BOOK REVIEWS

ROY WILLIS, *A State in the Making: Myth, History, and Social Transformation in Pre-Colonial Ufipa*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1981 [African Sysyems of Thought, general editors C.S. Bird and I. Karp]. 302 pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £19.50.

Dr. Roy Willis, who received his training as a social anthropologist at Oxford, carried out field research among the Fipa, a Bantu people of western Tanzania, for two years in the early 1960s. He has already published extensively on them, but the substantial work here reviewed must be reckoned his *magnum opus*. Its design, set out in a brief and lucid Preface, is ambitious. Willis has elsewhere described himself as being 'of the structuralist persuasion', and he introduces his book as a 'marriage of a revisionist structuralism and an historical reconstruction which has been strongly influenced by Marxist theory' - and, he adds, by 'exchange theory' as well.

But the prospective reader need not be daunted. Essentially what Willis is trying to do, as all good anthropologists must (or should), is to make the best possible sense of the ethnography. His study is not 'just' ethnography; strictly speaking, of course, no ethnography is. Nor, despite its title, is the book only, or mainly, about historical processes of state formation. Its theme is Fipa ideas and beliefs about the origin and development of their traditional polity, rather than the polity itself. In this context Willis applies both 'action' and 'cosmological' (or conceptual) frames of reference, being careful always to keep them distinct. A brief resumé of the book's organization may indicate the logic of its argument.

There are three parts, and the movement from each to the next is clear and systematic. First comes an analysis of the key Fipa myth (or myths) of origin, one version of which starts with a first man falling from heaven, either accompanied by a first woman or subsequently producing one from his knee (in a variant of the Genesis myth). In an alternative version, the story begins with the arrival from elsewhere of a little group of women. In any case, these events and their consequences led to the establishment of the political primacy of the royal capital of Milansi, at the geographical centre of the country, and ultimately to the traditional division of the territory into two distinct polities, a division which persisted up to colonial times. Willis convincingly explains the wealth of symbolism entailed in the detailed stories, and he goes on to link this complex body of data with an interpretation of Fipa traditional history, in its smooth transition from legend and fable to what actually happened (or may have happened), i.e. the emergence of the two contiguous and opposed Fipa 'states'.

In Part II the economic and political organization of Fipa society, as this may be conceived to have been in or about 1880, is carefully reconstructed, on the basis mainly of oral evidence and of the author's own observations of contemporary institutions which may be presumed to have remained relatively unchanged. The choice of date is not arbitrary, for it was about that time that Ufipa achieved its maximum indigenous development, and soon after it the disruptive impact of European influ-

ence began to make itself felt. The value of Willis' multiplex frame of reference is especially evident here: explanations in terms of kinship and community relations of family and village, of ecological factors and of modes of production and exchange, as well as of agricultural methods and techniques (especially a distinctive form of compost mound cultivation), are all comprehensively and systematically deployed, to give us a rounded picture of a culture in its total context. Willis' 'structuralist' interests, though manifest throughout, do not preclude explanation in historical, ecological, technological and - dare one say it! - 'functionalist' terms. Dr. Willis' book is a shining example of the merits of a controlled eclecticism.

In Part III the author returns to his key myth, now regarded not as a representation, or a form, of traditional history, but rather as a pattern for the analysis of more recent political conditions and in particular of the state system as it was in the last pre-colonial years. This is followed by an Epilogue, bringing the story up to the final destruction of the old order under German colonial rule.

So summary a survey can do but scant justice to Willis' rich and varied saga. He writes well, and he is refreshingly free from the common anthropological tendency to suppose that there must be one 'right' explanation for any cultural phenomenon, so that alternative explanations are regarded as rivals and so probably wrong.

