Heiltsuk also hoped to incorporate into their society, such as education and industrial knowledge.

While missionization was successful in turning the Heiltsuk into a 'progressive' people, the Heiltsuk also used the missionaries to achieve several critical ends: as a means to address the disruption of disease and colonial trade; as a means for local chiefs to expand their influence; and as a means to organize the Heiltsuk peoples as a collective political entity. It is a notable historical irony that the missionaries established a council of chiefs to undertake collective projects (such as building a new church) that not only established the Heiltsuk as paragons of moral progress, but also inadvertently set the social foundations for a new ethnic identity among the Heiltsuk peoples. Harkin concludes that 'progress' and 'discipline' were not only central to Heiltsuk identity at the end of the nineteenth century, they were also at times a means to contest Eurocanadian domination.

The Heiltsuks has an unusual organization (a preface substitutes for an introductory chapter, and the conclusion, only five pages in length, offers no summation of the book) that prevents the reader from gaining a sufficient perspective on the overall scope of the work. The first three chapters discuss much of the theoretical and contextual material that might have been covered in an introductory chapter. As a result, Harkin's chapter on the contemporary Heiltsuk community of Waglisla and his apparent interest in the relationship of traditional culture to contemporary belief and practice fall by the wayside as the book pursues its central ethnohistorical subject. For example, Harkin notes that dances remain an important part of the community's 'historical culture', dances that have been 'skillfully reconstructed through the study of texts and through contact with the earlier revival among the Kwaguls, as well as from the memories of Heiltsuk elders' (p. 33). This interest in tradition, Harkin argues, demonstrates a rejection of the progressive ideology that was once so much a part of Heiltsuk identity. He concludes that 'this paradox is a key element of contemporary Heiltsuk identity' (p. 35), but unfortunately does not elaborate on this paradox or its significance for the Heiltsuk.

In his concluding remarks, Harkin suggests that two themes increasingly dominate the ethnohistory of North America, the first being genocide, the second the 'middle

ground' first proposed by Richard White in his history of the Great Lakes fur trade. Harkin wishes to distinguish his ethnohistorical work from these two interpretations, for the Heiltsuk were not culturally annihilated, nor did they experience an egalitarian relationship *vis-à-vis* Eurocanadians. In contrast to White, who suggests that colonial relations formed a 'middle ground' of cultural interaction and mutual reinvention, Harkin argues that missionization involved a 'fundamentally negative process of the suffusion of techniques of power throughout the Heiltsuk life world', which eroded Heiltsuk control over their community (p. 156). Despite this pessimism, Harkin replaces earlier portraits of Heiltsuk 'assimilation' with a more nuanced view of their history, in which the Heiltsuk underwent enormous changes, of which they accommodated some, resisted others, and always interpreted these events in terms of their cultural experiences and their desire to maintain a unique identity and way of life.

ALX DARK

VEIT ERLMANN, *Nightsong: Performance, Power and Practice in South Africa* (Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology), Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1996. xxv, 446 pp., References, Discography, Illustrations, Index. £59.95/£19.95/\$75.00/\$24.95.

Nightsong explores the competitive performances of male a cappella choirs in South Africa. These flourish at night time and are embedded in the world of migrant labour. More recently they have become known as *isicathamiya*, from the Zulu word *catham*, to walk like a cat.

Erlmann's study, completed in the 1980s prior to the collapse of the apartheid system, is at once a highly theoretical and empirically founded analysis. It aims to explore the 'dialectic of individual creativity and cultural constraint, by linking intensely studied individual and local performance practices with global networks' (p. 307), while employing an approach which 'takes the post-structural critique seriously, and yet does not dissolve into so many stories and viewpoints' (p. 1). The work supposedly includes a detailed discography of *isicathamiya* recordings up to 1990 and is complemented by a sixty-minute video of different choirs' songs, not made available to this reviewer. The focus of this review is therefore on Erlmann's written chapters, which circle around *isicathamiya*'s most common performance settings: its all-night competitions.

These events are generally held in halls of migrant hostels, where different choirs of one musical association practise and present set pieces. Performances are characterized by striking uniforms such as 'white suits, black shirts, red ties, pocket handkerchiefs and stunning red gloves' (p. 34), as well as choreographic elements ranging from marching steps to tap-dancing or moments of standing still punctuated by 'hands folded in operatic fashion' (p. 37). Similarly, these occasions are marked by poetic lyrics of struggle and heroic self-representation:

Basibiza lonk'ilizwe.

We are invited all over the country.

Sizokufa yindlala.

We'll die of starvation.

Ngoba lapho basibiza khona asazi bantu.

Because where we are invited to, we don't know anybody.

(‘Evening Birds’, cited on p. 234)

The girlfriends of choir members make up the majority of the audience, although some groups have large male followings. A judge decides on the winners, whose prizes range from considerable amounts of money to goats or blankets. In addition, a fund-raising rota ensures a regular income for all competitors, as profits made at these events go to each of the participating choirs in turn.

Erlmann looks beyond the night-time performance platform into the daily lives of the performers. The *isicathamiya* stage is scanned for the particularities of its actors' creativity, as well as for the impacts of the South African migrant world and wider-reaching international orbits. A multifaceted portrayal of *isicathamiya* as 'a forcefield of conflicting and intersecting interests, aesthetics and ideologies' (p. xxii) is skilfully embedded and framed within the introductory and concluding words of Joseph Shabalala. His group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, collaborated with Paul Simon to produce 'Graceland' and has become the most renowned in the world of *isicathamiya*.

