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OBITUARY NOTICE

ANDREW DUFF-COOPER

23 December 1947 - 4 August 1991

It is with deep sorrow that we have to announce the death of Andrew Duff-Cooper on Sunday, 4 August 1991. His death has come as a great loss to his many friends and colleagues.

Andrew will be remembered well by those who attended or visited the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As a postgraduate student at Merton College from 1976 to 1983, and for a little time afterwards until he moved to Japan, Andrew was very much a part of the Oxford scene (when he was not in the field).

JASO readers in particular will remember Andrew as a regular contributor to these pages. Since he first reviewed for us in 1983, six of his articles and eleven reviews have appeared in the Journal, as well as an essay in our fourth Occasional Paper. Indeed, our last issue, in press at the time of his death, contained an essay and a review by him.

We hope to be able to publish in future issues some essays and reviews that remained unpublished at the time of his death. In due course, we also hope to be able to publish a list of all his publications. An obituary by Rodney Needham will appear in the issue after next.

The Editors
JASO is pleased to announce the publication of the latest volume in its Occasional Papers series.

JASO OCCASIONAL PAPERS NO. 8

AN OLD STATE IN NEW SETTINGS: Studies in the Social Anthropology of China in Memory of Maurice Freedman
Edited by Hugh D. R. Baker and Stephan Feuchtwang

This collection brings together anthropological and historical studies of Chinese society specially written in memory of Maurice Freedman. The papers presented here are by former students, colleagues, and members of the seminar on China which he organised at All Souls College, Oxford, in the last two years of his life. The studies take up the principal themes of Freedman's work: marriage, family and lineage, and Chinese religion. As well as adding to the ethnography of Chinese society, they develop anthropological issues which he articulated on such matters as the territorial politics of lineage organisation, ethnicity, kinship in urban and colonial situations, and the nature of religion. Framing them are the address delivered by Raymond Firth at the memorial service for Freedman, and an obituary and bibliography of his works written and compiled by G. William Skinner.

Hugh D. R. Baker is Professor of Chinese at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Stephan Feuchtwang heads the China Research Unit in the Department of Social Studies at City University, London.

Contributors:
Göran Aijmer, Hugh D. R. Baker, Mark Elvin, Stephan Feuchtwang, Raymond Firth, James W. Hayes, Christine Inglis, Diana Martin, Michael Palmer, G. William Skinner, Soo Ming-wo, and James L. Watson.

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DISORIENTATIONS: PART THREE

P. A. LIENHARDT

(Edited with an introduction by Ahmed Al-Shahi)

Introduction

The main theme of this third part of *Disorientations* centres on a discussion of Islam and education, particularly in Failaka Island off the coast of Kuwait where Peter Lienhardt began his fieldwork. Peter here makes two observations about Islam. First, he discusses the variance between Islam in accordance with the ‘Book’ and what exists in reality in behaviour, practices and rationale. Secondly, he interprets the role of comparative religion in the context of the observer’s view of religious beliefs and practices, and that of the people he observed. Since Peter’s fieldwork, tension has developed over the role of Islam in the political sphere—a situation which can be found in other Arab and Muslim countries. The majority of Kuwaiti nationals are orthodox Sunnis, a brand of Islam also dominant in other Gulf states and in Saudi Arabia. At the same time, Kuwaitis are tolerant of the

This third part of ‘Disorientations’ follows directly from ‘Disorientations: Part Two’, which appeared in the last issue of *JASO* (Vol. XXI, no. 3, pp. 251-67) and to which readers are referred for further information concerning the background to the present publication. It is introduced here by Ahmed Al-Shahi, who has edited the typescript for publication and prepared the footnotes. Both ‘Disorientations: Part Three’ and Ahmed Al-Shahi’s introduction were prepared before Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait on 2nd August 1990. The fourth and final part of ‘Disorientations’ will appear in a future issue of *JASO* with a further introduction by Ahmed Al-Shahi elaborating on its content and discussing some of the main themes of ‘Disorientations’ as a whole in relation to recent events in Kuwait.
beliefs and observances of other Muslims living in Kuwait who are not Sunnis. This is particularly the case with some immigrants who adhere to Shi’ism, a difference that could cause political difficulties—such as happened during the war between Iran and Iraq, when the Shi’a minority was sympathetic to Iran whereas the orthodox Sunnis supported Iraq. In 1989, a number of bombings were carried out by Kuwaiti Shi’ites. The ceasefire between Iran and Iraq in 1988 was received with relief in Kuwait as well as in the other Gulf states. Religious diversity is recognized by the State, which has succeeded hitherto in striking a balance between the demands of this diversity and the continuity of the ruling family’s authority in the country. Based on his observations of nearly forty years ago, Peter raises many issues in his analysis that are evident in the present-day circumstances of Kuwait. This reflects his deep understanding of the fundamental principles that have influenced the thinking and behaviour of the communities of the Gulf.

AHMED AL-SHAHII

I was to see more of these offices on my return visits. For the moment, having borrowed a large tent with a great weight of metal posts and pegs from the oil company, it was time for me to hire a fishing launch and cross the seventeen miles of sea that divided the commotion of Kuwait from the quiet village life of Faiyaka—to exchange the horns of unpredictable cars for the brayings of unmanageable donkeys.

How absurd it seemed, after being denied access to the tents of the Bedouin at Jahra, to find oneself carrying an oil company tent across the sea to erect in a fishing village. As a home, the tent turned out to be a white elephant, though its weight was real enough. Had it not been for all the metal parts, it would have been unnecessary to hire a launch. The normal thing to do was to pay the conventional single fare as a passenger, supplementing it with as much again, or any sum that seemed appropriate, on the terms of noblesse oblige—in comparison with the fishermen one was rich. As it was, after asking my permission because, after all, a contract was involved in hiring the whole launch, the captain took other passengers aboard. The best place to sit was the stern, the most stable position and away from the splash of the waves, so long as the weather stayed calm.

Sandals were not worn aboard the launch: everyone carried his footwear in his hand across the gangplank and put it down beside him on the deck. I was pressed to keep my shoes on, an obvious gesture of politeness to which the proper response seemed to be to insist on conforming to the custom. The same thing had happened on the one or two occasions when people had invited me into their houses in Kuwait. The two situations seemed so obviously similar that I took the

1. Jahra is a small town in northern Kuwait that serves as a customs and immigration centre.
symbolic parallel for granted: boarding a boat was like entering a house. But it was not quite so simple. Several months later, I learned that the deck was the ‘mosque’ of those sailing in a boat; it was the place where they prayed. As we crossed to the island, the summons to prayer was called and the sailors and passengers performed the prayer of mid-afternoon on the deck of the launch, using their head-cloths as prayer mats.2

The fishing launches of Failaka, of which this boat was one, were locally built craft equipped with diesel engines and lateen sails. They supplied fish for the Kuwait market, and this was why transport between Kuwait and the island was fairly regular. The launches were highly seaworthy, and had to be so because violent storms blew up in the Gulf in no time. In such storms, no one was so foolhardy as to put freshly to sea. These were times when fishing ceased and Failaka was cut off from Kuwait for days on end. That day, the sea was calm. One could, however, observe a distinct freshening of the weather once we had left the protection of the Bay of Kuwait. The sheltered anchorage of the bay provided an explanation of why old Kuwait had grown up and flourished in a barren land where even the drinking water was scarce and exceptionally brackish.

We landed at the village of Failaka towards sunset. The launch was pulled up on the beach and the sailors deposited my belongings above the tide-line. Except for the tent, there was not much: a couple of suitcases, two or three cardboard boxes, and a tin trunk and a packing-case that had arrived from England by sea. The packing-case contained two camp-chairs, a camp-table, a camp-bed, a pressure-lamp and a mosquito-net. In the cardboard boxes were a primus stove and some pots and pans I had bought in Kuwait. It was taken for granted that the luggage could be left unattended, and I went to see the governor. The metal parts of the tent were, in fact, to stay on the beach until I returned the tent to the oil company.

The room in which the governor conducted his business was completely old-fashioned—no administrative desk, no chairs, but low, wide cushions to sit on against the walls, and a floor covering of rugs. It was lit with a pressure-lamp. A radio was broadcasting an intoned recitation of the Koran—presumably from Iraq or Cairo, since Kuwait then had no radio station of its own. The governor smoked his clay bubble-bubble pipe and offered it round. Tea was served, followed by smoking incense. The incense lay on the top of glowing charcoal in a little clay pot, and one was supposed to inhale a little of the smoke and then pass the pot under one's beard, if one had a beard.

2. There follows a note to remind Peter to take up the symbolism: 'house is associated with women. Women are not associated with boats, except as occasional passengers. Only other association is inauspicious—the barren woman becomes fertile if she steps over the keel of a boat under construction at the price of the life of a sailor—usually the captain.' He continues, 'No one would even have allowed me to enter a mosque (which they did not like me to do anyway) with my shoes on. Palestinian Muslims were told to keep their shoes on. It was 'modern' to keep one's shoes on in a house.'
This was the governor's public room, his diwāniya. In the context of administration, the word itself was interesting. It was a version, current in Kuwait and southern Iraq, of the Arabic word diwān, existing also in Turkish and Persian as divān. Hence the English word 'divan'—the sofa made by putting a frame under the sort of sitting-cushions which furnished the governor's room. But the word was also connected with a verb meaning 'to write down'—hence diwān and divān as words for a book of poetry, also familiar in English. Hence also, even in my Arabic pocket dictionary, the further meanings of diwān: 'an office', 'a court of justice'. The Diwāniya of the Governor of Failaka was, indeed, his office and his court of justice, as well as his public sitting-room.

The governor had two muscular ex-slaves as his attendants, men strong enough to enforce discipline. Failaka had no police or uniformed men of any kind. There were also present three Palestinian schoolmasters, the staff of the village school, who turned out to be the only people on the island who knew English. They were obviously there to interpret if necessary. By that time, I could manage more Arabic than the governor had expected, and we never had an interpreter again, but it was useful on that occasion to have their help because there were practical details to discuss. The headmaster explained that if I would like a house there was one I could rent at 70 rupees (£50) a month, and there was also a young man who had once been an assistant cook on a dhow who would be ready to work for me as a servant at a wage of 120 rupees a month. The headmaster added that the young man was married and would prefer to sleep at home, and so would I make this concession? The man was brought in for me to meet, and everything was settled. The governor lent me a metal bed, mattress and some matting for the floor, and I moved into the house.

I lived in Failaka village for three months of the winter and spring of 1954 and paid a further long visit in the summer of the following year. It was a village of about 3000 people, the only village on the island whose name it shared. There is probably no such thing as a 'simple' village, but at least Failaka was an easier place to get to know than Kuwait. For me, in three months, diverse experiences began to assume some vague consistency, a consistency sensed sooner than grasped intellectually. Various tentative ideas on all sorts of matters had to be cultivated and then, with regret, weeded out. A few began to grow healthily.

The house I had rented was a typical local house except for the size of the plot, which included a little date garden. From the outside, it consisted simply of a rectangular enclosure with walls high enough to prevent passers-by from seeing in. There were no windows in these walls; the whole house was oriented inwards. Inside, there were two single-storey rooms built against one outside wall, and a further, adjoining room built against another. The rest of the enclosure was a yard, into which the door of the house opened directly, with a few palms planted at the far end. The rooms did not intercommunicate; each had its separate door opening into the yard. The windows, looking out on the yard, had wooden shutters, but no glass. The walls of the house were of sun-dried mud brick, plastered over with
mud and straw. The roof beams were mangrove poles, which supported stones
topped with a thick layer of dried mud to make a waterproof flat roof.

The reason why houses were surrounded by high walls and had no windows
on the street was to preserve the privacy of the women. Modesty and propriety
required women to avoid social contact with men to whom they were not closely
related. A woman spent most of her time in her own house. When she went out
into the street, she carried her seclusion with her: the walls of the house were
replaced by a long black veil. The only work women did outside the house was
to fetch water and to sweep the pathways around the house and keep them looking
respectable. Women went out to the well together, chaperoning one another. They
would also go out together to visit other women, usually relations, and sometimes
to visit the graveyard and greet the family dead. Women prayed at home, not in
the mosque.

The ground area of the house I had rented would have allowed for additional
rooms to be built on so as to house a large family. The happiest domestic
situation, people said, was to have the family all living together. Sons would bring
their wives to live in their parents' house and bring up their children there. The
father of the family would be master, making sure that the family lived religiously
and honourably, and keeping control of expenditure. He had to be equitable,
arranging that if one woman got a new dress the others got new dresses too, and
not allowing any child to be specially favoured as against the rest. The mother
would be mistress of the house, in charge of the cooking and domestic manage-
ment, distributing the household tasks among the women and girls. Under the
moral influence and affectionate discipline of the master and mistress of the house,
the family would share its expenses and they would all look after one another.

My servant belonged to just such a happy family. Since I was providing part
of their income, they seemed to treat me as a benefactor. In spite of purdah, I was
able occasionally to talk to my servant's mother and even to meet his wife, whom
the parents treated affectionately. At the end of my stay on the island, when
everything was packed up to go on the launch, a storm blew up and lasted for two
days. The father invited me to stay in their house, as if I were a member of the
family, and there I learnt how family days began. Before dawn, the father came
round calling, 'Get up and pray.' There were no greetings until we had washed
our faces. Then came the greetings, 'Peace be upon you', 'And upon you be
peace', 'Good morning.' My friends then performed the full ablutions (the ritual
washing of their hands and forearms, feet and ankles, and faces) and individually
prayed the dawn prayer, which ends, as do all the prayers, with the greeting of
peace to the two guardian angels who constantly stand behind each person's
shoulders.

The sight of a cane tucked away in a corner reminded me of a saying of the
Prophet Muhammad familiar to everyone. He advised fathers to teach and exhort
their children to pray and, if they were still dilatory, to chastise them. It seemed
unlikely that the cane had been much, if ever, used in that house. They were
sensible, dutiful, good-natured people between whom I never saw the slightest sign
of domestic friction. The young man was his parents' only child and the apple of their eye. He was the survivor of three sons, the other two having died in infancy. The first of the infant sons had been given the name of his dead grandfather, in order to commemorate him. When he died and another son was born, he too was given the same name, now commemorating both the grandfather and his dead brother. The second baby died and a third son was born. He again was given the same name, but the parents had now began to wonder whether there was something inauspicious in the name as it stood. They consulted a religious teacher who wrote down a number of names on scraps of paper and, with a prayer, dropped them over the baby. One of them landed on the baby's body, a name that means 'manumitted'—not in this case from slavery, but from evils. He survived, and this was the name he was usually known by, though when he grew up he rather preferred to be known by his grandfather's name.

Recreation recommended parents to get their children married young so as to keep them out of temptation. When he was about sixteen (people were never sure of their ages) his parents had found him a very pretty fourteen-year-old girl to marry. Such a young couple could not be expected to be mature enough to manage a household independently. The idea that they should live with the husband's parents made practical sense. One could also appreciate how, had there been more sons in the house, the children of the succeeding generation would be brought up in the habit of obeying their paternal uncles as well as their fathers, and so follow the traditional lines of agnatic authority. Their maternal uncles, affectionate and influential as they might be, could not demand obedience. They would be living elsewhere, authoritative and responsible in their own households.

So far, the young couple had no children—indeed, in early stages, such young marriages often have more to do with companionship and the growth of intimacy than with procreation. The family did, however, have one extra member, an orphan nephew of the father's who had come from abroad. He worked with the father as a builder. Thus, when work was available, there were three wage-earners to produce the family income in a family of five—some insurance, among poor people, against accident, sickness, or the days of unemployment.

Not all families were so happy. An old widower invited me home. I knew him because has son-in-law supplied me with water—a lowly and not very manly job. As we sat talking in the main room, my host began by apologizing: 'Please excuse this bedouin hovel of a home,' he said, 'it is all falling down.' The old man did not, however, lack patronage. He prided himself on the regard shown him by the shaikhs, for whom he had worked. He hunted under the bed and brought out a little raffia fan on a stick bearing the Arabic greeting, 'Prosper every day.' It was a keepsake the ruler had given him after a visit abroad. In a while we heard tea glasses being discreetly rattled outside the doorway by a woman, presumably his daughter, who was standing there almost completely out of sight and fully veiled. Having brought in the tea tray, the host hunted under the bed again for a tin of cake. The son-in-law joined us and did the pouring, but as a
junior, though perhaps thirty-five, he only spoke when spoken to. The household was strict.

Like his house, the old man was getting frail. His cloak of dignity had worn threadbare: unhappiness showed through, and with it the lack of forbearance whereby some of his trouble might have been avoided. He discussed ‘life’ and ‘the world’ philosophically, but when he addressed his son-in-law a petulant tone intruded. The old man talked about his son, who was not present. He had got him a wife, but she was no good in the house. The father had been dissatisfied, and the son had divorced her. He had got him another wife, and the same thing had happened again—it was difficult nowadays to find a good wife. He had found him a third wife, this time a very young girl whom he had expected to be manageable. She was the worst of the lot. He spoke of her in a calm, measured voice, but with a vocabulary quite unrelenting. She had not only been lazy and disobedient, but feckless into the bargain. He had had a terrible time with her. The last straw was when she forgot to turn off the tap of the paraffin tank and he found the paraffin all trickling away in the yard. ‘What a waste! How could she be so feckless unless she was trying to be annoying?’ When he criticized her, she just left. He wouldn’t have minded, by that time, only his son left with her. They now lived in Kuwait and didn’t even visit him. ‘The world is like that,’ he reflected, ‘everything passes away.’

Whatever I saw of a rural tragedy here, reminiscent of some of the stories in Crabbe’s poems, it was not my place to do more than hint at a tragic flaw. I wondered what the governor made of it all, and asked him. The governor expressed his opinion with inflexible Kuwaiti common sense—of course he was an old man. Being old, he ought to be wise enough to understand what life is like. A man ought to look after his daughter-in-law, and a son ought to stand up for his wife—if need be, even against his father. Otherwise, this sort of thing would happen: divorces would go on for a while, but sooner or later a girl would turn up who was strong enough to get her own way and make her husband leave home. No doubt it was a sad situation, but whose fault was it?