I think that this way of using contemporary ethnography to illuminate not a remote and unspecified past but a specific period in recent history, represents a relatively new approach to understanding. In the African context, the only comparable exercise that comes to mind is Vansina's *The Tio Kingdom of the Middle Congo 1880-1892* (1973, reviewed by the present reviewer in *Africa*, Vol. XLV, 1975). But Vansina could spend only six months in the field, as compared to Willis' two years, and Willis' ethnography is of quite exceptional quality by any standards. His mastery of the nuances of the Fipa language is evident. Judged only as an account of Fipa symbolic representations, his book, consistently with the aims of the series in which it is published, contributes in depth to our understanding of one African system of thought.

The 'marriage' (evidently a polygamous one) which Willis speaks about in his Preface has, then, been splendidly consummated. It may be hoped that it will stimulate others to similar unions, while there is still time.

The book is beautifully produced. There are a number of adequate if not very exciting photographs, and the maps, plans and diagrams (with the exception, perhaps unavoidable, of Diagram 4) are of admirable clarity.

JOHN BEATTIE

MARILYN STRATHERN, *Kinship at the Core: An Anthropology of Elmdon, a Village in North-west Essex in the Nineteen-sixties*, Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press 1981. xxxiv, 296 pp., Bibliography, Index, Illustrations. £18.50.

The extent of migration from urban to certain rural parts of England, suggested by early results of the 1981 census has surprised many social researchers. The English eastern lowlands is one of the areas most affected by these changes. This book results from one of the very few attempts to record changes in such a village. Audrey Richards' Foreword records the story of the research and is important for an understanding of the value of Marilyn Strathern's contribution to the anthropology of Britain.

In 1962 Audrey Richards took Cambridge students to a village in north-west Essex for an exercise in fieldwork techniques. Her attention was caught by residents distinguishing 'real' Elmdon people from other 'villagers' as well as from recent incomers like 'the lady from Cambridge' who had bought a weekend cottage there. Marilyn Strathern, one of the students on that first field trip, has used data amassed between 1962 and 1977, by students and research assistants, and by Audrey Richards in her twenty years of residence in Elmdon.

> Strathern reiterates a question posed by Richards in 1964:
> ...what made some Elmdoners identify with their own village; feel they have prescriptive rights to housing and other amenities; and that they, or some of them, are the 'real' Elmdon people whereas immigrants, of whatever class, stock-keepers or stockbrokers, are different and without the same rights and should not really be there.

The study starts by asking why incomers relate to the village, a name, a place, and a social space, by reference to 'real' Elmdon - four named families whom she calls the core. The book includes close examination of concepts of family, community and village. However, there is more emphasis on discovering the sociological reality of 'real' Elmdon behind these terms than, as her initial question would suggest, analysing through their contextual occurrence the language and processes of interaction between different residents in the village. This is precluded by her method: setting the analysis in an ethnographic present of 1964, the date of the most thorough house-to-house survey.

A typology of families is constructed around social categories in use in 1964. The core, the four families of 'real' Elmdon, were all raised in the village, and at the turn of the century men with these names were agricultural workers. Other 'Elmdoners' include old established families associated with trades and crafts (the old agricultural middle-class) and people who came to the village before 1914 but whose outside origins are recognised. 'Newcomers' are categorised as those arriving after the First World War and especially commuters, weekenders and retired people who came in the 1950s. The obvious difficulty of allocating individuals to families in this typology leads to an examination of how the notion of a bounded set of families associated with village identity arises when neither kinship and marriage systems nor employment patterns before the turn of the century were, according to records, so circumscribed. This is discussed in chapters on kinship, employment and housing.

Villagers are, they claim, 'all related' but 'real' Elmdon presents notions of boundaries. Through bilateral reckoning of descent both men and women can claim membership of several surname groups; personal kin

spreads across many families and with out-marriage, stretches over a number of villages. In practices, in assistance in domestic matters and invitations to ceremonies, only specific kin relations are activated: distant kin are shed. It is argued that conceptually parents as 'sides' through whom family traits and qualities are inherited 'closes' ramified kinship into family groups. Continuance of patronyms only as long as there are male holders further 'closes' the system. The core families' reckoning and shedding of kin is compared with the way a propertied and titled local family with a lineal ideology shed younger sons, collaterals and women in a 'narrow equation between "family" and "estate"'. It is suggested that family name has an external referent: in the case of the squirearchy it is a property; for the old agricultural middle class it is a skill or craft; for the core families it is 'real Elmdon'.