Shabalala's autobiography, although in many ways unique, stands as an example of the lives of many migrant labourers engaged in *isicathamiya*. Born into a poverty-stricken family of manual workers on a white landlord's farm, Shabalala's love of music developed at a young age and became the driving force in his life. Having left home to live in the cities, he sang in different choirs. Success came when he founded his own musical groups, which eventually allowed him to live entirely off his music. The accomplishments of Ladysmith Black Mambazo have been unmatched by others, and yet the experiences of these singers parallel those of other choir members in significant ways. All belong to South Africa's migrant population, accounting for over seventy per cent of the overall labour force, hovering in a hazy zone between a rural life-style to which most ties have been cut and the urban communities in which few ties can be found. According to Erlmann, the lives of these workers, although highly heterogeneous, are linked by an 'all-pervasive state of off-centredness, of fractured identities, and perpetual displacement' (p. 107).

It is at this interstice of diverse worlds that *isicathamiya* exists. Two world-views clash and complement each other, as white gloves, ultimate icons of freedom from menial manual labour, and leopard-skin designs embodying the supreme power of Zulu warfare, appear on the same stage. Diverse ideologies collide, as aesthetic criteria from the rural context are thrown together with those of the dominant white order of the urban centres. The influence of recording industries and broadcasting stations, for example, moulds the songs of *isicathamiya* choirs according to white ideals of the 'black civilized native'. At the same time, Erlmann underlines the creativity of migrants in shaping their own experiences. The incorporation of elements from the hegemonic order allows performers to reappropriate the logic of this order in a way that contradicts the reality of apartheid laws.

Isicathamiya provides a means for the definition of a positive self-image in a world where a 'black person encountering a white pedestrian on a sidewalk has to step aside and use the street' (p. 192). The silent decrees of the apartheid regime tinge every aspect of migrants' lives. Yet, in the spotlights of a competition, enclaves of power and pride are polished out of the hardship and humiliation of urban life, as performances cross-reference the diverse fragments of migrant life, evoking experiences of bounded, collective, and rooted identities.

Critical eyes, looking for evidence of incoherence and a lack of direction supporting critiques of post-structuralism, may censure Erlmann for not always providing a clear line of argument to shed light on to the complexity of his diverse approaches to the phenomenon of *isicathamiya*. However, the attentive reader will have to acknowledge the author's deftness in interweaving a profound knowledge of contemporary anthropological theory with extensively researched South African data by providing finely sown explanations of his hypotheses and objectives at every step of argumentation.

Part 1, 'Texts', begins with a speech delivered by Joseph Shabalala at the University of Cape Town. Its threads are taken up in a theoretical discussion of contemporary performance studies, positioning *Nightsong* among efforts 'to insert agency and performativity into anthropology' (p. xxiii). Three descriptive texts referring to an *isicathamiya* competition add to these ideas, as does an in-depth summary of the history of this performance genre.

Part 2, 'Spaces', demystifies the notion of space by defining it as the 'embodiment of an imagined order' (p. 98) whose meaning is socially produced and therefore transformable. The following issues are explored: 'the complex and heterogeneous life-worlds *isicathamiya* performers live in; the crucial spaces: home, family, and nation constructed in and through performance; the dancing and clad body as a site and agent of aesthetic experience and as a signifier of an idealized community; the intertextuality of poetic genres; the enactment and formalization of spatial strategies within the context of competitions articulated in an aesthetics of power; the impact on *isicathamiya* of the mass media, the government, the broadcasting industry, and other agents of the hegemonic order; and, finally, the ability of performers to maintain their autonomy in self-supporting associations' (p. xxiv).

Part 3, 'Self', knits together aspects of Shabalala's autobiography with theoretical issues of music history, autobiographical narrative, and anthropological analysis.

It is *Nightsong's* focus on the experiential level of migrant life, attempting to portray South Africa's landscape and performance practices as embodiments of experiences, which most strongly induces the magnetic pull of this book. 'Unhomeliness' is identified as the norm of migrant life experience, 'a condition in which the border between home and world becomes confused, in which the private and the public become part of each other...the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world' (p. 103), leaving the individual with an acute sense of disorientation and lack of collective identity. In this context, Erlmann identifies *isicathamiya* as a key force in revitalizing the 'homely' epitomized in a bounded sense of the self and its community. In short, 'to sing *isicathamiya* is to be at home' (p. 133).

KAREN LÜDTKE

W. S. F. PICKERING and W. WATTS MILLER (eds.), *On Durkheim's Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Routledge Series in Social and Political Thought), London and New York: Routledge 1998, ix, 224 pp., References, Indexes. £50.00.

Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* is arguably the greatest book ever written on the relationship between religion, culture, and society. Since its publication in 1912, it has had an immense and varied influence on sociology, anthropology, and the modern study of religion. The book has, it is true, been subjected to many criticisms, particularly over Durkheim's use of ethnography. Its enduring influence rests not on its ethnography, however, but on its ambitious and imaginative exploration of the social basis of beliefs, rituals, and modes of thought. As is well known, this influence has been evident in various forms of functionalism and structuralism, but it is also apparent in the work of philosophers and social theorists such as Bataille, Foucault, Baudrillard, and Girard. This influence is one source of an evident renewal of interest in the book among contemporary scholars of culture and society, a renewal also encouraged by the publication of Karen E. Field's new translation in 1995. This new collection of essays adds to this resurgence of interest, with contributions from anthropologists, sociologists, and philosophers, whose essays are characterized by a sensitive exploration of Durkheim's text, a serious concern with its historical context, and a desire to assess its relevance to contemporary social, philosophical, and moral questions.