As the low rent of my house suggested, little of Kuwait’s prosperity had so far rubbed off on Failaka. There were no public works: the only roads and paths were those worn by people’s feet. Private house construction and repairs only provided employment for four or five builders, and that, spasmodically. Apart from the Palestinian schoolteachers, Failaka had no modern services, whether benevolent or intrusive—no clinic or doctor, no police or customs officers. The villagers fetched their own water from the wells. They cooked on primus stoves and lit their houses with hurricane- or pressure-lamps. At night, a simple lamp raised on a mast guided the fishing boats to shore, while one could see in the sky the diffused glow of oil gas being burnt off on the distant mainland.

I heard no suggestion that Failaka was being neglected by the government. Things were better than they had been. Those who had gone on raids on behalf of the great Shaikh Mubarak at the turn of the century had soon realized that his principle for dividing the spoils of battle was very simple: ‘The great is for the
great, the middling is for the great, the small is for the great, and what is left over is for you.' The present ruler was generous and enlightened: Failaka's turn would come. People in Failaka certainly took it for granted that they had a right to benefit from the wealth Kuwait's oil produced, but the modern idea of 'the people' demanding their rightful share in the division of the national wealth was not familiar among the islanders—they were not 'the people' (al-sha'b) but 'the people of Failaka' (ahl Failaka—a totally different expression). Even for the future, no one seemed to have the unrealistic dream of a life of ease supported on oil royalties. What people hoped for was well-paid work. To demonstrate that he was not illiterate like most (he was certainly more naïve), a fisherman laboriously scrawled down the question, 'Is there oil on Failaka?' Why else should an Englishman have come there, and might he not tell a literate man the secret he had concealed from the others? If Failaka turned out to have oil too, then the people would have work at home without having to cross to Kuwait.

Kuwait had first come into being, on its inhospitable site, in the eighteenth century. Failaka could have been a practicable place for habitation ever since people had boats. In a predominantly barren area, it had a good water supply, plenty of fishing, and the security of being an island. The only archaeological evidence of earlier habitation then known was a Greek inscription found early in the century. There were, however, near the village, two long, regular mounds that looked, even to my inexperienced eye, like tumuli that would interest an archaeologist, and there was also a shrine a few hundred yards along the sea-shore. The twin mounds were called Sa'ad and Sa'id, and the shrine was called Al-Khidr. Al-Khidr, 'The Green One', appears in the Koran as a holy personage, more angelic than human, who instructed the prophet Moses in the ways of divine providence. Sa'ad and Sa'id were said locally to be the graves of holy men, true Muslims from the early days of the world, when human beings were of vast size.

It was disappointing for an anthropologist, looking for something to discover, to find no significant cult connected with these places, nothing which adapted the transcendent religion to the particularities of local life. There was one old woman nicknamed 'Mother Khidr' who regularly visited the shrine and the old graveyard nearby, and though the roof had been broken down there were signs that a little incense had been burnt at the shrine subsequently. But that was all. As for the mounds, all that was said was that there were many holy men buried in Failaka, and that was why the island had no snakes. One or two people said the shrine of the Green One had been broken down because it fell under suspicion of being a place for immoral assignations when a youth and a woman were seen there together at night, though, in fact, it turned out to have been just a woman taking her sick son there in the hope of a cure. The governor said this was nonsense. Some people from the Iranian coast had been visiting the shrine, simple-minded, superstitious people as they were, but such behaviour ultimately amounted to idolatry and could not be allowed to go on. He had discussed the problem with one of the shaikhs, and they had simply taken some men and broken down the
shrine. If anyone (except, perhaps, Mother Khidr, whom I could not talk to because she was a woman) had any strong objections, I never heard of it.

There was one detail in which quite a number of the local people could be thought to disregard strict Islamic orthodoxy, though they preferred not to think so themselves. This was zār, the visitation of spirits. I had heard a little about zār from the islanders, but first came across it in practice when a young man I knew well was talking to another about the latter’s personal problems, which seemed to be causing him some psychological strain. Judging by what I overheard of the conversation, carried on in low voices at the far end of my kitchen, the main speaker was becoming increasingly tactless, and the other young man was beginning to show signs of acute mental distress, to a point when I began to think I ought to intervene. At that moment, the distressed man, who was sitting on the floor, fainted and fell over. I started to interfere, but the man responsible told me not to be alarmed, everything was all right. In a minute or two the other one came round and rubbed his eyes, and my friend greeted him, ‘Peace be upon you.’ He went away, a little dazed but much calmer.

My friend explained that he himself was one of the practitioners of zār on the island. According to Islamic teaching, there are many spirits in the world. spirits originally created by God from fire. Some are Muslims, and are usually benevolent. Others are malevolent and dangerous, but it is with God alone that human beings should take refuge against them. According to zār beliefs, spirits ‘visit’ human beings and get into their heads. They cause trouble and have to be placated. Zār practitioners in Faiālaka would give the spirit incense to smell through the nose of the sufferer, who had gone into a state of trance after the lengthy singing, to the accompaniment of tambourines, of Islamic songs such as:

Repentance Lord, repentance Lord,  
For my fault and sin,  
Lord God, I repent.  
The drinker of [forbidden] wine,  
Got drunk but sobered up.  
Lord God, I repent.  
Now we are men of God.

Speaking with the sufferer’s tongue, the spirit would ask for things—a ring for the sufferer to wear, sometimes the sacrifice of an animal, whose blood the spirit would drink through the sufferer’s mouth. The drinking of blood is, of course, absolutely forbidden to Muslims, but it was not the Muslim sufferer but the spirit visitor who was supposed to be drinking it. In trying to work out the logical status of the act of drinking blood, I asked: ‘Could you give the spirit the blood of a donkey?’, a silly question which got the answer it deserved: ‘Would you drink the blood of a donkey?’ As far as I could discover, people mainly had recourse to zār in cases which suggested emotional and psychological disturbance, though one case was of terminal cancer and another was of a stroke. Far from being substitute or alternative religion, zār in Faiālaka, for those who had anything to do with it,
was more like superstitious folk medicine. The more literate and businesslike local people, such as the governor, certainly spoke of it as a superstition, *khurāfa*, and hence regrettable—but harmless as compared, for example, with idolatry. Spirit healers were not setting up equals with God. It would have been unthinkable to permit large public displays of spirit healing, such as I witnessed in the Afro-Arab circumstances of Zanzibar a few years later, but as long as it was practised discreetly in the home it was people’s private business and no one interfered. Later, in another part of the Gulf, I found it was possible even for the sceptics to turn to spirit healing in circumstances of medical desperation when all else failed, practising a sort of mad empiricism as we all might.

The same sort of people were sceptically tolerant of the common practice of protecting kitchen gardens from the evil eye by hanging a few donkey skulls on the fence. They shared the opinion of the Persian poet Fariduddin ‘Attar who wrote, ‘You must have been born with ass’s brains to hang up this ass’s skull. This ass, when living, could not ward off the stick. How can it ward off the evil eye, when dead?’ In the anthropology of that time, the word ‘superstition’ was considered outdated, even obscurantist, and on the whole for good reason, but the word in Arabic had exactly the same meaning, and its use was part of the ethnography of the Gulf. It distinguished what one might call ‘notions’ from ‘beliefs’, just as in England it distinguishes the notion that it is dangerous to walk under a ladder from beliefs of a theological kind. It was thus that idolatry fell into a different category. In Islamic terms, many regarded such superstitious behaviour, whether of spirit healing or hanging up donkeys’ skulls as, strictly speaking, ‘disapproved’ (*makrūh*), but idolatry was ‘forbidden’ (*ḥarām*) and indeed as forbidden as anything could be.

Religion in Failaka did not deviate from the ‘straight path’ in which people ask to be led every day as they repeat the opening prayer of the Koran. To worship God and obey Him were the essential duties of mankind. The One God was creator of all, and except for His Word, the Koran, everything else was created. God had sent many prophets to mankind from Adam onwards, including Jesus and those whom Christians regard as prophets of the Old Testament. They were Muslims. Their prophetic messages, as transmitted in the Christian and Jewish scriptures, have been corrupted by priests and rabbis. The final and greatest of the prophets was Muhammad, to whom the Koran was revealed and who was able to interpret God’s will.

There had been no old Christian or Jewish minorities in Kuwait or the other shaikhdoms of the Gulf, as there were in so many Middle Eastern countries, and so people in Failaka were only familiar with these religions as mentioned in Islamic teaching. Some were mildly inquisitive about whether Christians prayed or fasted. My explanations convinced them to the contrary since prayer, *al-salāh*, required prostrations (otherwise it was only ‘intercession’, *du’a*), and a fast in which people ate and drank was no fast. One thing that did impress several people, indeed moved them, was the wording of the Christian marriage service—‘for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health...till
death do us part'. The Prophet said that, of all the things that Islam allowed, divorce was the most disapproved. Christians and Jews are to be tolerated in Islam, and people in Failaka were tolerant, though they did sometimes suggest that I was being unreasonable in not obeying God to the point of becoming a Muslim myself. One homely remark indicated the construction placed on obedience, though it might have surprised the more theologically minded: 'How can you be a Christian? How can you claim that you can obey God without obeying the Prophet Muhammad? It is like saying you obey your father and don't obey your (paternal) uncle.'

One elderly man held religious instruction for adults every morning. He encouraged me to attend, perhaps in the hope that if God decreed that I should become a Muslim he would be the instrument of my conversion. His efforts at proselytism, if such they were, were tactful and indirect. I simply noticed how frequently he reverted to Islamic teachings about Jesus: after Muhammad, the greatest of the Islamic prophets; the Word proceeding from God, but still created by God; whom God saved from crucifixion by substituting a likeness of him; and who shall return at the end of the world and kill Al-Dajjal, 'the Imposter' (who in Christianity is called Antichrist). These doctrines are all derived directly from the Koran. And, as the teacher frequently mentioned, the Koran says of Christians that of all men they are 'the most inclinable to entertain friendship for the Muslims'. The teacher was too kindly to mention in my presence what was said by the great classical commentator Al-Baidawi (I quote from the notes of George Sale to his own translation of the Koran, which I had taken with me):

They add that Jesus will arrive at Jerusalem at the time of the morning prayer, that he shall perform his devotions after the Mohammedan institution, and officiate instead of the Imam, who shall give place to him; that he will break down the cross, and destroy the churches of the Christians, of whom he will make a general slaughter, excepting only such as shall profess Islam, &c.

Indeed, in the whole period I spent in the Gulf, no one whatsoever mentioned to me the ultimate destiny of Christians who failed to convert. More than once, the teacher quoted from the Koran the miraculous speech of the infant Jesus from the cradle, defending the Virgin Mary from the accusations of the people. Here in his very own words, unchanged by human transmission, was the irrefutable proof of what Jesus proclaimed himself to be:

Verily I am the servant of God; he hath given me the book of the gospel, and hath appointed me a prophet. And he hath made me blessed, wheresoever I shall be; and hath commanded me to observe prayer, and to give alms so long as I shall live; and he hath made me dutiful towards my mother, and hath not made me proud, or unhappy. And peace be upon me the day whereon I was born, and the day whereon I shall die, and the day whereon I shall be raised to life.
Far from living off his religion, the teacher spent his own money on it. About twenty men would usually attend his instruction; and towards the end of the proceedings the teacher provided us all with a simple breakfast at his own expense—an act of charity as much as hospitality. His method of teaching was to read from a classical book, adding his own commentary. He never wandered off into pedantic niceties. His main concern obviously was that people should lead good lives, and his commentary was mostly taken up with the exposition and reiteration of the duties of Muslims. His audience was illiterate and he was entirely patient with the simplest of questions, as when one man, after the teacher had spoken at some length about the anšar (‘helpers’ of the Prophet) asked whether they were Muslims, a question not all that different from asking whether the apostles were Christians. This was not a school: he was not teaching about Islam as a matter of information but teaching Islam as a religion.

During the breakfast, when conversation was general, people sometimes raised problems of their own. One day, two brothers who were having a family quarrel brought the matter up at a meeting. In such a situation, they ought first to have turned for guidance to the older generation of their family, for family matters were very private. But the brothers were middle-aged men and no one from the older generation survived. In a more impersonal fashion, the teacher took their place. He discussed the principles of behaviour and justice raised by the quarrel, quoting what God had prescribed and the Prophet had said in his reported sayings, and gave a religious adjudication. Here, in ‘commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong’, he was performing one of the religious duties incumbent on all Muslims. He was also, in so far as he was able, making peace, a further religious act. Moreover, that the peace should be between brothers had an intense social relevance. Of the many stories that were read out to us, the one which emotionally moved the audience was that of Joseph. When we reached the description of how Joseph was reunited with his father and forgave his brothers for betraying him and casting him into the well, two or three old fishermen were reduced to tears.

The thing that struck me most in these meetings was the idea of the prophet Muhammad as the model of all human virtue, the most perfect of all men, the Chosen One whose face was clothed in the light of the Throne of God. At school, in so far as I had heard or read—say in Walter Scott’s The Talisman—of the Muslims of the past, it had been in the context of war, and in that context the Muslims were not ‘us’ and their victories were not ‘ours’. The time was far ahead when a high proportion of children in a classroom in Yorkshire might be of Muslim Pakistani origin. Since the World War that was going on at the time was that of 1939 and not 1914, we were no schoolboy jingoists. Nevertheless, as the victory of Wellington over Napoleon had distinctly been ‘our’ victory—a small part of our identity—so the Battle of Tours\(^3\) had been more ‘our’ victory than

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3. Peter’s note to this reads: ‘The victory of Charles Martel in AD 732 against Muslims advancing from Spain, but for which, Gibbon imagined, Islam would have been taught in the universities of Paris and Oxford.’
otherwise. At Cambridge, where one learnt about the early Islamic conquests at the same time as learning about the Islamic religion, militant Islam had still been in the forefront of the mind. Some recent events had matched it. In one of those arguments at Cambridge that so often passed for conversation, one Pakistani nationalist had said: 'I don't pray, I don't fast, I drink alcohol, but when I was fighting the Indians in Kashmir, I knew that if I was killed I should go straight to heaven.' In Islam, God has many names, including 'the Conqueror', but the names that appear in the opening prayer of the Koran and are constantly repeated in everyday life are 'the Merciful, the Compassionate'. Here in Failaka, consonant with the supreme mercy of God, the mercifulness of the Prophet was a dominant religious concept.

During the religious instructions, the teacher was reading from a book entitled *Narratives of the Prophets*, an old, popular account of the prophets of Islam before Muhammad. I had read similar books in Cambridge, and so in manner and content it was no surprise. Nevertheless, hearing it read out as the only outsider in a group of believers was a markedly different experience. It formed a different perspective of the imagination. For example, in Cambridge, when I read attacks upon idolatry, the vicariousness of comparative religion had dominated the perspective—it was something taken for granted in the community in which I lived. In the community of Failaka, comparative religion was unheard of, whereas idolatry was real sin, the setting up of equals with God. Through the mouths of idols, though no one had ever seen an idol, the devil and evil spirits spoke to lead men astray. Maintained as a private idea, and one that could not be discussed, comparative religion could not be forgotten, but it became a more distant part of the landscape. Only thus could vicariousness be included in a context that itself opposed it.

*Narrative of the Prophets* included numerous quotations from the Koran, but the bulk of the book was made up of apocryphal detail. The following is a representative passage taken from the story of Jacob and Joseph after Joseph has been made away with by his brothers:

And it is said that the angel of Death visited Jacob, and when Jacob saw him the angel said: 'Peace be upon you, O you who see the with anger.' And Jacob's skin crawled and he trembled with fear as he returned the greeting. Then he said to him, 'Who are you, and who has let you into this house, when I have locked myself in so that no one can disturb me while I complain to God of my grief?' And he replied, 'O prophet of God, I am he who makes orphans and widowers and he who separates companions.' And Jacob said, 'You, then, are the Angel of Death.' He replied, 'I am he.' And Jacob said, 'O Angel of Death, I conjure you to tell me, when a man is eaten by beasts of prey, do you seize his soul?' He replied, 'I do.' And he asked him, 'Do you seize souls all together or separately, one by one?' He replied, 'I seize them one by one.' And Jacob asked him, 'And is one of the souls that has passed before you the soul of Joseph?' He replied, 'No.' Then Jacob asked him, 'Do you come to visit me or to call me?' He replied, 'O prophet of God, I have come only to greet you in peace, since God,
may He be exalted, will not cause you to die until he has brought you and Joseph together.’

This narrative read as an account of what actually happened. Its immediacy was enormously enhanced when read out among men every one of whom expected his own life to end when the Angel of Death, a personal presence, came to demand his soul; and who expected shortly afterwards to be questioned about his faith by two more angels, both of whose names mean ‘Abominable’, as he lay in the grave, with his shroud open over his ear. It was the atmosphere of literal belief that made the difference. When one knew and internally accepted the people like oneself, one was at least half way to accepting their imagination. Such is the effect of social assimilation.

Without ostensibly raising them, the book also answered many questions of how and why, such as might occur to any enquiring mind. Why did God visit Jacob with the tribulation of losing his son Joseph? The Angel of Death asks Jacob whether he wishes to know, and then reminds him of the precise year and the precise day on which he bought a slave girl and callously separated her from her parents. According to the book, however, others, who do not refer to a story about the angel, report a different reason: Jacob had owned a cow that bore a calf, and, without pity, he had slaughtered the calf before the eyes of its mother, who stood there lowing with grief. By the time I lived in Failaka, it would have been illegal and impossible for anyone there to buy a slave girl; but every man slaughtered an animal from time to time. As he did so, he would proclaim the name of God, saying, ‘God is most great: in the name of God’, but he would omit the attributes that usually follow, ‘the Merciful, the Compassionate’ because these were not appropriate to the act. And before slaughtering it, he would offer it water to drink.