In the section on employment Strathern hypothesizes that 'real Elmdon' was in currency in the 19th century period of High Farming and the identification of core families with village name arises from claims on landowners and farmers for local jobs for local people in competition with agricultural workers from surrounding villages. It may be that with more data on how employment was contracted this thesis could be maintained. As it is, it is one of the instances when, as Strathern herself states, she makes an 'hypothetical extrapolation into history'.

The distinction 'villagers' (of which 'real Elmdon' is an emphatic form),in contradistinction to 'newcomers', is described as occurring in the 1960s over competition for housing. None of the core families own houses and since mortgage-raising immigrants buy not only the old agricultural middle class' houses but also the smaller, previously tied or rented 'working men's' houses, this is seen as an attack on a pool of accommodation to which core families claim access. Council housing allocation policies also disregard what is seen by Elmdon people as a right to Elmdon houses against other villagers.

As the book unfolds, 'real Elmdon' is shown to consist of four families whose high position in the agricultural hierarchy has disappeared with changes in the industry; they own no land, no houses, and have no other assets apart from their labour; and they do not play a visible leadership role in the village. Their 'property' is proprietorial claims to identification with the village, its jobs and its accommodation. Why then do they hold such 'power' in the village that immigrants relate to the village through them?

This is partially answered in a discussion of notions of community. Newcomers visualise the whole village as an actual or potential community with one section ('villagers') as its special representatives. Strathern describes how newcomers have taken over the paternalist landowner's provision of welfare and feel they have a responsibility to provide leadership. However, at the same time they see the village as a place where events should be organized by and for all residents. 'Villagers' on the other hand see community as constituting different interest groups, themselves having claims to village assets (jobs and houses) but proclaiming themselves powerless in relation to other interest groups. Their 'power' is to boycott newcomers' activities with which they disagree, a stance which disturbs the middle class notion of community.

It is hinted that villagers and newcomers have not only different ideas of community but different notions of what constitutes proper organization. Strathern seems to share newcomers' attitudes when she dismisses villagers' apparently effective running of sports teams and a Slate Club in the pub because 'this does not seem to amount to "leadership"'. It would seem that villagers' abilities to make arrangements and assess attitudes in a way invisible to newcomers could be another

source of 'power'. Why, for example, from the scant details given, have newcomers seemingly not sought (or been given room to seek) positions such as parish councillors which are described as fitting their ideas of community and their responsibilities to it? The processes by which newcomers are assimilated only recur in sections of different notions of property and class. The book concentrates on material and conceptual foundations of 'real Elmdon-ness' and how ideas of boundaries are created. It does not show why and how immigrants relate to this image. On reaching the end of the main text one is asking a reformulation of the original question: how do 'villagers' have such influence over newcomers when all they have to lose is their proprietorial claims?

It comes as a shock to find, in an Epilogue by Frances Oxford on the village in 1977, that 'real Elmdon' has no currency. There is fascinating ethnographic detail on how the shrunken number of 'villagers' (the only term now used) upset the 'committee culture' of dominant, leadership-prone newcomers, but between the two authors there is no sign of how the 'community' went through such a change.

It is most valuable to have ethnographic material made available on this sparsely studied subject and there are many stimulating ideas in the book. However, telescoping research carried out between 1962 and 1977 back into an ethnographic present of 1964 with an Epilogue on 1977, means that whereas concepts of 'village', 'community', 'newcomer', 'villager', and 'real Elmdon' can be studied in detail, processes of negotiating meaning of these terms over a period of social change are lost. Perhaps in this case the data was too variable, but if there is any place where anthropologists have the opportunity to study the processes of social change it is on our own (or Audrey Richards') doorstep.