The book arises from a conference organized by the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies. Such collections can make unsatisfactory books, but it is to the credit of the editors that they have produced a well-structured, coherent set of essays of a uniformly high standard. They are loosely structured into the themes of methodology, beliefs, rituals, and epistemology—a structure mirroring that of Durkheim's book, though there is plenty of crossover between the essays. The methodological essays are characterized by the exploration of the influence of a number of Durkheim's contemporaries and predecessors. Morphy's examination of the influence of Spencer and Gillen is sensitive and illuminating, while Merllie's account of Durkheim's disagreement with Lévy-Bruhl concerning the distinction between modern and 'primitive' modes of thought demonstrates that Lévy-Bruhl's arguments were a great deal more subtle than has often been understood. Jones's essay is also a detailed and valuable account of how significant developments in Durkheim's sociology of religion emerged through his responses to the arguments of Boutroux. It is in relation to issues of belief, ritual, and epistemology, however, that a series of disagreements between the various authors become apparent.

The debate about whether Durkheim prioritizes belief or ritual in his study of religion and society has a long history, and is very much evident in some of the papers here. Steadman Jones and Watts Miller argue that Durkheim prioritizes belief, while Ruel attacks anthropologists such as Radcliffe-Brown and Victor Turner for their focus upon ritual, which he believes they treat independently of religious beliefs. Strenski, however, in his impressive examination of the influence of the Indologist Sylvain Lévi, argues that for Durkheim, as for Guyau, ritual is the privileged mode of religious life. A similar suggestion is implicit in Thompson's elaboration of a theory of sacred identity in relation to modern and postmodern social forms. Making the sort of

association between beliefs, symbols, and ritual to which Ruel objects, Thompson treats beliefs as ideologies, which he relates to symbolic communities. His account of Durkheim's discussion of tattooing in *The Elementary Forms*, for example, emphasizes how tattoos are a symbolic representation of belonging to emotionally grounded communities. Paoletti's account of Durkheim's theory of social symbolism rests on similar arguments.

The essays also reflect a series of significant disagreements over the philosophical characteristics and implications of Durkheim's arguments. Watts Miller, for example, offers a Kantian reading of Durkheim, while the influence of Kant is questioned in papers by Godlove and Schmaus. The subject of 'collective effervescence' produces a particularly interesting series of interpretations and assessments. As Pickering notes in his introduction, effervescence has been a relatively neglected subject among scholars of Durkheim. It is raised in many of the papers here, however, such as Morphy's essay on Durkheim's relationship with Spencer and Gillen, and is the central subject of a number of the chapters. Ramp's essay discusses effervescence as the arousal of a 'liminal energy' that not only binds individuals together, as functionalist interpreters of Durkheim emphasize, but also calls individuals out of themselves, stimulating the individual's experience of transcendence, and the social body's renewal of its collective energy. Allen's account of effervescence examines it in terms of helping to explain the origins of human society. Beginning with a sensitive account of Durkheim's evolutionism, Allen notes that primatological descriptions of 'chimpanzee carnivals' suggest the pre-human origin of effervescent gatherings. He goes on to argue that it is such gatherings that help explain the creative beginnings of early patterns of human sociality, which makes them greatly relevant to tetradic theory and palaeoanthropology. Némedi's essay is more critical of the concept, accusing Durkheim of a 'fatal circularity' of argument dependent on a 'dubious theory of creativity'; but his attempts to elucidate the 'shaky edifice' of Durkheim's theory are not entirely convincing.

It is the diversity of interpretations of the *Elementary Forms*, however, and the high standard of scholarship supporting these interpretations, that makes this such an illuminating book to read. It will be of particular interest to students of Durkheim, but should also be of value to a broader range of scholars interested in the role of religion in relation to society and culture, as well as to those concerned with questions about the origins of sociality and social creativity.

PHILIP A. MELLOR

MARTHA MUNDY, *Domestic Government: Kinship, Community and Polity in North Yemen* (Society and Culture in the Middle East), London and New York: I. B. Tauris 1995. xvii, 317 pp., Index, Figures, Appendixes, Tables. £39.50.

In this monograph, Mundy uses detailed statistical and ethnographic material to provide fresh and provocative insight into the political organization of Middle Eastern agricul-

turists. Locating her study in a fertile agricultural valley outside Sana'a, the Yemeni capital, Mundy draws on extensive questionnaires, personal life histories, and written legal documents to argue that analyses of social polity must begin not with abstract notions of 'tribe', but with the economic and social organization of house and households. Her documentation is most impressive. Particularly suggestive is her notion that tribal identity emerges from practical negotiations over land alliances between families. By focusing on the strategic decisions that individuals make, her work provides valuable perspectives on the roles women play in establishing the terms of local identity and the boundaries of community.

In the introductory chapter, Mundy outlines some of her general criticisms of ethnographies of Middle Eastern tribes. She begins chapter two by presenting emic models of community and place, outlining three common idioms of membership that relate to (a) interpretations of the past, (b) notions of social status, and (c) the constitution of the local political community. These distinctions position her nicely to articulate transformations in identity not only historically, but also in terms of status hierarchies. Her attention to the ways members of various status and occupational groups view the community differently offers a challenge to analytical perspectives that rely on a single informing idiom such as patrilineal descent or segmentalism.

There are two essential points to the third chapter. First, the household is a central arena for litigation: at least half of the disputes in the community occur between close relatives or members of the same household. Acknowledgement of such a site of negotiation helps turn the ethnographic lens from disputes and mitigation between analytically segmentable communities to the ongoing transformations made within the community. Secondly, the state has long been present in such domestic litigation through the application of Islamic law in disputes over property transfer and inheritance. Legal traditions can legitimately be theorised beyond the analytic confines of state and tribe.