Thus, in the answers to unasked questions, the Narratives, like many other texts of religious learning, produced examples that taught people what was pleasing and displeasing to God, and contributed to a moral consensus. With the theme of mercy also went the theme of justice. The Koran states that when Benjamin was accused of stealing the cup that his brother Joseph had put into his sack, the other brothers said, ‘If Benjamin be guilty of theft, his brother [Joseph] hath also been guilty of theft heretofore.’ Though the prophets, including Joseph, had human faults, could a prophet be guilty of such a crime as theft? And yet, the Koran does not say that the brothers were lying. According to the Narratives, some authorities say that Joseph had once stolen an egg from the family house to give to a beggar (hence, his act was not theft but an act of charity). But others say that his mother, who was a Muslim, had told him to steal a golden idol belonging to her brother and break it. Joseph did so and cast the idol away in the street. (This was no theft, but opposition to idolatry—nor did Joseph even keep the gold.)

All in all, the narratives read out were so elaborate and circumstantial as to sound like history, a history in which God frequently spoke to his prophets and angels were constant visitors to men. This was the only history the audience had, the Failaka school being so new, except for memories of a recent period in Kuwait
and the Gulf extending, perhaps, for seventy years. It seemed that the shortness of the secular folk memory brought the prophetic past much closer. In one respect, it drew close to contemporary events. This was in respect of Israel. Since the prophets were Muslims, the neglect or rejection of their message by the Jews appeared as a lengthy sequence of offences against Islam. This was entirely consistent with what is stated in the Koran.

The teacher did occasionally remark on some of the situations of the modern world, commenting on the atheistical nature of communism or the dispossession and flight of the Arab refugees from Palestine in the war of 1948. His comments steered clear of the militant or political sides of Islam. In the context of Palestine, he said that the Palestinian Arabs should all fulfil their duties of fasting, prayer and the like, which too many must have neglected, in the hope that God would restore their land to them. He did not speak of holy war, jihād. One subject he never touched on was political issues in Kuwait. This may have been out of choice, but was possibly also out of prudence. Willing as they may sometimes have been to take notice of public opinion, the shaikhs would not countenance any religious ‘leadership’ that could offer an alternative to their own authority. Not being a Muslim, I could not without scandal attend the Friday prayer in the mosques, but I gathered that the Friday sermons were all read out of books, some so old that they included a prayer for the Sultan ‘Abd al-Hamid of Turkey as Caliph. It was said in explanation that no local man was considered learned enough to write a Friday sermon of his own.

Those who attended the religious instruction were not exceptionally pious or virtuous men, any more than were the other people of Failaka. Nor were they revivalists. When I joined them as they mended their fishing nets along the seashore, they were discussing, joking, or complaining about secular affairs, not talking about the prophets, or the angels, or the religious law. They were normal, everyday people. In some matters where mercy might have been expected, they were far from tears: they said that if a girl committed fornication and lost the family honour, it was right for her father or brother to kill her and throw her body into the sea. This was a fishing community: people lived a hard life and they spent what little money they had on themselves and their families. But one of the necessities was to perform religious duties—to pray five times a day, to fast, to give away something in the way of alms, and to try to repent fully of one’s sins. Some men in Failaka had learnt, as children, to read the Koran at the mosque school, but apart from that, the sort of teaching I have described had been the only education available until the opening of the modern school, staffed by Palestinian teachers.

Educational opportunity was no new idea in the State of Kuwait. On one of my occasional visits there from Failaka, I learnt that the first school with a claim to modernity had been founded when pearl fishing still flourished and long before oil came on the scene. It had been set up, for practical reasons, by merchants, who circumvented the conservative opposition of some of the shaikhs by naming it the Mubarakia School, in commemoration of the autocratic Shaikh Mubarak. One
of its early teachers was the remarkable Egyptian expatriate, Shaikh Hafiz Wahba, later to become Minister of Education in Saudi Arabia, and subsequently Saudi Arabian ambassador in London. In Failaka, elementary, modern education at least offered boys the opportunity of qualifying to be clerks, of being better paid and more secure, and of spending their nights comfortably at home rather than laboriously and dangerously at sea. For the clever ones, if their fathers agreed, there was plenty of government money available to send them later to secondary schools and perhaps to the university of Cairo or of some other foreign metropolis.

The teaching in the new school was, necessarily, elementary, and did not include current affairs. I never heard whether the teachers mentioned their own opinions and experiences in class—certainly, had they been known to be persistently introducing their opinions about politics into the lessons, they would not have lasted long. As the proverb said, ‘Strangers have to behave themselves.’ Strangers they were, and for them Failaka was a ‘backward’ place as compared with Palestine. In their terms, even the religious teacher was not a well-educated man. Had they ever attended his instruction, they would have been more critical than I felt like being when he persisted in reading out the Arabic word for ‘angel’ (malak) as the word for ‘king’ (malik). But, in any case, the apocryphal part of the Narratives of the Prophets was not their sort of Islam. Except for alcohol, which they did not drink, they were distinctly closer to the Pakistani militant I had known in Cambridge than to the religious teacher who was now their neighbour. There was a war behind them—and another war ahead. It was now 1954, six years after the first war in Palestine and only two years before the Suez war. During the latter, Kuwait had huge demonstrations in support of Egypt, and the representatives of the Foreign Office, hitherto on good terms with the Kuwaitis, suddenly found themselves ostracised, while further down the Gulf, in the less stable circumstances that then prevailed in Bahrain, there were riots in which the Christian church was burnt down. Whatever the teachers may have kept to themselves in the classroom in 1954, they cannot have needed to conceal in 1956.
THE POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHICAL GENEALOGY
OF EVANS-Pritchard'S THE NUER

TONY FREE

In an earlier article (Free 1990), I noted how contemporary views of anthropology as writing—exemplified in Clifford and Marcus’s Writing Culture (1986) and Geertz’s Works and Lives (1988)—have tended to ignore the relation between text(s) and world(s). When they do refer to any world it is a unitary, monolithic one: for example, Geertz deals in Works and Lives with Evans-Pritchard’s work as the outcome of the world of the Oxbridge common room, while Rosaldo in his essay in Writing Culture deals with Evans-Pritchard’s The Nuer as a product solely of colonial domination. Both gloss over the political dimension of Evans-Pritchard’s work—Geertz, by denying any politics, and Rosaldo, by stereotyping Evans-Pritchard’s political position as that of a colonial dominator. Both thus ignore the political divisions within the colonial world and Evans-Pritchard’s position within it. Furthermore, although many of the essays in Writing Culture

I am grateful to Michael Gilsenan and Godfrey Lienhardt for reading drafts of this article. It was written, along with Free 1990, in October-December 1988, and no attempt has been made in either article to deal with any article or book published since then. Some additions and afterthoughts have been made in the footnotes. Page references are to The Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940) unless otherwise indicated.

I have restricted myself to a critical appraisal of Evans-Pritchard’s recent critics. The article can thus be seen as a defence of Evans-Pritchard. It should not, however, be seen as a piece of pure ‘ancestor worship’. For an earlier article critical of Evans-Pritchard’s Nuer ethnography, see Free 1988.
do make substantial reference to philosophical writing, they avoid any mention of the specific philosophical genealogies of any particular works. In dealing with *The Nuer*, the essays of both Marie Louise Pratt and Renato Rosaldo avoid any reference to philosophy, restricting themselves to the literary aspects of written texts. Similarly, in *Works and Lives*, Geertz (1988: 8) sees anthropology as simply situated within or between a dichotomy of 'literary' and 'scientific' discourses. The importance of specifically philosophical aspects of and background to anthropological texts is ignored. It is as if this philosophical background and philosophical writing in general have been moved from a form of writing into oblivion, as an irrelevant and minor subtype of literature.

Wendy James has pointed out (1973: 49) that Evans-Pritchard's *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* was 'a book of unusually committed characters...in its treatment of an anti-colonialist national movement and its clearly anti-Fascist sympathies'. Evans-Pritchard's political position was far from being that of an apologist for colonialism, or for that matter that of a typical representative of Oxbridge England. Here I shall attempt to uncover the highly interrelated philosophical genealogies and political positions inherent in Evans-Pritchard's best known text, *The Nuer*. In so doing I shall attempt to point to the flaws and omissions that are necessarily aspects of any purely literary approach.

1. *The Explicit Absence of Philosophy*

Perhaps the fundamental complication in dealing with the philosophical background of *The Nuer* is Evans-Pritchard's attitude towards the citation of other texts. Pitt-Rivers points to this in the preface to the second edition of his *The People of the Sierra* (1971). Scandalized by the request of his publisher to cut out the 'erudition', Pitt-Rivers went to consult his teacher: 'Professor Evans-Pritchard...reassured me that such scholarly trappings are mainly either mystifying or redundant: the reader who is not much acquainted with the theories invoked is not much enlightened by the references to them, and he who is should be able to see their relevance for himself' (Pitt-Rivers 1971: xi). Thus it would not be surprising to find seemingly innocuous statements in *The Nuer* that have a reference back to philosophical, sociological or anthropological writings. But in looking for such back-references one can never be sure when one is reading a reference into the text that was not originally intended. Thus the following may be regarded as broad speculative interpretations.

Let us start our mystification by looking at a few seemingly innocuous sentences quoted by Rosaldo (1986: 94) as 'speaking of absences rather than presences', as showing that 'the Nuer lack the obvious (to a Western eye) institutions of political order':
The Nuer cannot be said to be stratified into classes. (p. 7)

Indeed, the Nuer have no government, and their state might be described as an ordered anarchy. Likewise they lack law, if we understand by this term judgements delivered by an independent and impartial authority which has, also, power to enforce its decisions. (pp. 5-6)

The lack of governmental organs among the Nuer, the absence of legal institutions, of developed leadership and, generally, of organized political life is remarkable. (p. 181)

The sentence in *The Nuer* that immediately precedes the second quotation above is: ‘He [the leopard-skin chief] is a sacred person without political authority’ (p. 5). Just as such statements concerning the lack of the leopard-skin chief’s juridical authority can be traced to an empirical negation of the applicability of the Durkheimian conception of moral authority (see Free 1988: 74), statements concerning the lack of law or of legal institutions can be traced to an empirical rejection of Durkheim’s characterization of ‘segmentary’, ‘mechanical’ societies as giving rise to ‘repressive law’.

Similarly, the statement concerning social class conjures up the first sentence of *The Communist Manifesto*: ‘The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle’ (Marx and Engels 1967 [1848]: 79) of which it is a direct contradiction and, moreover, Engels’ footnote to that sentence (ibid.) which points to the existence of primitive communist societies.

2. **Rousseau and the Pastoral**

A central theme of Rosaldo’s essay in *Writing Culture* is that of ‘the pastoral’: *The Nuer* is seen as written in ‘the pastoral mode’. (This is a theme to which Clifford returns in his essay in the same volume where he claims (1986: 113) that salvage anthropology is ‘appropriately located within a long Western tradition of pastoral’.) It would be largely fruitless to enter into a definitional argument concerning the appropriateness of the word ‘pastoral’. A more important question than what pastoral means is what the usage of the term does or enables one to do in this specific argument. Nevertheless, Raymond Williams, whose *The Country and the City* (1980) is cited by Clifford as an authoritative work on the pastoral, points to ‘the confusion that surrounds the whole question of “pastoral”’ (ibid.: 14) and says that ‘the first problem of definition, a persistent problem of form, is the question of pastoral, of what is known as pastoral’ (ibid.: 12). However, these definitional problems do not seem to daunt the writers of culture from writing of ‘the pastoral mode’, or from continuing to extend its usage from poetry to anthropological writing. What do they achieve by this?
Aside from the derogatory connotations of ‘pastoral’ for the post-romantic—though possibly not post-modern—mind, the use of the word ‘pastoral’ to refer to The Nuer creates a thread of continuity, and obscures any discontinuity, from that book back via the eighteenth century to Virgil and Hesiod. Williams’s The Country and the City is partially directed against ‘the bluff’ of such ‘confident glossing and glozing of the reference back’ (Williams 1980: 18-19), against ‘the long Western tradition of the pastoral’ (Clifford 1986: 113) within which Clifford locates salvage anthropology and Rosaldo locates The Nuer. The Country and the City largely concerns changes in ‘the structures of feeling’ (Williams 1980: 12) or the evolution of an eventual structure of feeling in the historical social relationship(s) between country and city, rather than ‘a “structure of feeling”’ as Clifford (1986: 112) quotes Williams (1980: 12). Indeed, Williams states—of the regressive series of retrospective writings concerning the country that he refers to—that: ‘Old England, settlement, the rural virtues—all these, in fact, mean different things at different times and quite different values are being brought to question. We shall need precise analysis of each kind of retrospect, as it comes’ (ibid.).

Furthermore, the chapter dealing explicitly with ‘pastoral’ in The Country and the City is entitled ‘Pastoral and Counter-Pastoral’ and points to William Crabbe’s rejection of the ‘neo-classic pastoral’ (ibid.: 13-34). Moreover, the pastoral is seen in terms of the city and the country, rather than all aspects of the relationships between the country and the city being subsumable under the label ‘pastoral’. Even if there had been no appeal to the authority of Williams by Clifford, these rather salient points would have to be considered as they demonstrate considerable differences, even within ‘literature’, between writing concerning the country in the sixteen to eighteenth centuries and that of the twentieth, let alone between the earlier literature and twentieth-century ethnographic writing. Moreover, differences in what is called ‘pastoral’, which may range from a eulogy of the country to the satirical or ironic critique of the writer’s own society, are ignored in the application of a single term.

Nevertheless, once Rosaldo has extended the usage of the word ‘pastoral’ to cover The Nuer and Le Roy Ladurie’s Montaillou (1978), he writes:

Yet a question remains. Why use the literary pastoral to represent, presumably in a documentary rather than a fictional mode, the lives of actual shepherds? The pastoral mode, after all, derives from the court, and its shepherds usually turn out to have been royally dressed in rustic garb. As a literary mode, it stands far removed either from late medieval French shepherds or contemporary Nilotic cattle herders. Instead it embodies a distinctive sense of courtesy that Kenneth Burke

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1. Such ‘appeals to authority’ are one of the most common tropes in anthropological, academic and indeed everyday discourse. Their usage merges with the operations of pedagogic authority within academia and appeals to the authority of academia outside of it—the television expert, for example.
has aptly characterised as 'the rhetoric of courtship between contrasted social classes'... In earlier literary epochs this courtship occurred between nobles and commoners, lords and vassals, and masters and servants. The displaced modern pastoral analogously emerges in interactions between town and country, middle class and working class, and colonizer and colonized. (Rosaldo 1986: 96)

Even if we were to accept that The Nuer is derived from the eighteenth-century pastoral—Rosaldo points (ibid.: 95) only to those few statements about the courageous, generous, democratic, egalitarian and independent qualities of Nuer character to support his assertion that The Nuer is written in the pastoral mode—we need not accept that this derivation entails an embodiment, that a historical link involves any identity of substance, or hypostatized essence. Nor do we have to accept that 'the pastoral mode' is an embodiment of 'the rhetoric of courtship between contrasted classes'. Williams (1980: 17) points to the fact that Virgil, whose poetry can perhaps be seen as strictly pastoral in an original, classical sense, was the son of a smallholder who wrote to protect the land and its customary farmers from confiscation.

If we look for a philosophical reference-point for Evans-Pritchard’s so-called pastoral statements about Nuer character, one candidate is what has become known as Rousseau’s ‘noble savage’. One could, perhaps, see Rousseau’s philosophy as pastoral in some aspects, but any association with Marie Antoinette’s shepherdess games might have been lost on him as he moved from house to house, on the run from her father-in-law’s and husband’s secret police.

Let us look in more detail, then, at the quotations concerning the Nuer ‘character’ cited by Rosaldo as evidence for the ‘pastoral’ nature of The Nuer, to see exactly of whom or of what mode of writing they are reminiscent. Rosaldo (1986: 95) quotes a number of statements said to display the ‘pastoral mode’:

Such a life nurtures the qualities of the shepherd—courage, love of fighting, and contempt of hunger and hardship—rather than shapes the industrious character of the peasant. (p. 26)

Some outstanding traits in Nuer character may be said to be consistent with their low technology and scanty food-supply.... The qualities which have been mentioned, courage, generosity, patience, pride, loyalty, stubbornness, and independence, are the virtues the Nuer themselves extol, and these values can be shown to be very appropriate to their simple mode of life and to the simple set of social relations it engenders. (p. 90)

The ordered anarchy in which they live accords well with their character, for it is impossible to live among Nuer and conceive of rulers ruling over them.

The Nuer is a product of hard and egalitarian upbringing, is deeply democratic and easily roused to violence. His turbulent spirit finds any restraint irksome and no man recognizes a superior. (p. 181)
First, we should note that there are other statements that do not fit so easily into the ‘pastoral mode’, such as Evans-Pritchard’s characterization of the Nuer as ‘the war-like Nuer’ (p. 20) and, in the paragraph following the last of Rosaldo’s citations, the assertion:

That every Nuer considers himself as good as his neighbour is evident in their every movement. They strut about like lords of the earth, which, indeed they consider themselves to be. (p. 182)

A statement that does nevertheless continue:

There is no master and no servant in their society, but only equals that regard themselves as God’s noblest creation. Their respect for one another contrasts with their contempt for all other peoples. (ibid.)