Two other books have been published as a result of this work:
A. Richards and J. Robin, Some Elmdon Families, *privately published by Audrey Richards, 1975.*
J. Robin, Elmdon: Continuity and Change in a North-west Essex Village, 1861-1964, *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1980.*

SUSAN WRIGHT

SHIRLEY ARDENER (editor), *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, London: Croom Helm 1981. 239pp., Bibliography, Index. £6.95 (Paper).

The saying 'a woman's place is in the home' implies more about the cultural expectations of women than their desired physical location. This is not only because the word home has meanings other than that of house but also because place has connotations which go beyond physical location. In the phrase quoted above 'place' locates a woman within a particular domain of activity and in so doing positions her in relation to other members of society. The writers of *Women and Space* are aware that space like place has connotations other than the physical. As one contributor, Callaway, points out, space has at least three different analytical levels when used by anthropologists:

1. *physical space*, the lay-out and organisation of physical reality;
2. *social space*, such as the kinship structure and the division of

labour between the sexes and generations;

3. *metaphysical space*, which concerns the cosmology or world system and the moral and religious orders which present the logical ordering of the visible and invisible universe.

Women and Space provides case studies of how women use and occupy all these levels of space. It also demonstrates the interdependence of these levels; for example women's place in the social space of kinship may explain their place in physical space and the arrangement of objects in physical space may be better understood in relation to women's position in metaphysical space. As the subtitle *Ground Rules and Social Maps* suggests people create categories which organise space and these categories are reflexive for they become ground rules and social maps for action. To quote Shirley Ardener 'space defines people' as well as people defining space.

The book is the fifth in the Oxford Women's Series and derives from a programme of special lectures on women convened under the auspices of the Oxford University Women's Studies Committee in Michaelmas Term 1979. It draws upon the work of participants in the independently organised Oxford Women's Social Anthropology Seminar which also provided the material for *Perceiving Women* (S. Ardener, ed., London 1975) and *Defining Females* (S. Ardener, ed., London 1978). As with the other two books, contributors to *Women and Space* were invited to give papers which related their own particular ethnographic interests to a broader theme, in this case the subject of the title.

The result is the presentation of a stimulating diversity of material and approaches within one volume. It has eleven chapters - an Introduction and ten dealing with specific ethnographic contexts. The range of cultures covered is wide. It includes Andean women (Skar), urban Greece (Hirschon), rural Greece and the Mediterranean (Sciama), Shi'ite Iran (Khatib-Chahidi), Doshman Ziari (Wright), two Soviet minorities - the Georgians and the Tadjiks - (Dragadze), Yorubaland, Nigeria (Callaway) and a South African urban community (Ridd). Nearer home, Rodgers looks at the British House of Commons, Blair examines the world of actresses and Ardener comments on the place of women in the space of science fiction (which one could perhaps classify as either a specific kind of physical space and/or as a kind of metaphysical space).

Obviously there is no dearth of comparative material. However, this can create problems for at times the underlying themes seem to get lost amidst such variety. Different societies have different conceptions of space as Skar shows when she discusses how the concept of physical space in a Peruvian village is hard to distinguish from the concept of time. As *Defining Females* reminded us the term 'women' is itself a cultural category or 'sex class' and so the notion of womanhood also varies cross-culturally. The difference between the freedom of movement of a Yoruba woman, i.e. the way she can move in space, and that of the more enclosed woman in Shi-ite Iran is in part the result of different conceptions of the category woman as well as the different organisation of kinship space and physical space.

Not only do the perceptions of women and space differ cross-culturally but so do the analytical levels in which the contributors are most interested. Hirschon's detailed discussion of a district in urban Greece focuses on how the arrangement of objects and activities inside and outside the house can only be understood with reference to aspects of the organisation of social and metaphysical space. Blair, in contrast is more interested in what happens when the role of the actress requires her to cross certain boundaries by which metaphysical space is organised. An actress plays parts which cause her, to use Goffman's terms, to make 'back-stage' private behaviour 'front-stage' and so public. Her re-arrangement of these cate-

gories leads to a particular kind of position in social space different from that of other women.