Chapter four lays out the basic issues of land ownership as it relates to households, professions, and transformations induced by oil revenues and migrant remittances. This general background provides a context for the detailed statistical analysis of houses and households in the following chapter. Mundy's skill in identifying the patterned differences in structure and social life of families with land and those without makes this one of her strongest chapters. Her attention to the cases of several women heads of households reveals particularly well the power that women can exercise through conjugal strategies, bargaining, and solidarity. Moreover, a concise review of Middle Eastern kinship studies as developed by Western and Arab scholars introduces this chapter in a way that frames the material as especially germane.

Chapters six and seven focus on marriage transactions and patterns among differently privileged groups. One of the most salient arguments in these chapters is that alliance, rather than descent, is the most important idiom for political solidarity. In the practices of daily negotiations over resources, people are most often concerned with active relations rather than ideal, schematic models. This is particularly true for women, as is shown in a number of case-studies. In chapter seven, Mundy argues for a holistic approach to kinship and marriage that views alliance in relation to land, status, class, language, and Islamic legal tradition rather than to any single imperative. While this is not a new idea, Mundy provides extensive documentation suggesting why

and how certain alliances—especially those between the landed—tend to be more durable than others. Unfortunately, these points tend to be buried in extremely dense description and diagrams that only a few persistent readers are likely to follow. Greater narrative imagination here would certainly have made the material more accessible.

Having reviewed some of the more valuable points of the book, I would like to consider critically Mundy's admonitions against analyses of social and political community that begin with notions of 'tribe'. Her main target is, of course, segmentary lineage logic. Summarizing the thesis of her book in the introduction, she writes: 'we need to build a corpus of documentation in terms other than the segmentary problematic, in terms not of tribes against the state, but of village alliances, regional systems and nationalist leadership' (pp. 5–6). Her focus on alliance rather than descent is an important step towards acknowledging the agency of individuals in the community and recognizing individuals as differently positioned and advantaged. However, the segmentary as it has been reworked does not preclude recognition of cross-cutting alliances, networks, or alternative models; it is importantly one among a number of models that can be utilized. While more relevant at the broader, public levels of politics, it has been one of the most durable conceptual maps in Yemen and can only be systematically marginalized through exercising a degree of oversight.

Mundy rightly calls attention to the existence of distinctive regional patterns of economic exchange and historical experience that have received little attention in studies of the relation between the local and translocal. However, she gives no indication of what these regional zones might be. Moreover, her theory of regionalism is sparsely developed. She makes only fleeting reference to it in the first chapter—as a collection of myths about place (pp. 27–8)—and, as if in apology, in the conclusion, where it appears as a distinct product of economic geography and state centralization (pp. 202–3). The power of the concept of regionalism, however, lies in its deep-rooted existence as an ideology that predates the modern nation-state and is institutionally as well as morally inscribed.

Finally, Mundy's interest in theorizing the relations of nationalist leadership to locality would suggest she consider how discourses of community are used by leaders and to what effect. Such an approach could not fail to acknowledge 'the tribe' (*al-qabilah*) as a mode of representation that is pragmatically and discursively variable. Mundy clings to a notion of tribe as a legal unit that is somehow beyond local practice. Juxtaposing 'the tribe' to the local, she explains that 'the higher-level rural political unit, the *qabilah*...is a different kind of social framework, one that has long been the unit of administration for the government' (p. 201). Her monograph is principally concerned with the legal, social, and economic underpinnings of community. However, a recollection of Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's early emphasis on the importance of the moral—and in particular the symbolic—to political relations is in order. Mundy's persistent efforts to render the 'tribe' epiphenomenal to more material imperatives prevents her from coming to terms with political discourses and events that may not map neatly on to statistically derived demographic patterns.

Despite these shortcomings, Mundy has produced an extremely suggestive and meticulously documented argument for resituating the ethnography of what have often too readily been labelled 'tribal' areas of Yemen. Her attention to the social fissures,

hierarchies, and networks of community, and their accompanying economic and legal contexts, offers a more agent-centred approach to alliance and identity than has been developed by previous ethnographers of the Yemeni social polity. Her monograph is an all-too-rare testimony to the value of closely interrogating analytic models of community through empirical methods and cautious inference.

W. FLAGG MILLER

CAROLYN NORDSTROM, *A Different Kind of War Story*, Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press 1997. xviii, 254 pp., References, Indexes, Plates. £38.00/£17.50/\$39.95/\$18.50.

Carolyn Nordstrom initially designed the research for *A Different Kind of War Story* as a 'comparative study of warfare' which would relate findings on war in Mozambique to her earlier work on Sri Lanka. The approach she takes is unconventional, in terms of both the discipline of anthropology and academic studies of war. Nordstrom describes her book as an 'ethnography of a warzone', an 'experimental methodology based on studying a process (political violence and creative resistance) rather than a...circumscribed locale.... [It] is grounded in a topic and a process rather than a place' (p. 10). She gives a coherence to the war stories she has collected from different parts of the huge and diverse country of Mozambique through a notion of 'cultures of violence, survival and creative resistance', which she defines as 'shared information on war and surviving war linking people war-wide' (pp. 10–11). Nordstrom hopes her work 'will suggest theories of human behaviour' and frames her discussion of Mozambique in a moral context 'intended to instruct' and to help us 'to do something about the atrocities of war' (p. 29).

Nordstrom did her fieldwork in Mozambique between 1988 and 1996, with the greater part conducted during the course of the war itself. Her reflexive discussion of the ethical and practical problems involved in studying a war while it is actually happening is both extended and frank. When she began her first study of the war in Sri Lanka in 1983, she relates how she 'did not really understand the dangers possible—both to me and to people with me.... While the data I collected were invaluable, hindsight has led me to conclude that our discipline would well be advised to provide its researchers with a more realistic and critical methodology than I first took with me to the field' (p. xvii). Doing research during a war 'involves a number of responsibilities above and beyond those associated with more traditional ethnography: responsibilities to the fieldworker's safety, to that of her or his informants' (pp. 8–9).