This is juxtaposed, perhaps not without irony, with his representation of colonial society, in particular his relationship with his servant. Furthermore, in the passage omitted from the middle of Rosaldo’s second quotation comes this section:

I again emphasize the crudity and discomfort of their lives. All who have lived with Nuer would, I believe, agree that though they are very poor in goods they are very proud in spirit. Schooled in hardship and hunger—for both they express contempt—they accept the direst calamities with resignation and endure them with courage. Content with few goods they despise all that lies outside them; their derisive pride amazes a stranger. (p. 90)

It has been claimed that ‘Durkheim has been the medium, so to speak, by which Rousseau has left his mark on modern social science’ (Wolin, quoted in Lukes 1973: 3). Nevertheless, the ambivalence of the statements cited above towards ‘the pastoral’ indicates a direct link with Rousseau and what has become known as his ‘noble savage’. Thus, for example, the equality and independence of the Nuer hark back to Rousseau’s pre-social man, who loses his equality and independence as society progresses. The pride of the Nuer could be seen as having one of its origins in Rousseau, for whom—in ‘The Second Discourse’—man, once he had first gained his ‘new intelligence’

would in time become the master of some [animals] and the scourge of others. Thus, the first time he looked into himself, he felt the first emotion of pride; and, at a time when he scarce knew how to distinguish the different orders of beings, by looking upon his species as of the highest order, he prepared the way for assuming pre-eminence as an individual. (Rousseau 1973 [1755]: 77-8)

Rosaldo claims (1986: 95) that ‘Evans-Pritchard overextends his assumptions and verbally locates the Nuer in a mythic (past?) age’, and cites this statement as an example
Taken with the earlier list of the uses of cattle we can say that the Nuer do not live in an iron age or even in a stone age, but in an age, whatever it may be called, in which plants and beasts furnish technological necessities. (p. 87)

Both this and the statement quoted previously contrast the qualities of the Nuer with those of peasants can be seen to have their, perhaps only primary, origins in Rousseau’s statements (1973: 83) concerning the origins of inequality in societies founded on iron and corn:

From the moment that one man began to stand in need of the help of another, from the moment it appeared advantageous to any one man to have enough provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, work became indispensable, and vast fields became smiling fields, which man had to water with the sweat of his brow, and where slavery and misery were soon seen to germinate and grow up with the crops.

Metallurgy and agriculture were the two arts which produced this great revolution. The poets tell us it was gold and silver, but, for the philosophers, it was iron and corn, which first civilised men, and ruined humanity.

One might note here Rousseau’s ironic allusions to ‘the pastoral’. Nevertheless, Evans-Pritchard’s The Nuer is not the wholesale application of the ideas of Rousseau to a Nilotic people. For Evans-Pritchard, society does not necessarily lead to inequality, rather the Nuer are without great inequalities in cattle. Similarly, much of The Nuer can be seen as written with reference to the following passage from Rousseau (1973: 81-2). Once man began to live in a state of society, ‘a value came to be attached to public esteem’, and,

As soon as men began to value one another, and the idea of consideration had got a footing in the mind, every one put in his claim to it, and it became impossible to refuse it to any with impunity. Hence arose the first obligations of civility even among savages; and every intended injury became an affront; because, besides the hurt which might result from it, the party injured was certain to find in it a contempt for his person, which was often more insupportable than the hurt itself.

Thus, as every man punished the contempt shown in him by others, in proportion to his opinion of himself, revenge became terrible, and men bloody and cruel. This is precisely the state reached by most of the savage nations known to us: and it is for want of having made a proper distinction in our ideas, and seen how very far they already are from the state of nature, that so many writers have hastily concluded that man is cruel, and requires civil institutions to make him more mild....

The final reference in this passage is to Hobbes, and the passage concerns one of the problems addressed by The Nuer, that of political order. However, Evans-Pritchard does not respond to it in Hobbesian terms, Rousseauist terms, or even Durkheimian terms of ‘restitutive law’, rather he sees ‘the principle of contradiction’ and the values of kinship, ultimately the segmentary lineage system, as
providing the principles of 'ordered anarchy'. His response is even less Hobbesian than Rousseau's, or Durkheim's.

3. The Philosophical Genealogy of the Early Chapters of The Nuer

Before we deal more fully with the political and 'allegorical' aspects of The Nuer, let us first look at it chapter by chapter to see precisely what its philosophical and anthropological background and references are. The genealogy of the segmentary lineage system has been well covered by Kuper (1982), so I will ignore those later chapters with which the book as a whole so often seems to be equated.

3.1 The genealogy of space and time

Evans-Pritchard describes the third chapter of The Nuer, concerning time and space, as a bridge between the two parts of the book—the first two chapters concerning cattle and ecological relations and the last three concerning social structure or social systems. One of the immediate ancestors of this piece of writing is mentioned almost explicitly in the text, when Evans-Pritchard states that he is not mainly interested in the 'influence of social structure on the conceptualization of the oecological relations. Thus, to give one example, we do not describe how Nuer classify birds into various lineages on the pattern of their lineage structure' (p. 94). The immediate ancestry of this is Durkheim and Mauss's Primitive Classification (1963 [1903]). However, to devote a whole chapter to 'Time and Space' alone, whilst ignoring classification and other categories of thought points to a stress on time and space not present in Primitive Classification. In The Nuer, time and space are at the origin of the discussion of values, conceptualization and social structure, which are treated in terms of them. The stress on time and space thus speaks more directly of Kant than of Durkheim and Mauss. It is perhaps noteworthy that in his Emile Durkheim (1973)—a book that was originally a thesis supervised by Evans-Pritchard—Steven Lukes links Primitive Classification to Kant and more directly to the neo-Kantian philosophy of Renouvier and Hamelin (ibid.: 435). It is Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1929 [1781,1787]), and not Durkheim and Mauss's Primitive Classification, that begins its discussion of human consciousness and epistemology in the 'transcendental aesthetic' with a discussion of space and time. For Kant, time and space are not only prior to his categories of thought in textual terms, but also together are 'the pure forms of all sensible intuition, and so are what make a priori synthetic propositions possible' (1929: 80). Behind Kant, as Lukes (1973: 435) among others notes, lies David Hume. This is particularly true of the concepts of space and time. For Hume, space and time are, together, one of the 'seven general heads which may be considered as the sources of all philosophical relation' and are 'after
identity the most universal and comprehensive relations' (Hume 1978 [1739-40]: 14); and contiguity in time and place is one of the bases of Hume's discussion of causality. Thus space and time stand at the base of Hume's 'science of Man' upon which 'even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy and Natural Religion, are in some measure dependent' (ibid.: xv).

Evans-Pritchard's discussion of time and space, following Durkheim's, is thus formed in relation to the philosophical positions of Kant and Hume on these matters. For Hume, the ideas of time and space derive, via impressions, from experience. For Kant, time and space are a priori 'representations' which 'underlie all outer intuitions' (Kant 1929: 68).

Durkheim, and Durkheim and Mauss, deal with time and space in the introduction to The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (Durkheim 1976 [1915, 1912]) and Primitive Classification. Although in the latter they do not give the same priority to time and space as Kant, in both they outline a position which they see as different to these two earlier philosophical positions. They contradict the 'logicians', who 'consider the hierarchy of concepts as given in things' (Durkheim and Mauss 1963: 4) and 'psychologists', who 'think that the simple play of the association of ideas, and of the laws of contiguity and similarity between mental states, suffice to explain the binding together of images, their organization into concepts classified in relation to each other' (ibid.). In their discussions of Zuñi and Sioux space and time they claim that 'not only do the division of things by regions and the division of society by clan correspond, but they are inextricably interwoven and merged' (ibid.: 47). This can be compared to Durkheim's statement that 'the social organisation has been the model for the spatial organisation and a reproduction of it' (Durkheim 1976: 12). After attempting to show that the classification of things by spatial regions developed out of the classification of things according to clans, Durkheim and Mauss (1963: 66) state that 'when it was a matter of establishing relations between spatial regions, it was the spatial relations which people maintained within their society that served as a starting point'. Thus, they claim some sort of causal priority of social organization in the conceptual organization of space. Evans-Pritchard takes up the priority given to time and space by Kant. Much of his discussion is derived from Durkheim and Mauss's discussion of categories as corresponding to social structure. Thus, central to his discussion of socio-spatial and socio-temporal categories is the concept of structural distance: 'the distance between groups of persons in the social system, expressed in terms of values' (p. 110). This concept is not so much determined by the age-set, lineage and political systems as at the centre of them, giving rise to the numerous spatial representations and the correspondence between the political and lineage systems: 'structural distance in the lineage system of the dominant clans is a function of structural distance in the tribal systems' (pp. 261-2). However, what he adds to the legacy of Durkheim and Mauss are conceptions of ecological distance and time. These are not inherent in the ecology itself, nor in material space, nor are they flat or rationalistic: they are empirical, deriving from relations to 'the world'. Thus, although 'oecological
time-reckoning is ultimately, of course, entirely determined by the movement of the heavenly bodies' (p. 102), rather than being the ideal time of Kant, Evans-Pritchard states that it is 'a series of conceptualizations of natural changes and...the selection of these points of reference is determined by the significance which these natural changes have for human activities' (p. 104) and 'is a conceptualization of collateral, co-ordinated, or co-operative activities' (ibid.).

Furthermore, he states: 'though I have spoken of time and units of time the Nuer have no expression equivalent to "time" in our language, and they cannot therefore, as we can, speak of time as though it were something actual' (p. 105). Therefore, our ideality of time in the abstract does not seem transcendent and is not an empirical reality for the Nuer. Similarly: 'oecological distance, in this sense, is a relation between communities, defined in terms of density and distribution, with reference to water, vegetation, animal and insect life, and so on' (p. 109). Once again, space is not a material nor an ideal, nor for that matter sociological, a priori, but rather relative and empirical, founded in collective experience.

3.2 Marx and The Nuer

Let us turn, now, to the first two chapters of The Nuer, concerning 'Interest in Cattle' and 'Oecology', i.e. Nuer 'Modes of Livelihood' rather than their 'Political Institutions' as the book's subtitle terms them. I have already noted how statements in The Nuer concerning Nuer character may be traced to Rousseau's 'Second Discourse', which concerns what has become known as the noble savage. One of the central themes of this is the relation between government and inequality. Thus, Rousseau (1963: 97) states: 'The differing forms of government owe their origin to the differing degrees of inequality which existed between individuals at the time of their institution.' Marx later returned to this theme, perhaps the best-known statement of which in Marx's work occurs in his 'Preface' to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1976b: 3): 'The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis, on which rises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.' It is also one of the central themes of The Nuer. Evans-Pritchard puts what corresponds to the relation between base and superstructure at the centre of The Nuer when he states, for example, that Nuer values 'can be shown to be very appropriate to their simple mode of life and the simple set of social relations it engenders' (p. 90). Could one

2. The stress on 'activity' in Evans-Pritchard's account of time is reminiscent of Marx's Theses on Feuerbach (Marx and Engels 1970: 121-3), rather than Durkheim and Mauss's (1963) version of Kantian ideal time and space, although it could also derive from Durkheim (1976: 10-11) where he claims that 'a calendar expresses the rhythm of collective activities'.
not see this as a restatement in the case of the Nuer of Marx’s statement of the relation between base, superstructure and consciousness?

So let us now look for other similarities between Marx’s work and *The Nuer*. Evans-Pritchard deals with ‘Modes of Livelihood’, Marx with ‘Modes of Production’. The first chapter of *Capital* concerns ‘The Commodity’, the first chapter of *The Nuer* concerns cattle, which could perhaps be seen as the central commodity of Nuer society. Marx begins his analysis of the commodity with the distinction between use and exchange value; by the third page of the first chapter of *The Nuer*, cattle are ‘an essential food-supply and the most important social asset’ (p. 18) and later are said to have ‘great economic utility and social value’ (p. 40). Marx claims that ‘a use-value, or useful article, has value only because abstract human labour is objectified or materialised in it’ (Marx 1976a: 129); following a section concerning the distribution of cattle, Evans-Pritchard devotes the following three sections to their use, stating that ‘Nuer value their cows according to the amount of milk they give’ (p. 21). In the following two sections Evans-Pritchard deals with labour and refers us forward to the second half (sections 5-10) of the second chapter, in which labour is dealt with in terms of the relation of food-supply to the environment, or of the relation of use-value to nature in Marxist terms. Marx ends his chapter on the commodity by describing ‘commodity fetishism’—by which ‘nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves...assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things’ (Marx 1976a: 165) and in which value ‘transforms every product of labour into a social hieroglyphic’ (ibid.: 167). For Evans-Pritchard, ‘Nuer tend to define all social processes and relationships in terms of cattle. Their social idiom is a bovine idiom’ (p. 19). The penultimate section of this first chapter concerns Nuer cattle vocabulary, which shows cattle as ‘the superlative value of Nuer life’ (p. 48). The final section of the first chapter deals with the importance of cows in the political structure.

However, Evans-Pritchard does not apply the ideas of Marx wholesale to the Nuer. He can be seen as providing a critique of them. Thus: ‘I may sum up by repeating that economic relations amongst the Nuer are part of general social relationships and that these relationships [are]...mainly of a domestic and kinship order’ (p. 92). He seems to be stating, to put it in Marxist terms, that amongst the Nuer relations of production are part of, not divisible from, other social relations. Indeed, such a statement could be traced back to a critique of the applicability of the concept of exchange value and its replacement by that of social value or social uses in the first chapter of *The Nuer*. The concept of social value, then, lies at the centre of the later chapters on the political and kinship systems. It is this concept that then permits Evans-Pritchard to understate, in the later chapters, the importance of cows in the political system.

Nevertheless, one might be tempted to say that it was the distinction between base and superstructure that led Evans-Pritchard from statements such as ‘kinship is customarily defined by reference to these [cattle] payments’ (p. 17), to a lineage system devoid of cattle and a political system where cows take a secondary place
to homicide, being mentioned in four pages of parenthetical small type (pp. 165-8) in which cows are seen as a cause of homicide. However, the movement between base and superstructure, from 'Interest in Cattle' to 'The Lineage System', is also a movement from a materialism to an idealism of the forms of value in which 'it does not follow that behaviour always accords with values and it may often be found to be in conflict with them, but it always tends to conform to them' (pp. 263-4). This movement is replicated in each of the first three chapters: from cattle and their uses to their social value; from ecology to social relations; and from ecological time and distance to structural distance.

Let us here briefly mention one final possible reference back, namely to anarchist ideas. *The Nuer* concerns a stateless society and in it traces of William Godwin's anarchism can perhaps be found. In particular, those references to a simple political society could perhaps have their origins in Godwin's description of simplicity as a feature of his proposed anarchist society (1976 [1793]: 553), rather than testifying to the backwardness of the Nuer.

4. The Nuer as Political Allegory

Let us now look at the possible allegorical aspects of *The Nuer*. It is perhaps easy to read Rousseau's Second Discourse, on the origins of inequality, as a portrayal of 'a state of nature' of 'the noble savage' and his rise to 'civilization'. However, Rousseau begins it (1973: 45) by stating:

> The philosophers, who have inquired into the foundations of society, have all felt the necessity of going back to a state of nature; but not one of them has got there..... Every one of them, in short, constantly dwelling on wants, avidity, oppression, desires, and pride, has transferred onto the state of nature ideas that were acquired in society; so that, in speaking of the savage, they described the social man. It has not even entered into the heads of most of our writers to doubt whether the state of nature ever existed...we must deny that, even before the deluge, men were ever in the pure state of nature; unless, indeed, they fell back into it from some very extraordinary circumstance; a paradox which it would be very embarrassing to defend, and quite impossible to prove.

Let us begin then by laying all facts aside, as they do not affect the question. The investigations we may enter into, in treating this subject, must not be considered as historical truths, but only as mere conditional and hypothetical reasonings, rather calculated to explain the nature of things, than to ascertain their actual origin....

This suggests to me that 'the noble savage' can be best read as a statement that neither language, inequality, violence nor evil is natural or innate; as a statement about the possible forms of society and the causes of inequality and government;
as a conscious myth or allegory rather than just an ‘origin myth’. Rousseau’s Second Discourse is directed against what he sees as Hobbes’s arguments for absolutism, namely that in ‘the state of nature’ man is in a state of anarchic violent barbarism and therefore needs an absolutist state to protect himself against it, and that an absolutist state is to be accepted like the authority of a parent. Assuming that each generation calls on the ghosts of the past for their own purposes, let us look now at what possible allegorical purposes Evans-Pritchard could have had in conjuring up the ghost of Rousseau.

The Nuer was published in 1940, and was presumably written between 1937 and 1940. Britain went to war with Germany in 1939, and The Nuer may have been written either before the outbreak of war or just after it. As an empirical restatement of Rousseau’s arguments against absolutism, it may be seen as an ideological attack on Fascism and the absolutist state. Parts of it are a clear, if allegorical, statement against Fascism in, or at the end of, a time in which such well-known names as Paul de Mann, Celine, Heidegger, Pound, Eliot and D. H. Lawrence were at least ambivalent towards it, and at the end of a period in British political history that involved such ‘characters’ as the British Union of Fascists, Oswald Mosley, Lord Rothermere and the Daily Mail with its 1934 headline ‘Hurrah for the Blackshirts’. I mention these just to point out that the attitudes of many European intellectuals, and also some of those in positions of power, were somewhat ambiguous towards Fascism, and that support for it extended into British intellectual and political life, although by the time of the publication of The Nuer after the outbreak of war, attitudes may well have changed.