Shirley Ardener's Introduction does much to pull together the richness of diversity but she indicates that the papers raise so many questions that she is torn in deciding how much time to allot to the consideration of the characteristics of the organisation of space; for example, the place of objects in space, the relation of time and space,and the many themes that do seem to recur in the relation between women and space in different cultures. She discusses briefly different kinds of space and the way in which physical space and our perceptions are 'mutually affecting spheres of reality'. She also acknowledges that the term 'social map' is a 'handy folk term' rather than having 'the status of a definitive scientific label' thus indicating the varying analytical interests of the writers.

Of the many insights she provides, which all serve to place the papers in the broader context of women's studies and anthropology in general, my personal choice of the most significant is her comment on the vulnerability of women because of the implications it has for new perspectives on relations between public and private spheres. She writes, 'The vulnerability to rape and other depravations is a basic asymmetry (from which perhaps many others may spring or upon which others are built), which has a bearing on how women use space.' In many cultures (although not all as the volume itself demonstrates) this asymmetry is built upon and restricts a woman's use of space as compared to a man's. In Skar's Andean valley the area outside the valley is more unsafe for women than it is for men. Khatib-Chahidi shows how household space is made safe for women by making arrangements for strangers - non-kin - who reside permanently within this space to become fictive kin and therefore safe. Thus the basic asymmetry of the vulnerability of women compared to men may lead to an organisation of space which involves women being kept in safe places.

The association of women with the domestic sphere and private places has often been interpreted in the light of the exclusion of women from the public sphere and the exploitation of her labour. However as Sciama and others point out this can be an ethnocentric assumption. There can be advantages in being kept in safe places and confinement in private places need not mean deprivation. The implications of women's association with the private sphere depend upon how this private sphere is articulated with other areas of life. Ridd's paper on South Africa demonstrates how important and prestigous control of the private sphere may be in a situation where men are forced to go out into a public arena where they have no prestige. Wright's Doshman Ziari women manage to use their domestic space to influence the more public political affairs of their menfolk. In contrast Rodgers shows how British concepts of domestic and public activities are seen as mutually exclusive and so can hamper any kind of involvement or influence that women may find it advantageous to have in the public sphere.

In a recent article La Fontaine has stressed that relations between men and women and between domestic and other forms of organisation must not always be interpreted as being in opposition to one another (*Man*, Vol. XVI n.s., 1981, pp.333-349). Rather there should be a realization of their interdependence and the different kinds of interdependence that exist between them. Discussions about the way in which the vulnerability of women is used to organise space and the different kinds of relations between domestic and public space in this volume provide further support for this argument. Dragadze's tantalisingly brief comments on the way revolution has affected the space of women in two Soviet minorities also

raises important issues about change in either sphere influencing the other.

For the reviewer as for the editor the book presents an embarrassment of riches in the number of questions it raises and which deserve comment. It is hoped that this book will stimulate further lines of more systematic enquiry, for it is a book which provides a better understanding of factors which influence the place of women in many cultures and an exporation of the ways in which anthropologists can use the concept of space to provide new perspectives on old problems.

CATHERINE THOMPSON

PAUL PARIN, FRITZ MORGENTHALER and GOLDY PARIN-MATTHEY, *Fear Thy Neighbor as Thyself: Psychoanalysis and Society among the Anyi of West Africa* (translated by Patricia Klamerth), Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1980. xv, 393 pp., Index, Bibliography, Photographs. £16.80.

Every two or three years the authors leave their private psychoanalytical practices in Zurich to conduct analytically oriented interviews amongst various West African communities. The fruits of their latest visit, four months among the Anyi of the Ivory Coast, are offered by the publishers as 'new reflections...on ethnopsychoanalysis as a fieldwork method'. A matrilineal society was deliberately chosen as a challenge to psychoanalysis because 'one of its fundamental concepts, oedipal conflict - allegedly or genuinely - is exclusively a product a patrilineal family organisation'. The book is typical of the newer psychoanalytic approaches to anthropology in that social institutions are no longer regarded solely as individual intrapsychic experiences writ large but as partly autonomous and themselves reflected onto the individual psyche.