Nordstrom based herself somewhere in Zambézia province in northern Mozambique (she decides not to tell the reader exactly where), but she also includes material from her fairly extensive travels throughout the country. According to her own description, she worked mainly in government-controlled areas, moving around mostly by airlift and armed convoy thanks to travel permits from the Ministry of Health. Nordstrom describes visiting 'a fairly representative sample of "runway" locations',

often only for a day at a time; she did not travel to 'extremely remote no man's lands', though she did try to interview people displaced from them (pp. 42–3). But moving around was not the only problem she faced: Nordstrom discusses the difficulty of interpreting the information she collected under the heading 'factx', a term she creates 'to underscore the observation that, at least in the context of war, something is always wrong with the facts that one is given. The facts of war emerge as essentially contested figures and representations everyone agrees are important, and no one agrees on' (p. 43). Nor were the challenges of wartime research over when Nordstrom left Mozambique: on her return, she faced audiences who repeatedly questioned her motivation. 'People want to know why I do this research. Do I get some kind of thrill from it? Have I become addicted to the excitement of the frontlines? Is there some kind of inescapable perverse fascination in horror?' (p. 19).

By aiming to focus on process rather than place, on common war stories and the practice of research in a war zone rather than attempting specific historical reconstructions, *A Different Kind of War Story* will inevitably disappoint those wanting to know more about the local dynamics of Mozambique's complicated war. The personal testimonies and wartime vignettes that Nordstrom relates are often only vaguely linked to particular places. For example, we are told several stories from the turbulent history of a 'fairly inaccessible' town in Zambézia which Nordstrom fictitiously names 'Ekani'. Ekani was occupied by Renamo, who allowed 'white men' to exploit its 'rich mines of precious metals and gems' and subsequently 'left all the mines and equipment smashed on their departure'. The town was later reclaimed for the government by Parama forces (pp. 89–95). Ekani's war is compared to the 'quiet war' of parts of Niassa Province and accounts of the war in other parts of the country drawn from the existing literature. The book has some interesting detail about the Parama forces that were so important in wartime Zambézia, including an interview with their leader Manual António before his death in 1991. Nordstrom recounts the legendary tales of Parama magic and discusses the Paramas' changing role, tactics, and reputation, as they became 'a force to be reckoned with' in a number of unspecified places in Zambézia.

Nordstrom uses war stories from different parts of Mozambique to make points about common experiences throughout the country. In a discussion of coping with violence, healing, and social reintegration, for example, she chooses to emphasize what is shared over diversity and argues for 'the truly national extent of this system of resisting and resolving violence'. She elaborates: 'From the south of Maputo to the north of Niassa, from urban centres to rural outposts, from refugee camps to burned-out villages, every place I visited hosted people who shared a similar view about dealing with violence' (p. 147). By asserting the importance of common responses, specific healing, religious and political traditions become merely 'coded' forms of a universal Mozambican response, unworthy of much elaboration.

Yet it would be unfair to judge the book for something it did not intend to do. Nordstrom's book is valuable reading for anyone contemplating the academic investigation of political violence and wrestling with the problems of how to do so from within a discipline that demands participant observation.

JOANN MCGREGOR

JEFF FERRELL and MARK HAMM (eds.), *Ethnography at the Edge: Crime, Deviance and Field Research*, Boston: Northeastern University Press 1998. xviii, 309 pp., References, Index. £52.00/£21.00.

This is an exciting collection of essays about the seductive power of deviant activity. The ethnographer's tools are brought to bear on deviance in its shifting social context, resulting in a rich and engaging understanding. The investigations reported in the book conjure up a world far removed from most academic criminology, which, in its search for objectivity, often becomes turgid and sterile. This work, by contrast, is fertile and pulsating. The lifeblood of the subject flows. The criminological expertise is made vivid and stimulating.

As with any ambitious project, a number of methodological and analytical limitations emerge. The technique of criminal *Verstehen*, and the blurring of distinction between researcher and research subject which it allows, form the conceptual core of this work. The dialectical nature of the research enterprise is drawn out and itself becomes a focus of inquiry. This approach is a useful route into the meaning of lives lived on the margins of society. However, it is not well suited to the study of serious crimes such as rape, murder, and child abuse, where the ethical objections to participant observation, confidentiality, and amorality would be insuperable. Furthermore, although we are given tantalizing glimpses into criminal decision-making, this deep appreciative understanding is not always accompanied by wide generalizability—changing contexts require new explanations. None the less, there is plenty here to whet the appetites of quantitatively oriented criminologists.

The human consequences of the research process are central to this work. Every author has a tale to tell. Some of the activities covered are legal (the training of police gun teams, telephone sex work, and skydiving). Others rank low in the crime hierarchy (graffiti art and marijuana-growing). Some of what we read is obvious but rarely articulated, and there are also some genuine insights. The real dilemmas which sometimes confront field researchers are laid bare. As Tunnell puts it in his contribution on property offenders, 'This chapter is my confessional of participating in illegalities, intentionally taking sides, withholding information, deceiving, and lying to authorities'.

The subject-matter is wide. Hamm relates his attempt to understand what drove Timothy McViegh to bomb Oklahoma City, causing 167 deaths. Mattley describes the 'stigma by association' she encountered as a result of her research with telephone sex workers: her colleagues extended her little academic credibility, but exhibited a high level of salacious interest in the detail of her work; interactions with male colleagues became sexually charged. Jacobs analyses the emotional toll of being robbed at gunpoint and then harassed at home by a 'trusted' informant. Kraska realises, to his alarm, that as he spends time shooting with police paramilitary units, he begins to enjoy the experience of militarism, which he abhors on intellectual grounds.