Let us now turn towards the question of colonialism. A perhaps crude rendering of Hobbes’s philosophy is uniquely suited to providing a colonial ideology or justification for colonialism, a view we can indeed find in statements of British colonialists. Take, for example, a statement by Cecil Rhodes to the South African Parliament:

I will lay down my own policy on this Native question. Either you have to receive them on an equal footing as citizens, or to call them a subject race. Well, I have made up my mind that there must be class legislation, that there must be Pass Laws, and Peace Preservation Acts, and that we have got to treat natives, where they are in a state of barbarism, in a different way to ourselves. We are to be lords over them. These are my politics on native affairs, and these are the politics of South Africa. Treat the natives as a subject people, as long as they continue in a state of barbarism and communal tenure; be lords over them, and let them be a subject race.... The native is to be treated as a child and denied the franchise; he is to be denied liquor also; and upon the principles of the honourable member of Stellenbosch himself, I call on him to go with me on this. (Quoted in Alvai and Shanin 1982: 72-3)

Given some recent statements on Evans-Pritchard’s relation to colonialism, one might be surprised to find that he does not expound such a neo-Hobbesian view; indeed he expresses an anti-Hobbesian view. Just as Rousseau’s argument against
Hobbes can be seen as an ideological resistance to absolutism, Evans-Pritchard’s implicit references to Rousseau can also be seen as an ideological resistance to the colonial utilization of Hobbes. The Nuer is, in that respect, anti-colonialist and in the line of Kropotkin’s Mutual Aid (1987 [1902]), which was an explicit attack on the Hobbesian version of Darwinianism to be found in Spencer’s evolutionary sociology and Thomas Henry Huxley’s ‘very incorrect representation of the facts of Nature’ (Kropotkin 1987: 17).

There are other statements in The Nuer that could also be read as implicitly anti-colonialist. For example,

...it is impossible to live among Nuer and conceive of rulers ruling over them.
The Nuer is a product of hard and egalitarian upbringing, is deeply democratic, and easily roused to violence. His turbulent spirit finds any restraint irksome and no man recognises a superior. (p. 181)

Such a statement suggests to me a wish that the Nuer should be left to their independence rather than a desire for their colonial exploitation. Similarly, the situation about which the Byronic ‘Operations on the Akobo’ (1973) was written, and which Geertz totally ignores (Free 1990), also perhaps points to Evans-Pritchard’s opposition to Fascism. Prior to the Second World War, and Evans-Pritchard’s operations, Abyssinia had been invaded by Mussolini in a war of self-aggrandizement that was termed by the British left, amongst others, as an act of Fascist aggression. It was also one of the last acts of European colonialism in which a previously independent African state was annexed. Here the interests of British colonialism were not only anti-Fascist, but also anti-imperialist.

5. The Nuer and Colonial Domination

Let us now look at other links between The Nuer and colonialism. Rosaldo states (1986: 96) that ‘it seems fitting that a discourse that denies the domination that makes its knowledge possible idealizes, as alter egos, shepherds rather than peasants’. There seem to be a few fairly common interrelated ideas concerning the relation of anthropology to colonialism underlying this statement.

The first claim is that it idealizes, or idealized, ‘the natives’. We have already seen that Evans-Pritchard’s presentation could not be seen as a simple ‘pastoral’. But there is a logical flaw in this aspect of the statement anyway, namely, that if

3. Thomas Huxley’s view was promoted in the manifesto Struggle for Existence and its Bearing on Man, issued in 1888 at the zenith of colonialism, in the same period as Rhodes’ speech (Hewetson 1987; Kropotkin 1987: 12-20). Kropotkin’s influence may have reached Evans-Pritchard via Radcliffe-Brown (Kuper 1983 [1973]: 34).
you are going to say that *The Nuer* is an idealization of the Nuer, you would have to say that you have some access to the reality of the Nuer. The only other available access to the realities of Nuer life in the 1930s is, as far as I am aware, the statements of colonial officers. These would be equally conditioned by their, at least slightly different, existential interests possibly to produce a neo-Hobbesian view of the Nuer. Without any access to the realities of Nuer life, you could only be reiterating prejudices, that are perhaps ‘neo-Hobbesian’, without any impressions of the Nuer at all. Any such statements must be pure rhetoric and moreover could be seen to support the political position of Cecil Rhodes and any of his political successors.

A second aspect of Rosaldo’s statement is the claim that *The Nuer* denies colonial domination, and that perhaps—Rosaldo does not seem to state this, but it could be an argument levelled against anthropology—it thus idealizes the Nuer’s relations to the colonial power. However, Rosaldo himself points to the numerous statements in the introduction to *The Nuer* concerning colonial domination, and furthermore Evans-Pritchard links centrally the prophets to the ‘new conditions of Arab-European intrusion’ (p. 191). He also explicitly relates how ‘a Government force surrounded our camp one morning at sunrise, searched for two prophets who had been leaders in a recent revolt, took hostages, and threatened to take many more if the prophets were not handed over’ (p. 11). This could be an understatement, but it is not a denial—perhaps such a distinction is ‘very British’. Thus, Evans-Pritchard could possibly be said to play down the importance of colonial domination for the Nuer, or its violence. Here again, if you are going to assert without reference to any other account of the Nuer at that time, that colonial domination was of more importance for the Nuer than Evans-Pritchard states from his impressions, do you not risk claiming purely rhetorically that colonialism was an irresistible monolith? Rosaldo’s statement (1986: 97) that ‘the pastoral mode becomes self-serving because the shepherd symbolizes that point beyond domination where neutral ethnographic truth can collect itself’ comes dangerously close to such a moral, political and purely rhetorical position. On the other hand, if you are going to state that Evans-Pritchard should have dealt more fully in *The Nuer* with colonial resistance, you are suggesting he should have been more of a spy. If you suggest that he could have dealt more fully with colonial resistance, you are denying the conditions of knowledge or are just being patronizing about the Nuer—suggesting, more or less, that they were politically stupid.

This discussion thus brings us towards an affirmation of a third aspect of Rosaldo’s statement, its concern with the importance of the existential conditions of knowledge: that colonial domination did more than just make the anthropology of that period possible—in some sense of the word, it conditioned it or was an integral aspect of it. Let us deal with two connections between anthropological fieldwork and power that are in no way necessary or even constant.

First, that of seeing or looking, in anthropology and power. Evans-Pritchard states that
As I could not use the easier and shorter method of working through regular informants I had to fall back on direct observation of, and participation in, the everyday life of the people. From the door of my tent I could see what was happening in camp or village and every moment was spent in Nuer company. (p. 15)

Renato Rosaldo (1986: 92) remarks of this that ‘in retrospect, the fieldworker’s mode of surveillance uncomfortably resembles Michel Foucault’s Panopticon, the site from which the (disciplining) disciplines enjoy gazing upon (and subjecting) their subjects’. For Foucault (1977: 195-228), the Panopticon is an image of power, or discipline, for the twentieth century. Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon was a prison consisting of a central tower from which a ring of outer individual cells are permanently visible, while the observer in the central tower cannot be seen from the cells. It abolishes the crowd—Goya’s howling masses—and replaces it with a multiplicity of numerable, supervisable individuals who are no longer communicating people but merely objects of information, with no horizontal links through the walls of the Panopticon. Through it power functions independently of any one person exercising it; it renders the actual exercise of power unnecessary as the prisoners themselves bear it. It is ‘a machine for dissociating the see/being-seen dyad’ (ibid.: 201-202). It is here that, for Foucault, the sciences of man—he mentions ‘psychology, psychiatry, criminology, and so many other strange sciences’ (ibid.: 226)—have their origin.

However, in itself, Evans-Pritchard’s fieldwork was not panoptic. Indeed, even before the end of the ‘door-of-my-tent’ sentence he is writing that ‘every moment was spent in Nuer company’, and earlier he states:

As I became more friendly with the Nuer and more at home in their language they visited me from early morning till late at night, and hardly a moment of the day passed without men, women or boys in my tent... These endless visits entailed constant badinage and interruption and, although they offered opportunity for improving my knowledge of the Nuer language, imposed a severe strain. Nevertheless, if one chooses to reside in a Nuer camp one must submit to Nuer custom, and they are persistent and tireless visitors. The chief privation was the publicity to which all my actions were exposed, and it was not long before I became hardened, though never entirely insensitive, to performing the most intimate operations before an audience or in full view of the camp. (pp. 14-15)

This does not point to any dissociation of the seeing/being-seen dyad, nor to the Nuer becoming individualized objects of information rather than communicating people. Indeed, Evans-Pritchard states that ‘as soon as I started to discuss a custom with one man another would interrupt the conversation in pursuance of an affair of his own or by an exchange of pleasantries or jokes’ (p. 14). At worst, the Nuer become ‘sources of information’ and are represented as ‘the Nuer’ or in terms of the social values of their system, rather than as individuated objects. The application of the image of the Panopticon to The Nuer ignores the invisibility to
Evans-Pritchard of certain aspects of Nuer life; it writes the Nuer out of The Nuer, replacing them with prisoners; and it ignores their resistance and the role they played in the construction of The Nuer. It is as if anthropology did at some stage possess a key of pure seeing that rendered social life visible. This brings us again to 'the conditions of knowledge'.

Let us dissociate seeing from a necessary connection to power. Foucault (1973) points to 'the gaze', and in 'surveillance' (surveiller) (1977) explicitly links seeing to power.4 However, seeing is not inextricably, necessarily or even constantly linked to power. There are different ways of seeing than 'the gaze' or surveiller, than looking over, inspecting or supervising. The importance of seeing or looking as the origin of resistance, rather than power or domination, surveillance or discipline, is suggested by the poetry of Blake and Shelley, for example, even if this poetry is pre-Panoptic or perhaps on the cusp of Panopticism. In Blake's 'The Garden of Love', seeing is a resistance to the power of the organized religion of the time, while in Shelley's 'The Masque of Anarchy', seeing is part of the rhetorical resistance to 'God, and King, and Law'. Both poems show that seeing need not always be 'surveillance', need not necessarily be simply a function of power, but that it can be an aspect of the resistance to power. Foucault himself, in his essay 'The Eye of Power', in Power/Knowledge, talks of 'the Rousseauist dream' of a 'transparent society that opposed the darknesses of royal power in the eighteenth century (1980: 152). In his conclusion to the essay 'Truth and Power' in the same volume he is ambivalent about any necessary relationship between power and truth. He writes, 'it's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time (ibid.).

6. The Existential Conditions of The Nuer

Let us now turn to the more concrete existential conditions of The Nuer. There are first the material and political conditions that made it possible. Evans-Pritchard points to these, rather than away from them. He states in the first sentence of the Preface: 'my study of the Nuer was undertaken at the request of, and was mainly financed by, the Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, which also contributed generously towards the publication of its results' (p. vii); and he later states in his Introductory: 'when the Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan asked me to

4. Surveiller et Punir is the title of the original French (1975) edition of Discipline and Punish (1977). However, according to the translator's note, 'the verb surveiller has no adequate English equivalent'. For a discussion of the translation, see that note.
make a study of the Nuer I accepted after hesitation and with misgivings’ (p. 7). He has already, on the first page of the introductory to *The Nuer*, stated:

A later source of information about the Nuer are the *Sudan Intelligence Reports* which run from the reconquest of the Sudan in 1899 to the present day, their ethnological value decreasing in recent years. In the first two decades after the reconquest there are a few reports by military officers...several political officers contributed papers on the Nuer. Two of these officers were killed in the performance of their duty.... (p. 1)

These comments may be disarming, but for me when I first read the book they raised the question of exactly what his relationship to the colonial powers was, rather than offset them, as Rosaldo claims they do.

Similarly, Evans-Pritchard points towards the conditions of knowledge in the political situation of his fieldwork, rather than obscuring them:

It would at any time have been difficult to do research among the Nuer, and at the period of my visit they were unusually hostile, for their recent defeat by Government forces and the measures taken to ensure their final submission had occasioned deep resentment. Nuer have often remarked to me, ‘You raid us, yet you say we cannot raid the Dinka’; ‘You overcame us with firearms and we had only spears. If we had had firearms we would have routed you’; and so forth. When I entered a cattle camp it was not only as a stranger but as an enemy, and they seldom tried to conceal their disgust at my presence, refusing to answer my greetings, and even turning away when I addressed them. (p. 11)

And in the paragraph preceding that in which he gives the example of his conversation with Cuol (of which Rosaldo claims Evans-Pritchard finds ‘that the fault in this unhappy encounter lies with Nuer character, rather than with historically specified circumstances’ (1986: 91)), Evans-Pritchard states that ‘the Nuer are expert at sabotaging an inquiry’ and that ‘questions about customs were blocked by a technique I can commend to natives who are inconvenienced by the curiosity of ethnologists’ (p. 12). Above all, what Evans-Pritchard seems to do in the introduction to *The Nuer* is not to dissociate ethnography from the colonial conditions of knowledge in order to convince a reader of its truth, but to attempt to dissociate the aims and values of ethnography from the purposes and values of colonial domination. In this light, objectivity can be viewed as a keystone of a moral and social attitude that distanced anthropology as much from the colonial interests of the society of which it was part as from the colonized societies from which anthropology is always already socially distanced.

The two conditions of *The Nuer* Evans-Pritchard does not explicitly point to are those of colonial society in the Sudan and Egypt and of Oxford of the late 1930s. However, Jaques Maquet, who at least had some empirical impressions of the relationship between anthropology and colonialism, does attempt to grapple with this relationship in his 1964 article ‘Objectivity in Anthropology’. For him,
anthropologists were 'scholars whose material and professional interests lay in their home countries but who participated in the privileges of the dominant caste during their stay in Africa' (Maquet 1964: 48). But he also states:

These characteristics of their existential situation were perfectly compatible with holding progressive views.... The anthropologists' existential situation was perfectly compatible with the participant-observer attitude that some of them assumed, not so much for purposes of research but rather out of their deep sympathy for the society they were studying. Moreover, since their activities were marginal relative to those of the production-conscious European caste, who looked upon the anthropologists' work as a romantic waste of money, the anthropologists were orientated toward nonconformist attitudes critical of the colonial order. (Ibid.)

But he also notes that the position of the anthropologist depended on the political stability of the society, which an attitude of 'mild conservatism' would have defended. He sees this as an objective, though not necessarily perceived interest and claims that it was not in fact advocated. He further notes that the valorization of traditional cultures was a socially useful trend for the colonial regimes as they balanced traditional and progressive forces in decolonization.

As to whether the valorization of traditional cultures stemmed from its political uses, or was made possible by them, or whether those political uses of anthropology were merely ad hoc, or even whether anthropology in some way revealed this political strategy I can make no comment. Nevertheless, I would suggest that colonialism did condition The Nuer in yet another way. In its Hobbesian and racist attitudes, colonialism set the agenda for a concern with the study of the state or politics and even with witchcraft and rationality—and behind that, these themes were set in the Enlightenment. But these colonial attitudes also set the agenda for their empirical falsification, just as the colonial nations set the agenda for national liberation movements.

7. Conclusions

I have suggested that recent articles portraying anthropology as writing have ignored the philosophical genealogy of The Nuer and thus also the political position of Evans-Pritchard's work. The world in which writing happens is dealt with by both Geertz and Rosaldo as the world—a singular unitary world without divisions, least of all political divisions. This type of writing about writing displays a kind of functionalism far beyond Radcliffe-Brown's. It is no longer even a matter of the relation of parts to a whole, but merely the presentation of a whole undivided, with any particular text as an example of it. When this whole world is linked solely to power, and not also to resistance, the illusion of an
indestructible colonial monolith is reborn. Furthermore, in equating Evans-Pritchard with Cecil Rhodes, or in ignoring Cecil Rhodes and Oswald Mosley, the British past is effectively whitewashed beneath the quaint myths of dreaming spires, of 'the folk model of Anglo-Saxon democracy' (Kuklick 1984: 71), and of 'The least He that is in England...has a life to live as the greatest He' (Geertz 1988: 71).

In these literary approaches to anthropology, the stress on a work of anthropology as a literary creation ensures that any consideration of the specific philosophical genealogies of specific works is obscured and that the ancestry of anthropology and the social sciences in moral philosophy is overlooked. Furthermore, the lack of any reference to the worlds in and of which anthropology is written ensures that the complex political background of any text is hidden beneath the concentration on internal relations between texts. The political resistance to both colonialism and Fascism implicit in Evans-Pritchard's work has been consistently overlooked in recent writings about his writings. This may be partially due to stereotypes of Evans-Pritchard, but it is also due to the obliteration of the philosophical roots of anthropology in some recent attempts to deal with it purely as literature.

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THE FIELDWORK PHOTOGRAPHS OF JENNESS AND MALINOWSKI
AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN ANTHROPOLOGY

TERENCE WRIGHT

1. Introduction

If asked to select a name and date for the founding of modern anthropology, we would probably be expected to settle for Malinowski and 1914, the year in which he began his pioneering fieldwork in the Trobriands. However, we may well be encouraged to widen our enquiry—to shift emphasis from the vision of the individual anthropologist, and direct attention towards the socio-historical determinants of anthropological theory. Set against this background is an aspect of anthropological practice that is often overlooked—fieldwork photography. Here the camera has been used more often as a mute recording device, considered to be a transparent method of visual note-taking. But the last decade has seen renewed interest in photography’s contribution to ethnography. No longer serving a simple

Malinowski’s photographs appear with the kind permission of his daughter, Mrs H. Wayne. Jenness’s photographs appear by courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. All quotations from Jenness’s letters are from those in the Marett Papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. I should like to thank Elizabeth Edwards for her constructive comments on earlier drafts of this article. An exhibition of Jenness’s photographs, Wamo, d’Entrecasteaux Islands New Guinea, 1911-1912: Photographs by Diamond Jenness, is to be held at the Pitt Rivers Museum from 1st June 1991 to early 1992.
illustrative function, the photograph can be now regarded as a reflector of the anthropologist's standpoint.

In so far as photographs reflect theoretical outlook, the examples used in this article would appear to refute the notion of a gradual process of circumstantial change. The pre-1914 photographs of Diamond Jenness, dull and uninspired, closely follow the prescribed routines of nineteenth-century ethnography. Yet the photographs of Bronislaw Malinowski himself, taken just two years later, represent the post-1914 era. They display an active gathering of information, through which he evolved his own style and line of enquiry. From this cursory glance at the photographs, we might be forgiven for falling in line with popular opinion—for it would be easy to construe that indeed Malinowski 1914, marked the watershed for anthropology.