A psychodynamic approach would appear well-suited to looking at a society in which the social consensus is disintegrating under the effects of colonialism and the new nation state, in which individuals must choose between a variety of values, roles and identities. Unfortunately there is little basic ethnography or history. It is not clear for instance until half-way through the book as to whether wives with their children live in the same households as their husbands. (Sometimes they do.) As the analysts point out: 'in contrast to other ethnographic techniques, our method made it unnecessary for us to ask questions'. They themselves rely on previous studies but quote them only when relevant to their interpretations. The interpretations themselves are presented not as conclusions but as descriptions; we are introduced to new characters as 'sadoanal' or engaged in fending off phallic breasts (for this is the psychoanalysis of object relations theory). The concentration on the psychoanalysis of a few informants means that much of the book is concerned with the personal reactions of the informants to the authors with little consideration of the effects on this of the colonial experience or current political questions. Additionally, as the interviews were conducted in French with the occasional help of an interpreter, when we learn that the Anyi call the Ashanti 'cousins' we are not at all certain

whether this is in French or Twi or of its significance.

To take as given the value of a psychoanalytic approach has implications for theory as well as method. To take one of the most plausible of the authors' suggestions, the daily enemas administered to children do seem to parallel the Anyi attitude to money - this is always being mislaid or lost or stolen. However we are not offered any intermediate steps or suggestions as to whether these two types of behaviour are linked by the community through concepts resembling 'catharsis'. The relation between public and private symbolism is unclear - whether there is a causal connection between the two, and if so what is the direction of the causality, or whether like Devereux we are to regard the two as just somehow running in parallel lines, artefacts of our mode of perception. The authors appear unaware of somewhat more sophisticated solutions of the problem such as those of Turner (causality running along separately in both psyche and society, with metaphorical associations between the two).

Even the central question - the extent of the individual's identification with his father in a matrilineal society - is in danger of being lost. However it seems that Anyi boys must identify with 'the male aggressive power of the king...because he represents and portrays the aggressive masculinity they need in order to counter the possessive claims of the maternal lineage.' The power of men in the matrilineage is regarded as essentially female in emotional quality for the individual - a familiar problem - but the authors do not even refer to the Jones/Malinowski debate or to such recent contributions to it as those of Ann Pearsons. On the whole individuals pass through the oedipal period by identification with their father. 'A hero is anyone who first manages to evade his "oedipal" conflicts and then succeeds in mastering it outside the maternal family, for anyone capable of this feat can return out of exile to the kin of his mother, like the nephew to the throne of his uncle, and can identify with the nurturing and authoritarian traits of both his father and mother.' Thus to some extent mother's brother stands for father in later adolescence. The problems this couches for the male are admirably illustrated by the psychoanalytic method. Not unreasonably the authors employ the idea of 'extension of sentiment' to explore individual socialisation but they seem completely unaware of the usual objections of using it to explain social facts. Explanation of society by individual psyche is inadequately resisted, and indeed is consistently implied although never clearly stated.

In short, nothing very new. Ethnopsychoanalysis should restrict itself to questions of socialisation or else develop a considerably more sophisticated methodology. This book is unlikely to appeal to anyone ignorant of the ethnography of the Akan or who doubts the validity of the analytic approach. Not, I suppose, a very large readership.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD

OTHER NOTES AND NOTICES

Conference on *Emerging Christianity in Modern Africa* at St. Catharine's, Cumberland Lodge, sponsored by St. Catharine's in association with the Royal Anthropological Institute, February 26-28, 1982.