Fleisher's fieldwork with youth gangs angers him. His comments are hard hitting and he is not afraid to point the finger: 'I despise the parents...for perverting and transforming children into teenage urban predators.... Kids who are beaten need security, protection and treatment. Adults who beat kids need to be in a prison cell,

not on a therapist's couch. It's that simple.' Such directness makes a refreshing change from the stilted prose of traditional criminology.

Lyng's research took him over the edge. His adoption of extreme skydiving led to significant shifts in his own behaviour and self-concept which culminated in a near-fatal motorcycle accident. As the web of deviant activities was spun, so the motif of Lyng's life became voluntary risk-taking. As dangerous activities were mastered, new risks were introduced so that participants could once again approach the 'edge' separating life from death. Closeness to the edge made life worth living. The risks associated with skydiving were artificially raised by jumping in dangerous weather conditions or under the influence of intoxicating substances. Success at skydiving led to a search for other methods of demonstrating one's survival skills. This included motorcycling riding at speed.

Lyng charts how he moved towards the edge and then pulled it closer as it drifted away. His experience of dancing at the edge led to a personal transformation: '...what had started as an intellectual quest to understand the edgework phenomenon became a sensual attraction to the experience itself. The impulse nexus, which had constituted only a small part of my self-concept in the years before I began this research project, grew in relation to the other dimensions of self as I became increasingly addicted to edgework.' Lyng's essay outlines the personal risks of field research. It shows how experiential change can have bone-splitting consequences, and how the ethnographer's craft can shape his life.

A measure of the success of this collection is its pace and readability. Readers will be pulled through the chapters by the intrinsic worth of the subject-matter, the lively style of writing, and the coherence of the intellectual argument. The book's focus on the dangers and pleasures of the criminal moment provides a nuanced account of deviant activity. The authors have managed to reintroduce themselves into their research stories, and by doing so, make a valuable contribution to criminological knowledge.

IAN O'DONNELL

ANN DANAIYA USHER (ed.), *Dams as Aid: A Political Anatomy of Nordic Development Thinking* (Routledge Studies in Development and Society), London and New York: Routledge 1997. xiv, 171 pp., References, Index, Figures, Plates. No price given.

In paying close attention to the dynamics of development funding, *Dams as Aid* is a useful companion volume to an earlier generation of critiques of Nordic countries' aid programmes (e.g. O. Therkildsen, *Watering White Elephants?*, Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies 1988). That said, however, the current volume does demonstrate important changes in critical concerns about development aims since the 1980s, from poverty and primary health care to environmentalism. The basic thesis of *Dams as Aid* is that dams and hydropower technologies have become increasingly unpopular in the West, in terms of both their environmental impact and the political

mobilization of the populations affected by flooding. With the declining market for dam-building projects in-country, argues Usher, major Nordic companies and parastatals have increasingly relied upon building infrastructure in the Third World for their profits. At the same time, Nordic development agencies have found dam-building projects a relatively straightforward means for disbursing aid, even though such projects are characterized by frequent cost overruns, well-known technical problems such as siltation, and basically unsustainable maintenance costs for electricity-generating equipment. Accordingly, an alliance has been forged between dam-builders and development bureaucracies through which donor-funded projects provide major support for Nordic industry. Perhaps this is controversial in the context of Scandinavian aid, but to British observers it comes as no great surprise, given the 'development' policies of the previous UK government.

That said, the editor and contributors do extensively document the intimate networks of links between companies and developers, in Norway and Sweden as well as in three case-studies (Theun Hinboun, Laos; Pangani, Tanzania; Bio-bio, Chile). One of the strengths of the analysis is the 'triangulation' the authors achieve through the detailed study of the reality of dam-building on the ground and interviews with development bureaucrats, industrialists, and environmental campaigners in Scandinavia. This 'triangulation' is made possible through systematic contributions from local social scientists (Mung'ong'o in Tanzania; Silva in Chile), environmental/indigenous rights activists (Lovgren, Vedin in Sweden; Dalland in Norway) and journalists (Ryder on Theun Pangoun, and Usher herself, who contributes five of the eleven chapters). The analysis provides extensive evidence of (at least passive) collusion to promote dams by governments, policy-makers, development agencies, and industrialists; and it documents the secrecy surrounding decisions to fund dams. Chapter 6 in particular describes the atmosphere of 'pervasive appraisal optimism', in which the positive outcomes of dam-projects are emphasized while their negative potential and environmental-impact assessments are systematically denied, concealed, or ignored. As a brief account of the internal workings of aid bureaucracies (and their different institutional cultures regarding official secrecy), this chapter is essential reading for tyros to the aid game or for development workers gaining their first experience of working with Norad, Sida, and the other Nordic agencies. Whether civil society is the vehicle through which this culture of appraisal optimism can be countered (as the book argues) is, however, a debatable point. In this connection, it will be interesting to see how the forthcoming Freedom of Information Bill squares with the emphasis on ethical development policy over the next few years in Britain.