While this article looks at the photographs in the light of prevailing anthropological theories, it also considers the images in conjunction with the accounts of the ethnographers themselves. And some details, which initially may appear trivial, become especially relevant in the context of the photographs. At the same time as addressing some general issues pertinent to ethnographic photography, the article suggests the inadequacy of theoretical polarization and simplistic causality.

To obtain a clearer picture, it is necessary to look beyond the photographs to the anthropologists' written accounts: to Jenness's correspondence with R. R. Marett and to Malinowski's diaries. The comparability of sources is questionable, for it may be considered unfair to attempt to equate Malinowski's diaries, renowned for their candid nature, with Jenness's letters to Marett, who was, after all, his supervisor: they could hardly be as revealing. Furthermore, in its unusual form, as textual manifestation of inner speech, the aim of a diary is primarily self-referential, yet at the same time addressed to a nondescript persona. In the case of Malinowski they have reached a readership not of the author's intention. But perhaps we should not be seduced by the intimacy of Malinowski's personal mode of address, and should not feel that it precludes insight into his working methods as an anthropologist.

The photographs of Diamond Jenness, now collected in the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, were taken during a period of fieldwork in the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago of Papua in 1911-12. Jenness was based on Goodenough, or Nidula, Island. His anthropological work in the area of south-east New Guinea followed his studies for the Oxford Diploma in Anthropology in 1910. The expedition was funded by various Oxford colleges and private individuals, including Henry Balfour, the curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum. It was expected of Jenness that he make a collection of artefacts for the museum. His photographs, 576 in all, cover the period of a year—from 1st December 1911, when he arrived in New Guinea, to December 1912, which marked the conclusion of the expedition.

Only once, in The Northern D'Entrecasteaux (Jenness and Ballantyne 1920), the book which resulted from his fieldwork, does Jenness refer to photography: 'Once when we had run out of tobacco we engaged a native to carry the camera
and its outfit two or three miles, promising him a stick of tobacco the following
day. We never saw him again for a month’ (ibid.: 207). Some may consider that
this in itself is telling with regard to his approach to ethnology and equally,
perhaps, to photography. That Jenness, in particular, makes few comments about
his approach to photography is tantalizing, yet hardly surprising: general
commentary about the use of photography in fieldwork has been seriously
neglected by anthropologists.

Malinowski, however, is an exception. Working a couple of years after
Jenesss, and in the same geographical area, Malinowski’s photographs form a
second anthropological collection that is very different in both the approach taken
to the subject of enquiry and the use of the camera. In Kaberry’s essay (1957) on
Malinowski’s contribution to fieldwork methods one might have expected some
acknowledgement of the role of photography, but she makes just a single passing
reference to it. And Malinowski’s own writings provide little critical insight about
his use of the medium. Nevertheless, from his collection of photographs in the
archives of the London School of Economics, we know he was a prolific
photographer and, from his diaries (Malinowski 1967), published ten years after
Kaberry’s essay, we know that photography was a major preoccupation of his.

By the time either Jenness or Malinowski was working in Melanesia, the use
of photography in the service of ethnographic fieldwork was commonplace. Initial
attempts to record ‘exotic’ people and places had given way to more serious
attempts to study other cultures. These developments were paralleled by the use
of the photography archive for the study of the lives of others. In 1874, The
British Association for the Advancement of Science produced, under the direction
of Tylor, the first edition of Notes and Queries on Anthropology, for the Use of
Travellers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands (BAAS 1874). Later a committee
was formed for the collection, preservation, and systematic registration of
photographic material of anthropological interest, a report of this committee being
published in the BAAS Report of 1882. Two years later anthropology was
established as an independent section of the association (Stocking 1987: 263).

During the same period the British Journal of Photography of 1889 mentions
two uses of photographic archives: to provide ‘a record as complete as it can be
made...of the present state of the world’ and to provide ‘valuable documents’ for
the future. In 1892, Im Thurn addressed the Anthropological Institute on the
subject of ‘Anthropological Uses of the Camera’, one of these being ‘for the
accurate record, not of the mere bodies of primitive folk...but of these folk
regarded as living beings’ (Im Thurn 1892: 184).

2. Jenness

To return to Jenness, we find that because he made so few references to his
photographs, we have to look more to the context in which he was operating,
While this may involve some conjecture, it is safe to assume that Marett exerted a considerable influence. In 1911, as Reader in Social Anthropology in the University of Oxford, Marett played a significant part in forming Jenness's approach to anthropology. In his role as academic supervisor he communicated by letter with Jenness in the field. We have at least one side of the correspondence—Jenness's replies to Marett's letters are held in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Marett's own writings may be used to suggest other formative influences. From his *The Diffusion of Culture* (1927: 4) we get a clear (if perhaps slightly exaggerated) portrayal of how he saw his supervisory role in relation to field-workers such as Jenness. Marett wrote: 'the man in the study busily propounded questions which only the man in the field could answer, and in the light of the answers that poured in from the field the study busily revised its questions' (ibid.). Furthermore, we can presume that Marett's book *Anthropology* (1912) reflects the content of his anthropological seminars during the period from 1908 to 1910 in which Jenness studied for the Diploma in Anthropology. A few key points from this book indicate the sort of anthropology that influenced Jenness: 'anthropology is the child of Darwin, Darwinism makes it possible. Reject the Darwinian point of view, and you must reject anthropology also' (ibid.: 8). Elsewhere (ibid.: 74), Marett expresses the importance of establishing the cranial index, and later, we find him neither embracing nor completely rejecting Galton's theory of eugenics, popular at this time. Rather, he positions himself at a comfortable distance: 'to improve the race by way of eugenics, though doubtless feasible within limits, remains an unrealised possibility through our want of knowledge' (ibid.: 95).

Marett's influence was not limited to academic matters. He was instrumental in helping Jenness fund the expedition. On 1st March 1911, he circulated a letter to the heads of various Oxford colleges requesting financial support, giving a succinct description of the aims of the project:

> It has been ascertained that, by using as his base the mission station established in the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, he will have a most favourable opportunity of studying the natives of this almost unknown region.... In return for such pecuniary aid Mr. Jenness promises to make over to the Pitt Rivers Museum whatever specimens he may secure of native handiwork...and present his researches in the form of a Report.

It was considered good fortune that the mission station was run by Jenness's brother-in-law, the Rev. A. Ballantyne, who with Jenness was to become co-author of *The Northern D'Entrecasteaux* (1920).

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1. Galton (1890) had evolved a technique which he called 'analytical photography', the 'objectivity' of the camera being used to establish racial types through the superimposition of photographic images.
On 27th May 1911, in a note to Marett, Jenness outlined his programme:

2 months general examination of D'Entrecasteaux
8 months specific study of Goodenough Island
2 months study of trade relations with neighbouring islands—e.g. Trobriand Islands

Much of their correspondence at this time concerned the acquisition of a phonograph, and a 'tintometer' or pigmentation meter. Although it seems that Jenness was placing much of his faith in the available anthropological technology, there is little evidence of concern over his photographic preparations, except that in the event of his death the camera, along with other equipment, should be left to the Oxford Committee for Anthropology.

Before embarking on the expedition Jenness spent a short while at his home in New Zealand, there practising his photography. In a letter to Marett of 7th November 1911 he wrote: 'I have taken some photos of some of our curios, & shall take prints of them with me'. On his way to Goodenough Island, he stopped off at Samarai and wrote another letter to Marett (dated 16 Dec. 1911), mentioning: 'I have some notebooks & my anatomical instruments, as well as a camera & 2 or 3 dozen plates'. While waiting here for his voyage to Goodenough Island he practised his anthropological techniques on the Samarai natives. Marett included Jenness's 'findings' in his preface to The Northern D'Entrecasteaux:

While waiting...for the pearl-trader's cutter that was to take him on to Goodenough, he gets to work with his anthropological instruments on the native patients in the hospital, and is put out a little on finding that a shock of frizzy hair makes it hard to get one's head-measurements right to the last millimetre. (Marett 1920)

However, in the letter from Samarai, Jenness mentions other things on his mind that created difficulties in obtaining measurements: 'full measurements would have been rather difficult—in some cases impossible, owing to the different maladies.'

His work at the hospital also presented him with the opportunity to cut his photographic teeth. The patients were photographed full-face and profile (Figs. 1 and 2). He fulfilled the requirements of his 'scientific' approach either by putting the distant field of vision out of focus or by setting the subject against a minimal background, a favourite location being in front of a light galvanized shed presumably situated in the hospital grounds: 'I photographed several & the plates have turned out fairly well on the whole' (16 Dec. 1911).

As far as can be told from his letters to Marett, this appears to be his sole evaluation of his photographic method. From the institutionalized subject, Jenness would have found little resistance to photography. Along with his concern to measure the patients, his photographic treatment of the subject was intended to obtain 'scientifically valid' information. This is also evident in the Samarai Hospital photographs in which the subjects appear to have been 'pre-numbered' (Fig. 3). When he first arrived at the Bwaidoga Mission Station on Goodenough he employed his practised technique. The resulting images were later to be included
in the *The Northern D'Entrecasteaux* under 'The Natives—Their Physical and Mental Characteristics'. His association with the Goodenough Mission certainly established him in a position of authority as a photographer, giving him the opportunity to recruit subjects. Besides a dozen such anthropometric photographs, Jenness obtained the head indices and heights of 60 people and full measurements of six or seven.

As well as identifying with the 'spiritual authorities', in the form of the Mission, Jenness allied himself to civil authority by becoming friends with the policeman from Wagifa, a small island off the south-east coast of Goodenough. He went for trips in his boat, a photograph of which appears in *The Northern D'Entrecasteaux* (facing p. 18). It was part of police duties to report on cannibalism, a practice which was met with harsh penalties. During the period on Goodenough, Jenness and Ballantyne took it upon themselves to check out reports of cannibalism. It may seem surprising that despite his close associations with the authorities of church and government he should feel that: 'the natives have confidence in me & regard me more as one of themselves' (letter to Marett, 26 July 1912).

While Marett's influence was sustained by correspondence throughout the duration of the expedition, Jenness also received in May 1912, from the publishers, a copy of Marett’s *Anthropology* published that year. Almost a year later, in a
letter of March 1913, he wrote: 'I enjoyed your "Anthropology" immensely and have been recommending it to everyone, so that they can judge for themselves whether I am biased.' While this comment could have been a form of appeasement—in the same letter he announces that his report would not be ready: he is off to the Arctic—the overall form of The Northern D’Entrecasteaux was foreshadowed by Maret’s Anthropology. With minor modifications, most of the chapter headings were those used by Maret and are in a similar sequential order.

At this early stage of his anthropological career, it may well be that Jenness’s amateurish approach to fieldwork in general did not enable him to make the most of the photographic possibilities. Not all the disasters that affected his work were of his own making, though his reliance upon available technology—of which the camera was a part—and perhaps the influence of Ballantyne, his brother-in-law, made him less able to cope in times of adversity. Ballantyne comes across as a rather domineering, clumsy individual, and much of Jenness’s experience of Goodenough seems to have been coloured by Ballantyne’s impressions. The letters to Maret mention Ballantyne’s aid with translation and regret that he did not live to see the publication of The Northern D’Entrecasteaux: ‘so great, indeed, was the assistance he rendered me that we agreed to collaborate. I am therefore responsible for the form of this report, but any merit that may be found in it is due almost entirely to Ballantyne’ (Jenness and Ballantyne 1920: 12-13). While some allowance
must be made for modesty on Jenness's part, the strains of duty were apparently felt by many, and *The Northern D'Entrecasteaux* was something of a family effort: "owing to my absence in the Arctic, much of the labour that preceded the final drafting of the report fell upon my two sisters, Miss G. and Miss A. Jenness" (ibid.).

While the expedition was largely unsuccessful, Jenness should not be held entirely to blame. There were problems with the phonograph. In May it was producing 'poor results', by July—"the phonograph has had its day"—it had run out of cylinders. Enough material, however, remained in one form or another for Jenness to bring out a second publication on the songs of Bwaidoga (Jenness and Ballantyne 1928). Neither the results nor the fate of the 'intometer' are recorded. Furthermore a drought—"the most disastrous known for many years"—hit the island. This resulted in a three-month famine from May to July 1912. And finally a large number of specimens, on their way to the Pitt Rivers Museum, were destroyed by a fire on board the SS *Turkina* just off Rio de Janeiro.

One does not need to read too much between the lines to detect a sense of despondency and an accompanying loss of interest. Duty-bound to produce the report and final publication, there follows a list of excuses to Maret, though it is fair to say that many were justifiable. And, despite the interruptions of the Arctic expedition and the 1914-18 War, whenever possible his correspondence with
Marett continued: 'I am looking forward each day for the letter that will put me into a uniform. There is only one thing I am afraid of, I may be too late to see active service' (March 1917). And in a letter from Germany (18 Dec. 1918): 'with regard to the photos—a complete catalogue of my photos is nearly completed'.

The impression of Goodenough in *The Northern D'Entrecasteaux* is of an island where the traditional pattern of life has broken down. The islanders no longer respect the totemic laws of marriage, nor observe tribal taboos, and chiefs are unable to maintain their authority over a people who have relinquished their faith in indigenous religion. In part, this loss of 'traditional' lifestyle appears to contrast with the much later work of Young (1983: 11) who finds an 'ever-renewed and inexhaustible corpus of Kalauna oral literature...greatly enriched since European contact by the addition of Bible stories', while in the area influenced by the 'Bwaidoka' (sic) Methodist Mission it was no longer regarded important to keep the myths secret (ibid.: 264-5).

When the book by Jenness and Ballantyne was finally published in 1920 a favourable, though not outstanding, review was published in *Man* (Barton 1921: 111). Nowhere did the photographs receive special mention.

Earlier, Jenness had mentioned his debt to Haddon for 'much counsel and assistance'. In October 1932, in return, Haddon requested a number of Jenness's plates featuring canoes. They provided reference material for a drawing of a canoe: 'Jenness has kindly lent me a large number of photographs, and it is from these sources that the following account has been compiled' (Haddon 1937: 272). So Jenness's expedition photographs were not necessarily without purpose, but their primary function of transparent note-taking is reinforced by this use of his images.

3. Malinowski

The work of Jenness on Goodenough pre-dated Malinowski's time in the same geographical area by almost three years. Malinowski also took photographs as part of his fieldwork. Yet with Malinowski's photographs one is immediately impressed by their degree of accomplishment. Not only are his images clear and to the point, but they supply information which extends beyond the scope of the text. If one were to go so far as to describe Malinowski as the 'better' photographer, would this be a simple consequence of his being the 'better' ethnographer? Was he more accomplished in his use of the medium? Or had anthropology itself changed?

From Malinowski's diaries, it is clear that he took a keen interest in photography. He suggests it served two purposes: ethnographic recording, and a personal point of contact with the outside world: 'I am no longer in love erotically with Z. If I could choose one of them as a companion at present, purely
impulsively, I would without hesitation choose T. A great part in this is played by the marvellous photos I have taken along' (Malinowski 1967: 64). And again: 'violent surge of longing when I look at her photos.... Strong feeling of her personality' (ibid.: 67). However, for Malinowski the role of photography as a point of contact may have been a two-way process. A number of his photographs had been printed in picture-postcard form, some showing him as a photographer. On a number of occasions Malinowski photographed Billy Hancock, a local trader and close friend. Much of their time together was spent discussing photography, taking photographs, and developing their pictures. In one such instance, Hancock is photographed while taking a photograph of a group of islanders (Fig. 4; XXV: 12). Presumably they then changed places, for in another image Malinowski is seen photographed in the same position (Fig. 5; BXVII: 4). From available evidence, this would seem to fit an occasion mentioned in the diaries when Malinowski casually remarks that he and Billy used up six rolls of film in less than a day (ibid.: 71).

To be photographed 'as a photographer' may also suggest an expression of self-assurance and confidence in his use of the medium (and in Malinowski's case, some might say, his characteristic tendency towards arrogance and narcissism). But there is further evidence of his concern with imagery in his written portrayals of the environment. Not only are they very 'visual', but he uses the terms of pict-

2. The numbers given for Malinowski's photographs refer to the catalogue in the London School of Economics.
Fig. 5. Billy Hancock, Bronislaw Malinowski (LSE BXVII: 4)

orial representation: ‘the subtle thin line of the horizon breaks up, grows thicker, as though drawn with a blunt pencil’ (ibid.: 142). This description is built upon practical foundations, for Malinowski had also made drawings as part of his fieldwork (ibid.: 116). Other descriptions seem to be more evocative of photography: ‘the damp velvety sheen of vegetation, the marvellously deep shadows, the freshness of the stones darkened by the rain, the outline of the mountains through the curtains of rain, like shadows of reality projected on the screen of appearances’ (ibid.: 90).

These examples serve to indicate a familiarity with the characteristics of visual expression gained through firsthand experience, rather than suggesting that Malinowski’s ethnographic photographs are in some way ‘picturesque’. Although his method displays concern for the pictorial elements of the photograph, his aim was to fit the significant information efficiently into the frame. Fortunately this did not rely upon rigid formulations, neither of nineteenth-century ‘pictorialist’ photography, nor of the early editions of Notes and Queries.3

Malinowski’s way of working and process of selection may be established from the photographs used for publication. These may be compared with the other photographs he took on the same particular occasions. For example, the photograph

3. For example, the photographs of E. H. Man. His work is described by Stocking (1987: 259) as representing the ‘first fruits’ of Notes and Queries.
of 'House Building' in *Coral Gardens and their Magic* (Malinowski 1935: Pl. 92) was taken from a sequence of three (XXVI: 8, 9, 10). From the positions of the people concerned, it seems the photographs were taken in fairly quick succession (Figs. 6, 7 and 8). After the first, he changed camera angle, then took two shots more that are almost identical. The second of the three (Fig. 7; no. 9) was the one used.