A large number of anthropologists, missionaries, theologians, anthropologists/missionaries and others gathered at Windsor Great Park for this conference. (It was largely a meeting of old friends.) What 'emerged' was a heterogeneity of types of Christianity almost beyond classification. There was no consensus on what constituted Christianity in Africa - only agreement on its infinite variability. Some people were concerned about the use of 'folk Christianity'. What was it? Did it indicate a mainstream orthodoxy continuing to be located in the increasingly secular world of the West - with all local variations to be regarded as 'folk'? Could there be a shift, a compromise, a movement of the centre towards the obviously 'living' Christianity of Africa? Adrian Hastings began by pointing to the growing strength of Christianity and urged participants to consider that aspect of Christianity in Africa that involved political discourse. Thereafter, black theology, the situational theology of the South African conflict, raised its head briefly, then disappeared. The papers took off in other directions. They were varied, ranging from African Christologies(Christ as medicine-man) to the Generation of Wealth in Small Communities and the use of language in the early mission field.

It would have been interesting, given the link between anthropologists and missionaries to have some kind of anthropological overview. In the end, this was provided by a preview of André Singer's film (made for Granada TV) on Zande witchcraft. Suddenly (well, relatively so) after the theologies, Christologies, economic and social determinants etc. of the papers, people (strangely absent from the previous discussions) flickered onto the screen. In the film a Catholic priest was presented as living in peaceful (if at times weary and exasperated) coexistence with Zande witchcraft thriving as in Evans-Pritchard's day. The church scenes of the congregation that had earlier been seen consulting the oracles were perhaps the liveliest moments. The audience reaction to the film was surprisingly hostile; it was, after all, merely a competent anthropological film on a topic familiar to most of us. Could the reason for this reaction have lain in the absence of two things: for the anthropologists, the absence of some sort of explanatory framework to 'excuse' this behaviour to the outside world, and for the theologians a similar unease created by a situation lacking perceptible grace?

The Christianity of Africa still seemed, at the end of the conference, separated from that of the West and yet perhaps herein lay its strength. It was difficult to suppress a feeling of excitement that the constant reformulation, rethinking of old ideas and the breaking of boundaries might bring some revitalisation. But to whom? The conference might more aptly have been called 'Emerging Africa in Modern Christianity'.

PAT HOLDEN

THE SADDEST STORY

Their eyes met across the crowded space. It was a rite of passage, one of the big ones, and all the village was there. She didn't often see him, except on occasions like this. He lived in the north-east of the village, and she in the south-west (except on Big Days, of course, when they all changed round; this was what kept the tribe going, so her mother said, but it seemed a lot of bother to her).

They had never spoken, but she knew it would be a good match. She was his father's sister's daughter; he was her mother's brother's son. She had always heard that patrilateral cross-cousins made a perfect marriage - and they were the real thing (not like her sister and her husband; 'classificatory' was what they told everyone, but only under the most generous interpretation).

Next to him sat his brother. He was good-looking as well, and she sometimes wondered how it would have been if he were a little older (he had only missed her age-set by a matter of weeks). Soon, of course, they would have to avoid each other - but that was the price you had to pay for marital bliss.

She thought about the little gift he had given her earlier in the day. (Well, not exactly given *her* - he had actually given an axe-head to his cousin, who had given a mat to her cousin, who had given a spear to his cousin, who had given a woven basket to her - but somehow she felt that the spirit of the gift, *his* gift, still lingered. She wondered if he felt the same about her gift, which reached him by an equally circuitous route. There was nothing personal about these exchanges. Her mother always said they kept the tribe going. But she couldn't help feeling there was more to it than that.)

A sudden movement roused her from her daydreams. He was on his feet and, unbelievably, walking towards her. He looked so handsome with his

painted face, and wearing all his clothes back to front (the way they did on Big Days). Before she could prepare herself he was in front of her, and smiling gently. He let slip a brief remark in an undertone; in a daze, without thinking, she shouted back the standard response. He laughed and turned away. Her stomach turned to water and her heart thumped. What was going on? Had she got it all horribly wrong? In desperation she cast her mind back over the years, quickly sorting the phratries into wife-givers and wife-takers as she had done a hundred times before. Suddenly, with horror, she realised her mistake. She had mixed up the moieties. Her dreams came crashing down about her, as she realised the full implications of her error. She, and the man she loved, were condemned forever to a joking relationship.

DESMOND McNEILL

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