As readers will have gathered, this is a worthy and important set of case-studies of the workings of development agencies in one sector of donor aid. It exhaustively catalogues the ecological and social consequences of dams (both large and relatively small). In its concern with the rights of indigenous people and smallholder farmers, it supports the crying need for more socially aware development policy and practice. It shows how development is situated in structures of (neo-?) colonialism, not least in the Arctic north of Sweden and Norway. The solutions it offers, of greater democratic debate on infrastructural development projects and the complete cessation of dam-building in the South, are certainly environmentally worthwhile. But the book fails to address the question of whether environmental concerns are so pervasive in the South

that dams would cease to be built (see G. Chapman, *Environmentalism, the Mass Media and the Global Silent Majority*, University of Sussex and ESRC 1997), or whether dam-building is any different from other aid sectoral programmes in its combination of appraisal optimism and technical incapacity. The search for 'Modernity' and 'Development' are just as attractive to the élites and electorates of the South as they were to the citizens of post-war Europe, and it is just as difficult to achieve a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability.

BARRIE SHARPE

SIMON SINCLAIR, *Making Doctors: An Institutional Apprenticeship* (Explorations in Anthropology), Oxford: Berg 1997. x, 347 pp., Bibliography, Illustrations, Index. £39.99/£14.99.

This book evolved from three years' research undertaken by Simon Sinclair at the Department of Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. It incorporates the results of a one-year field study he carried out at the University College London Medical School between 1993 and 1994, and forms one volume in a series entitled 'Explorations in Anthropology'. Sinclair addresses a number of complex notions based on concepts of 'disposition' and 'medical habitus', and relates these to the changes that have occurred between student entry to the institution through to the final pre-registration year of the qualified houseman. He makes considerable use of the extended metaphor of the theatre as applied to the construction of the institution to medicine's 'social stage', the pre-clinical student being seen as a member of an 'audience' progressing through clinical experience to doctor or full member of the 'acting' cast. The analogy of this transition is extended to the 'frontstage idealistic' presentation and performances of clinical students and housemen and their 'backstage' preparatory and 'economic' work, showing how these parameters change in the course of training. Sinclair describes how the dispositions of professional medicine, namely competition and co-operation, knowledge, experience, responsibility, status, and (personal and professional) idealism, can be seen to change in conjunction with the changing perspectives described by Howard S. Becker *et al.* (*Boys in White: Student Culture in Medical School*, University of Chicago Press 1961).

In *Making Doctors*, Sinclair has written an 'insider's' account of medical students' official and unofficial activities from the benefit of personal experience (as a medical doctor) and as a trained anthropologist, although this introduces problems of the subjectivity of personal experience rather than objective observation into his study that are never fully confronted or resolved. In particular, he states that his research was largely concentrated upon the particular areas into which he was drawn by his own colour, sex, and social background (pp. 97–8, 127). This would seem more acceptable had the book not claimed to provide 'an examination of the current state of medical training in the UK', looking 'not only at medical students' "official activities" [i.e. what they need to do to qualify] but also their "unofficial" ones' (as it says in the

publisher's blurb). However, the study's reference base seems to focus on rather too narrow a field of students. Sinclair might, for example, have benefited from considering other comparable student experiences, such as those of veterinary, nursing, or law students, or by widening the London-centred view based on one large teaching hospital to consider provincial medical schools.

The book is organized thematically with an introduction, nine subsequent chapters, and a brief final chapter or epilogue for concluding remarks. Chapter 1 introduces Sinclair's personal background and place in the study, describes the methodology used for the field research element, and outlines his aims. The book is claimed to be 'unusual in two respects, geographical and ethnographic' in representing the 'first anthropological or sociological study of basic medical training in England' (p. 3). His intention is to understand more fully the way the training collectively transforms individuals and thus the effect of training on students' mental well-being (p. 4).

Chapter 2, entitled 'Deriving Medical Dispositions', begins by discussing the role of the training institution and compares it with other institutions such as prisons or asylums. This chapter briefly examines the reasons for and effects of learning the rituals and language of medicine, citing their importance in examinations and assessments—a theme developed further and in greater depth in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 presents a brief historical overview of medical training, looking particularly at the development of the professional dispositions of knowledge, experience, and responsibility from a system based on a 'one-to-one master-to-apprentice relationship' to a university and hospital-based system with multiple students and, later, multiple masters under the 'firm' system of medical training. Sinclair adds valuable professional insight to the significance of the anatomical approach central to Foucault's concept of the 'medical gaze', observing that 'the common-sense perception of seeing and touching gives rise to a personal certainty through such combined sensory experience'. He suggests that in addition to the professional (public) disposition of knowledge, this 'combined sensory experience' (particularly a sensory combination of oral instruction, sight, touch, hearing, and smell) developed the personal professional disposition of experience.

Chapter 4, 'Medical Status: getting into Medical School', looks at the background to application and entrance to medical school but disappointingly imparts an impression of generalization and stereotyping.

Chapter 5 looks particularly at co-operation and the importance of the 'team' and the effect of segregation (and aggregation) on the new students during 'Freshers' Week'. Again, Sinclair appears to overstress the significance of events that are recognisably part of a wider student culture.

Chapter 6 examines the pre-clinical acquisition of knowledge firstly through the group scenario of lecture theatres and secondly through private study. In addition to obvious dramatic associations, Sinclair demonstrates the role of the attending audience with particular patterns of behaviour and response to specific subjects and lecturers. The nature of medical knowledge is examined, especially the tenacious assumptions of Western medicine and the significance of language, learning a medical vocabulary and its correct usage, and the resultant 'loss' of lay meanings.

Chapter 7 examines the pre-clinical learning experience further through the role of the dissecting room interpreted as representing a 'rite of passage to be endured' (p.

194) as a practical first approach to a 'patient'. Theatrical metaphors are developed further, depicting the dissection room as a stage set, and a rehearsal for the operating theatre as well as the ward, for developing new roles of clinical detachment and contrasting demeanours, while the importance for status purposes of costume and 'props', e. g. white coats and surgical instruments, is demonstrated.