While this appears to be typical of his picture-taking, evidence of his photographic technique drawn from the photographs themselves can be reinforced by his diary account. To illustrate this, I cite various entries from which we can build up an impression of his method. First, he 'looked around, noticing things to photograph' (1967: 256). He would then plan his photographs (ibid.: 231) and spend long periods working at them: 'I worked honestly for 3 hours, with camera and notebook, and learned a great deal, lots of concrete details' (ibid.: 217). He would develop and print the film: 'today devoted to photography' (ibid.: 272), occasionally with the assistance of Billy Hancock (ibid.: 182, 221), and then evaluate the results.

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4. For other examples, compare 'Working a Shell' and 'Men Holding Amulets (Mwali) on Pole' from *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1920: Plates L, LI, LII, LX) with LSE XIX: 28-30; XIX: 7-8; and 'Fishing' from *Coral Gardens and their Magic* (1935: Plate 5) with LSE XXII:1-5.
Sometimes he was ‘mortified by the poor results’ (ibid.: 195), at others he was delighted to produce ‘photographs which are a success!’ (ibid.: 237). Although he may have ‘wasted time examining Bill’s new camera’ (ibid.: 275), he knew when to stop: it is ‘good for the Ethnographer sometimes to put aside camera, notebook and pencil, and join in himself in what is going on’ (1922: 21). Jenness’s approach to photography relied upon technology to establish scientific objectivity—later used to illustrate his book. In contrast, Malinowski’s images, though impressionistic and at times self-critical, are informative in their embellishment of the text.

With regard to the social role of the anthropologist, Malinowski took a very different approach to that of Jenness, both to missionaries and to government. He maintained that the anthropologist should ‘ruthlessly’ avoid the mission and government stations and ‘live right among the natives’ (1932: xvii). And although in this regard he did not necessarily heed his own advice, it does lead directly to Malinowski’s criticism of Jenness and Ballantyne. In quoting from their *The Northern D’Entrecasteaux*, he accuses them of ‘dangerous and heedless tampering with the one authority that now binds the natives, the one discipline they can be relied upon to observe—that of their own tribal tradition’ (1922: 467n.).

The incident concerned the Ulekuugo—a cult which was destroyed by Ballantyne when he removed and accidentally broke the *manumanua* pot which
'ruled the rain and sunshine' and exerted 'its influence in the crops' (Jenness and Ballantyne 1928: 131n.). Young is in accord with this assessment of the function of manumanua: 'this ceremony was designed to banish famine and anchor food in the community' (1983: viii). At the least, it would seem very bad luck for all concerned that Ballantyne's breaking of the pot was followed by 'the most disastrous [drought] known for many years' (Jenness: letter to Marett 4 May 1912), and subsequent famine.

4. Conclusion

The differences I have identified between the photographs of Jenness and Malinowski can be accounted for by Malinowski's concern for visual enquiry combined with a more flexible approach to fieldwork. Nevertheless, Langham

5. Malinowski's interest in visual documentation might also be suggested by his later interest in the Mass Observation Project, to whose founders he gave 'wise advice' (Firth 1957: 7).
(1981: 327), amongst others, has made the suggestion that anthropology itself underwent radical changes during this period:

I would go so far as to suggest that the seminal year for the discipline was not 1922, when *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and *The Andaman Islanders* were published. Rather it was 1912, when the fourth edition of *Notes and Queries* on Anthropology appeared, containing the brilliant contributions in which Rivers gave the first clear statement of what later came to be identified as the procedural and theoretical basis of British Social Anthropology.

The six editions of *Notes and Queries*, which had a substantial influence upon fieldwork practice, are now particularly valuable as a historical source, reflecting the theories of the many influential figures in British anthropology who contributed in their time (see Coote 1987). The appearance of the 1912 edition of *Notes and Queries* fell between the times of the expeditions of Jenness and Malinowski. The fourth edition of 1912, edited by Barbara Freire-Marreco and John Linton Myres, reflected a radical change in attitude in anthropology, in particular a change from the evolution of religious thought to a new emphasis on kinship and social organization. It also adopted a more professional approach. Much of the first three editions took the form of instructions for amateur collectors of data.

We have firm evidence that both ethnographers used *Notes and Queries* in their fieldwork. From his letters to Maret, we know that Jenness referred to the book. In addition, he found 'Frazer’s little book of Queries was immensely useful tho’ of course it only supplied broad lines of enquiry' (letter to Maret, 26 July 1912). And Malinowski would compare his photographs to the recommendations of *Notes and Queries* which, in turn, appears to have inspired his photography: 'Read some more N & Q and loaded my camera' (1967: 30). While it may be significant that they were using different editions, the evidence from the photographs themselves suggests that it would be too simplistic to attribute the differences in the photographs exclusively to *Notes and Queries*. The approach to photography developed by Malinowski is entirely in keeping with his methodology of 'participant observation'—clearly distinct from Jenness’s attempts to gather evidence for Maret’s evolutionism.

For Jenness, while many of the difficulties he encountered in this, his first expedition, could not have been predicted, he seems to have been poorly equipped for any problems that might have arisen. His research conformed to that of the

6. The influence of the 1912 edition on Malinowski has been pointed out by Urry (1972: 52).

7. Not only was Malinowski more prolific in his use of photography—we learn that for a particular trip he took food for six weeks as well as 12 rolls of film and 3 dozen plates (Malinowski 1967: 218), compared with Jenness’s initial expedition supply of ‘a camera & 2 or 3 dozen plates’(16/12/11). We find Jenness taking the ‘orthodox’ approach, following closely the recommendations of *Notes and Queries* for dry plates rather than cellulose film in hot climates, whereas Malinowski was prepared to hedge his bets.
'old-school' ethnographer, an approach that was soon to be eclipsed by the new social anthropology—of which Malinowski was arguably the founder (Langham 1981). Jenness, with prescribed methods and rigid objectives, seemed to lack the flexibility that would enable him to cope with novel or difficult situations. In particular, this is reflected in his use of photography. Guided by an aim for clearly defined types of pictures, his camera imposed a structure on the subject, with little room to explore it or let it determine the image in any way. Yet further, his photographs reveal a photographer detached from his subject: usually taken from a distance, his images show little evidence of intimacy or involvement (Fig. 9).

Of course, the techniques of anthropological fieldwork have advanced considerably over the last seventy years. Yet in spite of the changes in photographic technology, the photographs of Diamond Jenness are neither better, nor worse, than those of many contemporary anthropologists. So, to be fair to Jenness, I should allow him the last word. In a letter to Marett written on 21st February 1919 he wrote: 'the work I did in the Arctic had made me realize how much I had left undone in Papua, how much better the report might have been if only I had known how to set about the fieldwork. I ought to have obtained more information, more knowledge of the natives....'
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DO MAMBILA COCKERELS LAY EGGS?  
REFLECTIONS ON KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

DAVID ZEITLYN

Many beliefs are labile, or peripheral, invoked but never explored, let alone examined systematically. The besetting sin of anthropology is to misplace concretism (Bateson 1980: 263), and this is a particular danger when dealing with beliefs. Our very practice tends to make things precise and delimited: we write them down, and then tease at our writings to ‘make sense’ of them. The real challenge of anthropology, it seems to me, is to record things in a way that remains faithful to the volatility of what we are describing.

In Cameroon, the Mambila with whom I work talk of the cho snake that lives in rivers and pools, the sight of which brings death. This snake is said to ‘blow the rainbow’, a statement for which I could elicit no further explanation. The neighbouring Tikar (according to a personal communication from their ethnographer, David Price) say that rainbows are the reflection of a snake. Mambila also maintain that in caves, behind waterfalls and at the bottom of ravines live tanyi, goat-like animals, which like witches can metamorphose themselves, usually in order to ensnare unsuspecting people. Tanyi attract unwary lone travellers. Both the cho snake and the tanyi figure as characters in stories told at beer drinks. For example, a man told of a journey he made to Nigeria one dry season during which he went into a cave. He said that a tanyi lived in that cave during the rainy season. No one asked how he established this fact.

A further example is the Mambila belief that cockerels lay eggs. I never suspected them of holding such a belief, and I think I would still be blissfully untroubled had David Price not prompted me to ask an explicit question when I
returned to the field in 1990. Price's fieldwork was carried out in Ngambe among
the neighbouring Tikar people. Among another neighbouring group, the Konja,
some men also made the same claim, but I have not, as yet, been able to explore
the Tikar or Konja elaborations.

Mambila, Tikar and Konja share a propositional belief that happens to be false.
As such, it is on a part with claims about the existence of phlogiston, unicorns or
the philosophers' stone. What is curious is that it seems to be fairly open to
empirical refutation, although Lewis (1980) points to some of the ways in which
this may be harder than it first appears. Our stumbling-block is our image of the
scientific tradition. Mundane beliefs seem to report 'facts' which could be
scientifically tested. Yet Lewis's Gnau do not sit in hides watching birds to see
if they die natural deaths. Similarly, Mambila do not watch their chickens to see
which bird lays what egg, nor do they dissect cockerels to establish whether they
are capable of such a feat. Moreover, our belief in rare and strange (unfamiliar)
objects is no different from the Mambila belief in *tanyi*. When I tell Mambila
friends that a hundred years ago there were manatee in the River Mbam (possibly)
or in the River Sanaga (certainly), the basis for my confidence is, on reflection,
extremely slender.

When I asked an explicit question, being long-winded to be sure I was being
fully understood, the answers I got were of the following form:

DZ: 'Chickens are of two sorts, female and male, hens and cockerels that crow in
the mornings. Hens lay eggs, I know, but I do not know if cockerels too can lay
eggs.'

Mambila: 'Oh yes, cockerels lay eggs, but small ones. You can eat them if you
like, but what you should do is to weave a small basket, put the egg in it and then
hang the basket at a crossroads. Then your chickens will grow well and fat and
not die and they will lay many eggs.'

Most people expressed uncertainty about birds in the wild. I talked about this
to two brothers (both in their twenties), one of whom keeps pigeons. They agreed
that male pigeons don't lay eggs. The younger brother then said that neither do
cockerels. Before I could say anything, his elder brother corrected him: 'Small
eggs are cockerels' eggs.' Eggs laid without shells are described with the same
terms as those used for miscarriages. Both are before term and are 'unripe'.
However, cockerels' eggs are different: although small they are perfectly formed.

To the best of my knowledge it is physically impossible for male birds of any
species to lay eggs, though I must confess that since a doubt was raised in my
mind I have subsequently confirmed this with some friends in the Oxford zoology
faculty. Granted this, two explanations are possible: (1) there are no such eggs,
and no one has ever seen them nor put them in baskets as described above; (2)
some aberrant hens' eggs are regarded as 'cockerels' eggs' by Mambila and are
given the treatment described above.

Mambila hens are free-range, preyed upon by kites, sparrow-hawks and eagles,
and prone to a wide variety of illnesses that can reach epidemic proportions. Eggs
are taken by egg-eating snakes and perhaps by small rodents. There is also a wide variety of ritual uses for chicks and chickens, quite apart from mere domestic consumption. In sum, a chicken’s life is fraught with uncertainty. We are far from the farmyard inductive certainties described by Bertrand Russell (1991 [1912]: 35). The source of any eggs that may be found is also far from clear. Hence cockerels are viable candidates for the unusual source of abnormally small eggs.

On the one hand there are mythical creatures: the dwarfs, hobgoblins, extra-terrestrials and hobbits of folklore. Beliefs such as these, like the dragon described by Sperber (1982), may be consigned to a category of travellers’ tales, or ‘semi-propositional representations’ (in Sperber’s terms). This means that they occur in talk (or other actions, for one can go out to hunt for golden-hearted dragons, or golden fleeces). They are propositional in form but stand for a range of propositions, rather than implying a single proposition. For the present it suffices to note that the way in which these beliefs are used resembles the use of religious concepts. They are alike at least in so far as both are protected from immediate empirical testing. The protection is achieved not so much in the manner described by Evans-Pritchard for Zande divination (1937: 475-8) but by the conversational context: you don’t argue with a story (with apologies to Maurice Bloch (1974)). Hard questioning of such stories only occurs when an ethnographer is present. Otherwise, scepticism expresses unfriendliness and a disinclination to continue the conversation. Any scepticism that may be expressed is not taken up and disseminated. The existence of mythical creatures is more newsworthy than their non-existence.

Thus for mythical beings. But, on the other hand, a few authors (such as those mentioned below) have discussed problems arising from the examination of more mundane beliefs. These are generally of the form ‘the Y people believe that X’. The problems are similar to those that arise in the analysis of religion but may be seen more clearly when separated from some of the different and similarly complex problems attendant upon the discussion of religion per se. Religious beliefs are doubly questionable. There is uncertainty about how we should best seek to understand religion, quite apart from the problems with belief itself.

A good example of the analysis of a mundane belief is to be found in Lewis’s discussion of the belief held by the Gnau in New Guinea that birds do not die natural deaths. This is, of course, identical in kind to a widely held belief that all human death is caused by witchcraft, so that in the absence of malevolent human action no one would die. More prosaic is the claim that the life of birds has no natural limit (one made implicitly by the Gnau). Lewis (1980: 137-8) has described his reactions on discovering that Gnau hold that birds do not die ‘natural’ deaths:

I treasure the feeling of discovery I had then for three reasons. Firstly, I had presumed that something was as obvious to them as it was to me and I was wrong. Yet I had lived with them more than two years without finding out so great a difference in the answers we would give to that question. Secondly, had you asked
me before whether I thought a particular people might have no fixed or sure answer to the question, I would have supposed it most unlikely. ‘Do birds and animals die?’ does not seem a question that would be left unsettled in the general knowledge provided in some culture. Two years passed until chance revealed it to me. Thirdly, the contrast between plants and animals which some people stressed led me to make clearer a distinction I was half aware of...Gnau men and women see some wild creature, it moves, is gone, and who can tell the next time whether it is the same one or another like it? Some say those creatures all must die, some say not, others are not sure.

Any dead birds which may be found are explained as having been killed. Death has external causes and is adventitious.

Gell (1975) mentions the way shadows in the forest may be seen as spirits (he thought he saw a knight in armour). A recent work of Sperber’s (1982) considers the existence of dragons with golden hearts. Liam Hudson (1972) reminds us that if we accept the existence of the rhinoceros it is hard to be complacent in denying the existence of the unicorn. I read in New Scientist that strange new creatures have been found in the depths of the Atlantic. By accepting these reports I incorporate these creatures as part of my knowledge, accepting it as knowledge by authority.¹

Anthropologists have had a long-standing fascination with beliefs that they deem to be peculiar or irrational. The whole notion of belief itself has been discussed from a variety of different standpoints. Philosophers make two useful distinctions when considering this subject: first, the difference between the objects of belief and ‘what [native speakers] mean by the word that the [anthropologist] translates as “belief” ‘ (Quine 1990: 116); second is the distinction between believing in something, and believing that something (Price 1969).² These two distinctions are particularly germane when we examine the literature discussing the perplexities of religion. Abstract and abstruse notions have been exhaustively examined, including such arcane matters as the putative identity of twins and birds among the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1956) and the numerologically satisfying and mythically complete account of the origin of the world and its contents as given by some Dogon (Griaule 1965). The question is, how should we analyse beliefs that seem to us to be empirically false?

¹. Russell (1991) used the phrase ‘knowledge by description’ to contrast with knowledge by acquaintance, which is the results of our own experience. I prefer to use ‘knowledge by authority’ since it emphasizes the social factors involved in accepting a description as being authoritative, i.e. true! Anthropologists may still wonder if such a distinction underestimates the extent that people learn (from within a culture) to understand their own experiences. I share this unease but feel that at a crude level the distinction may be a helpful one.

². This distinction is finer than it may seem at first sight (as Price illustrates). To believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God is little different from believing in him.
Despite the caveats raised by Needham (1972) I continue to use the term ‘belief’. Intentionality cannot be removed by taking a leaf from Wittgenstein’s book and demonstrating the lack of clear definition for the English word ‘belief’. As an analytic term it may not be the best: psychologists and philosophers often use ‘intentional states’ and ‘representations’ (which may be little improvement over ‘belief’ except that they are less likely to be confused with English folk concepts). Yet other cultures may have concepts that are well translated by ‘belief’. Like all translations, particularly those made by anthropologists, hedges and qualifiers will be added. ‘Belief’ remains as a possible term for use in translation. In particular, we must beware of two stereotypes that have distorted the anthropological study of belief and belief systems. They are The Creed and the products of scientific experiment (and scientific theories based on such experiments). Both are supreme creations of an idiosyncratic literate tradition that is historically specific and not generalizable without detailed argument. The latter is all too often lacking. The Creed is an explicit statement of the content of the beliefs that constitute a particular variety of Christianity. It gives the misleading impression that the contents of belief of other religions can also be specified. Similarly, the products of science, such as may be found in any textbook, give a misleading idea of certainty and of the possibility of precise, justifiable description.

It is still worth recalling Horton’s point (1967) that we all use ‘traditional’ thought or ‘traditional beliefs’ in our everyday life. It is hard work to act as an empirical scientist, and our best practitioners manage it for a very small part of their lives. We believe, and we recount what we have been told is true; and we make no attempt whatsoever to verify that information, even if the means to verify it may be readily at hand.

After further enquiry and reflection I am no more perplexed that Mambila believe that cockerels lay eggs than I am that a British Prime Minister can describe Britain as the world’s first democracy, or that Dan Quayle expected Latin to be spoken in Latin America. Accepting the assurances of colleagues in the Oxford zoology department that cockerels cannot lay eggs, I now tend to explain that what Mambila call cockerels’ eggs are aberrantly small hens’ eggs. The basis of this prosaic explanation is that the first egg laid by a broody hen is occasionally abnormally small. Also, a cockerel may lead a hen to lay in a nest, sometimes settling in first, as if to show the way. The combination of these two observations seems to be sufficient to explain a belief that cockerels lay eggs.