Chapter 8 moves to the clinical setting, where the key disposition becomes 'experience'. Ward rounds and the importance of the 'team' are the central themes. Hierarchical status of specialties, in being explained in terms of their relative contribution to the dispositions and the pressures of clinical teaching methods, are represented as societal rituals with significance in enforcing institutional conformity—with the fear of humiliation providing added pressure—which is justified by the profession's moral idealistic aims.

Chapter 9 focuses on the new doctor's one-year compulsory pre-registration experience through house jobs, in which there is a particular emphasis on the relationship between responsibility, experience, and idealism. Observance of status within the 'firm' deserves greater analysis from the wider intra-professional and lay viewpoints, although inter-professional rivalries and competition are shown to represent the move from horizontal co-operation between students to vertical co-operation within the medical 'team'.

Chapter 10, 'The Medical Habitus and Mental Illness', describes the trainees' experience of scientizing and pathologizing the world as representing a 'major cognitive shift in their aggregation to the profession' (p. 297). Chapter 11 is a short conclusion which makes several recommendations for a new basic form of medical training system based initially more on general practice than hospital specialization, resulting in a reversion to the earlier system of a 'more personal and less institutional apprenticeship' in the formative years of training.

Apart from some assumed medical and anthropological knowledge and background reading, this has a clearly written, relaxed style, well illustrated with pictorial evidence, examples taken from the field study, and well chosen diagrammatic representations. Sinclair's choice not to explore the comparative dimension must, however, to some extent reduce the book's broader significance to medical anthropology. Nevertheless, *Making Doctors* is both informative and thought-provoking, and offers the reader an opportunity to consider anthropological concepts in training and ritual in the medical institution generally.

HELEN SWEET

EMMANUEL D. BABATUNDE, *A Critical Study of Bini and Yoruba Value Systems of Nigeria in Change: Culture, Religion, and the Self*, New York and Ontario: The Edwin Mellen Press 1992. xvi, 283 pp., References, Appendix, Index, Plates. No price given.

Babatunde's work explores the notions of the 'good' and 'successful' person amongst two Nigerian groups: the Bini and the Yoruba. An introduction to the Bini and Yoruba

is offered at the beginning of the volume. The second chapter is centred on metaphysical beliefs, ranging from ancestors to divinities. Chapter three focuses on some of the most important qualities of the 'good person' among the two groups. In the following section, the notions of personality and individual destiny are explored. Chapter five is an autobiographical account of a Yoruba man, in which key notions concerning the attribution of social value emerge. Chapter six is centred on the role of women in marriage and religious rituals. In the last chapter, the importance of social change on the value system is discussed with special reference to the oil boom and the civil war of the 1960s and 1970s.

The author's in-depth knowledge of Nigerian society enables him to search for insights on the value systems in cosmology, reincarnation, chieftaincy, kinship, and physiology, just to mention some of the related issues covered in the text. Reference is occasionally made to colonial and post-colonial history. The vastness of the material used to support the description of what makes a 'good' person is fascinating. Each chapter, and indeed each page, contains valuable ethnographic material. Constant reference is made to Bini and Yoruba expressions of their value system. The work contains quotations from folk-tales, songs, prayers, proverbs, plays, and interviews. A number of customs and rituals are discussed vividly. To a non-specialist of the area as the reviewer, the ethnographic material seems extremely rich and detailed. The book represents an encyclopaedic approach to the system of Nigerian social values. Moreover a comparative perspective is adopted successfully throughout the work: Bini and Yoruba value systems are compared, pointing out similarities and stressing differences.

A few critical points should, however, be raised. The ethnography pays little attention to value negotiation and differentiation. It appears as if all Yoruba and Bini share an identical value system. Ethnic groups are often presented as juxtaposed sets of identical persons. At one point the author's pushes the generalisation even further and speaks of cultural features of the 'African' (pp. 228–9) and of a 'neo-African value system' (p. 234). It might have helped to look at differences within groups, instead of considering ethnic and continental groups as internally homogeneous. Gender roles are briefly discussed only in one chapter. Little attention is paid to other social differences which may have relevance to the value system such as the political and parental status of individuals, or their age. The emphasis on the 'good person' does not enable the writer to fully address the issue of the 'good youth' or of the 'good commoner'.

A related methodological critique is the lack of a dialectic approach to the relationship between the presentation of ideal cultural values and their practical application. The rich ethnographic material used seems to rely exclusively on official knowledge. Babatunde presents a clear picture of what is the normative 'good person'. Besides leaving out differences between social groups within society, Babatunde's approach leaves out practice. The reviewer has sought in vain for observations by the author on how values are actually set to work, negotiated, and contested in everyday life.

The presentation of Yoruba and Bini values is not static over time. Babatunde describes—with some regret—the degradation of customary values over the last decades. The set of values described throughout the book—kindness, truthfulness, bravery and respect—are termed 'traditional', while 'modern' values consist of greed, unfaithfulness, and selfishness. The latter seem to have swept away the former—

notwithstanding the author's final appeal for a return to a unitary African tradition. The degeneration is explained with particular reference to the monetization of society, the oil boom, and military rule. The historical perspective, however, consists more of the author's moral stance rather than an examination of the complexity of social change. The rigid dichotomy between traditional (good) and modern (bad) appears unconvincing.

A last remark on the bibliography. The work is presented as a 'revision' (page xiii) of the doctoral thesis accepted by the University of Oxford in 1982. However, the references in the bibliography, with very few exceptions, pre-date the achievement of the doctoral degree. More adjoined references would have certainly helped the author to insert the excellent ethnographic material in the methodological and theoretical framework it deserves.

STEFANO BONI

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