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JOHN HUGH MARSHALL BEATTIE  
1915-1990

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

John Beattie enjoyed a long and distinguished academic career. He possessed a number of attractive qualities and an endearing personality that radiated warmth and kindness. A number of friends and acquaintances from different walks of life, not least students of social anthropology and sociology, were irresistibly drawn to him and influenced by his ideas and way of thinking. We in this commemorative gathering are here really to celebrate John Beattie’s life, which had many facets to it; and the richness of which, in a profound sense, became accessible to a wide variety of individuals.

John Beattie was born in 1915 in County Wicklow in Ireland. The sudden death of his father when John was hardly two and a half years old perhaps gave him a sense of insecurity. He had, however, a highly developed sense of his Irish identity that he carefully but unobtrusively nurtured in later life with frequent visits to Ireland. Despite his high academic achievement at school, he was a relatively late developer; his initial interest in theology when he first entered Trinity College, Dublin, subsequently gave way to a more sustained engagement with philosophy.

As a student he felt attracted to the work of Immanuel Kant. He was deeply impressed by Kant’s concept of the categorical imperative, and perhaps also by the fact that Kant was one of the few philosophers to show an awareness of anthropology as an academic field of inquiry. It would be fair to say that throughout his career as a social anthropologist John Beattie bore the mark of the early influence exercised on his mind by Kant. His undergraduate career was highly successful, culminating in the award, for his work in mental and moral

Text of an address delivered at the Memorial Service for John Beattie held at St Cross Church, Oxford on Saturday, 7th July 1990. All John Beattie’s publications mentioned specifically here are included in the Select Bibliography provided below.
philosophy, of the only gold medal of the year given to an honours graduate in philosophy.

John's choice of career had a vocational aspect to it. After he obtained his honours degree, it was open to him to compete for either the Indian Civil Service or the Colonial Civil Service. In the event, it was the Colonial Civil Service that he decided to take up. It was not going to be just a career as far as he was concerned. It was in some vague, as yet undefined sense, a kind of dedication. His approach to it was whole-hearted, imbued with the liberal spirit in the finest sense of the term; the humanitarian appeal of serving in Africa far outweighed the administrative attractions of exercising authority and control over the lives of remote peoples.

On his selection to the Colonial Civil Service, John—along with several others who, like him, were to branch out in subsequent decades into an academic career in social anthropological studies—joined the Colonial Administrative Service. (This was just before the outbreak of the Second World War.) His philosophical bent of mind, influenced as we have already noted by his Kantian interests, was for the first time exposed, during the training provided by the Colonial Administrative Service course at Oxford, to lectures in the discipline of social anthropology given to the Colonial Civil Service cadets by Radcliffe-Brown and Meyer Fortes.

Of the majestic theoretical sweep that Radcliffe-Brown brought to the subject and the rigorous and 'dense ethnographic texture' of Fortes's material derived from his researches among the Tallensi, John felt the attractions of the latter to be novel in character and immediately relevant to the task of understanding the peoples among whom he was going to work. It would be reasonable to guess that during this brief exposure to applied social anthropology John grasped the equal importance of theory and fieldwork in social anthropology and the need to link them together in order to provide a rich and reliable understanding of any society.

The year 1939-40 at Oxford was also remarkable for another development. It was during that year that John met Honor, his future wife; his relationship with her was to become the fulcrum of his life. Her musical interests—she was a highly respected musician and had a distinguished career teaching the cello—stimulated his cultural interests. Their relationship remained very close indeed until Honor's sudden and tragic death twelve years ago.

John returned from Tanganyika in 1946 to marry Honor. Until then he had served in the Lake Province (in Sukumaland) in various administrative capacities. Returning to Tanganyika with Honor, he worked in Tunduru in the Southern Province. The first phase of what promised to be a very successful career indeed ended with a posting in the Secretariat in Dar es Salaam where he assumed some of the departmental duties in the sphere of 'African Affairs'. He thus became aware of Tanganyika's budding nationalist movement and the aspirations of the rising Tanganyikan élite.

It is worth remembering, however, that both Honor and John belonged to a rare breed of European civil servant. In their personal conduct with ordinary African people they treated them with dignity and respect without ever imposing
themselves on them. In fact, they were self-effacing to the highest extent possible, given the high-profile exposure to which John was inevitably subjected as a white colonial administrator. There were a number of incidents in which John's fundamental respect for African people was evident. On one occasion, a zealous African subordinate came to see him (John was the District Officer) to report that a group of men were having a marijuana-smoking party in the village and to seek orders as to what should be done about it. It was entirely in keeping with John’s attitude of 'live and let live' that he apparently said, 'No, they're not making trouble; so I think we can safely leave them to get on with it.'

During his first Dar es Salaam stint, John Beattie was also asked to assume the clerkship of the Legislative and Executive Councils. This post carried considerable prestige and responsibility. It also held great potential for promotion. However, during the first long overseas leave accumulated after his marriage, John sought permission to attend a full year's course (1949-50) at Oxford reading social anthropology. The department was buzzing with intellectual activity, and its young members' research interests reached out to the field in numerous far-flung lands.

A year devoted to study in Oxford also catered for Honor's professional interests. At the time, Oxford happened to be a place very much to her liking in an emotional, personal sense. It thus provided a most agreeable setting in which John imbibed the discipline in stimulating company and ventured forth to take a look at the wider theoretical shores of the discipline as it then was. Thus, he even referred to Lévi-Strauss's work on kinship in one of his examination answers.

Not surprisingly, a fruitful year in Oxford led to a decision to resign from the Colonial Civil Service in order to pursue further research in social anthropology at Oxford under the guidance of Professor Evans-Pritchard. In subsequent years, John Beattie and Professor Evans-Pritchard became very intimately associated in the teaching and research work of the department, though from different and independent inter-disciplinary positions of strength.

John did his fieldwork among the Nyoro people in Bunyoro in Uganda. As in his marriage, so too in the intellectual sphere, he gave throughout his career constancy of devotion, respect, concern and loyalty to the people whom he chose to study. About Nyoro society, John wrote a number of research papers (some of them highly distinguished); a non-specialist book giving a general introduction to the society, entitled Bunyoro: An African Kingdom; a teaching text entitled Understanding an African Kingdom: Bunyoro; and an important anthropological treatise on The Nyoro State that was to be followed by two further treatises, one on Nyoro law and the other on Nyoro culture, neither of which, sadly, have seen the light of day.

His general orientation to the subject was as significant as the weight and quality of his published contributions. His work among the Bunyoro as an anthropologist, as indeed his administrative career among the Tanganyikan peoples, was motivated by two considerations that were linked together into a unified methodology in his work as a whole. He had a firmly rooted belief in a common humanity and in the importance of reason in understanding human problems; at the
same time, he had the conviction that when it comes to explaining why so-called ‘primitive’ peoples are animated by beliefs and rituals that seem extraordinary to us, we ought to understand these activities as in no way a kind of mistaken science attributable to their stupidity or irrationality, but rather as activities comparable to art, music or drama in our own ‘complex’ society, activities performed for their own sake and not for any immediate result that might be expected to accrue.

This viewpoint is clearly stated in a celebrated essay of his published in Man in 1966 entitled ‘Ritual and Social Change’. Perhaps it is worth pointing out that John’s philosophical training and identification with the Kantian world-view led him, as a fieldworker, to look for the ‘universal’ in the ‘local’ and, in particular, to look for local expressions of universally comparable capacities of human experience. He believed that it made more sense to see ‘ritual’ as ‘art’ rather than ‘science’, because in this way we are able to emphasize the idea of a common humanity. By the same token, he was not concerned to force his understanding of the Nyoro society into some purely abstract theoretical mould; rather, his aim was to comprehend as fully as possible the complexity of Nyoro culture by focusing on a variety of aspects of it—the richness of Nyoro proverbs and the ambiguities of belief implied in the Nyoro spirit possession cult, to cite only two examples.

One of John’s great academic strengths lay in his capacity to communicate his understanding of society in a lucid, direct and well-crafted manner. He attached equal importance to research and to teaching, to doing his own research and to guiding the research of postgraduate students. He greatly enjoyed teaching undergraduates and had the capacity to pitch his lectures at a level that kept up the interest of bright students without losing those who were not so bright. His Other Cultures achieved considerable success as a textbook for undergraduates; it has been translated into numerous languages in different parts of the world and has been re-published several times and continues to this day to be an excellent introduction to comparative social anthropology. John’s skill as a communicator also enabled him to take part, in an effective way, in the anthropological debate on how we should understand ritual. He contributed several articles in this area, dealing with complex arguments in a subtle manner.

John was an excellent person to work with. He was gentle and warm, entirely without aggression, always ready to be more than fair to his adversary, and generous to a fault in his dealings with others; nor did he push his views at the expense of those of others. He brought out the best in his research students and greatly enjoyed his tutorial relationships, in which he stressed the importance of keeping ethnographic evidence always in focus. He attracted a large number of research students even in retirement, and guided the research work of many African students, some of whom have written extremely perceptive studies on East African topics.

John’s students and colleagues not only respected him but also developed a real affection towards him. He lectured in the Institute of Social Anthropology for twenty years before taking up the Chair of African Studies at the University of
Leiden in 1971. Throughout his career he was much sought after as a visiting professor and visiting scholar by many universities and institutes of advanced study in Africa, North America, Europe and Israel. He was also in great demand as an external examiner for degrees from undergraduate to doctoral level, in Britain as well as abroad, a task to which he invariably brought a nice combination of fairness and sympathy.

Events following the military coup in Uganda in 1971 made it difficult for him to keep in touch with his East African friends (especially those in Bunyoro and those with whom he had worked closely during his brief directorship of the East African Institute of Social Research in the early 1950s). This was a matter of great sadness to him. By the time political tensions began to ease in the mid-1980s (from 1986 to be precise), physical decline had already begun to set in and he was in no position to contemplate a journey to East Africa.

John’s passions were by no means restricted to the academic sphere. He developed a deep personal commitment to the people of Bunyoro and to the cause of the ‘Lost Kingdom’, which received a rough deal from the colonial over-rulers and the neighbouring kingdom of Buganda alike. He showed his concern for the younger generation of the Bunyoro by taking a keen interest in the education and welfare of a number of Bunyoro children to which he contributed in a spirit of quiet generosity. He would invariably request those friends of his who visited Bunyoro to take something for the young people there in whose welfare he was interested and to bring back news of their educational and personal progress.

John had a number of interests other than his interest in books and ideas. Endowed with a robust constitution, he loved to walk and to go on mountaineering expeditions in East Africa. In his retirement he walked a few times in the Yorkshire dales, but he walked and climbed regularly in the hills of his own native land of County Wicklow. His love of Ireland did not prevent his realising that he could not make it his permanent home, even as his reservations about life in England did not prevent him from making it his home either. In true Irish spirit he loved Irish literature, and especially poetry. He was fond of W. B. Yeats’s poems, many of which he knew by heart. The ambivalence that he felt about England and Ireland was reflected in his preference for the great poet’s outpourings about the tension of being an Irishman in England. John was particularly fond of Yeats’s poem ‘An Irish Airman Foresees His Death’, which contains the lines: ‘Those that I fight I do not hate, / Those that I guard I do not love’.

John distinguishing characteristic was his gentle and unobtrusive personality. He never raised his profile in any controversy, though he always stood his ground with intelligence and tenacity. He had a finely balanced nature, combining the Apollonian with the Dionysian elements of his make-up in amusing and intelligent ways. Yet, on balance, he was a Dionysian at heart. He enjoyed the pleasures of life, if sometimes in a quiet and recessive manner, always delighting in sharing his joys with friends. His hospitality was always freely given and he was frequently visited by scholars from different continents. He was a sociable, energetic, kindly, humorous, sensitive and intelligent person. At his best, he reached out to others
in his own generous manner. He loved to paint, and could have made a decent living at it if he had chosen to become an artist. His oils and watercolours have a professional flair about them. He had a mordant sense of humour, which he expressed through the vehicle of caricature; a number of 'outlandishly amusing and bizarre' cartoons are extant in the collections of his friends. I remember him drawing some of these extremely complicated pictures on the backs of cigarillo packets to great effect at conferences, often to relieve the tedium of having to listen to boring and mediocre papers.

John never fully recovered from Honor's death. He did try to return to normal teaching and guidance of research, but it did not last for more than five or six years. He could not complete his agenda of publication for the two volumes on Nyoro culture and Nyoro law for which the ethnographic material was ready. This will remain a loss to the literature on East Africa.

When the end came it was swift. At last, on Good Friday 1990, John Beattie 'drifted out of harbour on a silent tide', a peaceful end to a distinguished and dignified but quiet career: 'The curtain of your life was drawn / Sometime between despair and dawn.' A rich and sociable life, lived at a number of different levels in a number of different places over an extremely interesting span of history reflecting the destinies of colonizing and colonized countries, thus came to an end.

We are here to pay tribute to a 'good, honourable, and gentle' scholar who will be remembered for a long time as 'a thinker of the middle way', and above all to a beloved and much missed friend, parent and relative whose passing has impoverished our lives.

T. V. SATHYAMURTHY

J. H. M. BEATTIE: A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compiled by Hugh Beattie and Jeremy Coote

This select bibliography comprises books written, edited or co-edited by him (first editions only), as well as a selection of those of his articles thought to be of most general interest. His many ethnographic articles and essays concerning the Banyoro have not been included, nor have his reviews (except for review articles), comments, notes, letters and reprints. A complete bibliography is being prepared.


1964c  *Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology*, London: Cohen & West.


1973  *Social Anthropology and Africa* (Inaugural Address Delivered on his Appointment as Professor in the Social and Cultural Anthropology of Africa on November 2, 1973 by Dr. J. H. M. Beattie), Leiden: Leiden University Press.


J. H. M. BEATTIE AND THE OUAS

Professor Beattie’s long association with anthropology at Oxford, as described by Dr Sathyamurthy in his Memorial Address above, is well reflected in the record of his involvement with the University’s Anthropological Society. He served as its President twice: from 1961 to 1962 (and thereafter as an active, though occasionally apologetic member of the Society’s committee) and then for a two-year period from 1979 to 1981.

Surprisingly, he addressed the Society only once, at its 519th meeting on 17 November 1954 in the University Museum, when he took as his subject ‘Spirit Possession in Bunyoro’, a topic to which he was to return time and again in his academic publications. According to the minutes of the meeting, John’s ‘vivid analysis’—as it was described by John Peristiany, who led ‘a lively discussion’ that followed—was received with acclamation.

During his second stint as President, John presided over a renaissance in the Society’s activities, after a rather moribund phase it had gone through in the 1970s. This period in the Society’s history will be remembered with pleasure by all who attended its meetings at the time. John’s good nature and humour saw the Society through a remarkable series of technical mishaps with tape recorders and slide and film projectors; indeed, anything that could go wrong did go wrong. His hospitality ensured, however, that even on the most wintry of evenings (and even on those summery ones when Oxford offers many other attractions) a large audience turned up at the Pitt Rivers Museum’s green hut and later at the Linacre College lecture room, for the fortnightly meeting. Looking back over the records of that time one is struck by the variety of speakers and topics that John organized for our entertainment. It was, perhaps, never knowing quite what to expect—apart from technical mishaps—that made those meetings so popular.

With Professor Beattie’s death the Society has lost one of its most senior members. It takes this opportunity of joining with John’s many friends and colleagues, both here and abroad, in conveying its condolences to his family.

JEREMY COOTÉ
BOOK REVIEWS


Not long ago, Alfred Gell published an article in *Anthropology Today* (Vol. IV, no. 2, 1988) speculating on the similarity between magic and science. Imagination, he contended, propels both endeavours; advances in technology and magical incantation alike depend on successful resort to fantasy. In magic, the imagination is persuasively engaged at the moment one utters a spell or performs a ritual action, while in the domain of technology, engineers first imagine a possible configuration or contraption and then work it out on paper. One must imagine flying before one can proceed to draw plans for an aeroplane. That magic perhaps has more to do with imagining desired results than with executing rituals, practising a form of misguided experimental science or otherwise taking its ground operations overly seriously, seems an interesting proposition.

*Persuasions of the Witch’s Craft*, by Tanya Luhrmann, a Cambridge-trained anthropologist, adds a lot of grist to Gell’s mill. The study is based on a period of fourteen months’ field research in London, primarily among practitioners of ritual magic who organize themselves into separate, exclusive covens. These witches are shown to thrive within the general context (and networks) of the New Age movement, a vast umbrella of occult or naturist cures, therapies and religious practices: everything from tarot-card reading to neo-paganism.

Most covens preserve a high degree of secrecy regarding their practices. It is only after one is initiated that one can really learn the inner workings of present-day magic, and this may involve a long course of study as a novice. During her nine-month apprenticeship in one particular coven, Luhrmann was required to complete a half-hour exercise every day. These were then marked and returned every couple of weeks. Most of these assignments, certainly most of the practices and homework that she reports from other groups she joined, involved exercises in visualization and the scripting of rituals, using characters and themes drawn from world mythology, science fiction, history, or some combination of all of these. In one particular ritual the coven members, naked underneath their handmade magical robes—usually sitting in a circle in a darkened room in a terrace-house in London, but on this occasion on a weekend retreat at a Wiltshire manor-house—were asked to imagine themselves aboard Sir Francis Drake’s *Golden Hind*. During the course of the ritual they sailed together around the world, eventually landing back in England. No one, not even the adepts who scripted and led the ritual, was entirely sure what it signified or achieved. Some reported seasickness, wobbliness and that they could taste salt spray.

Like this ritual, most of the magical rituals witnessed by Luhrmann seemed to place a premium on the creative invention of strange scenarios peopled by exotic characters. No voodoo dolls, no burning of pubic hairs, no potions for these magicians. But then the author moved strictly in white magic circles, claiming
black magic to be relatively rare in England. White magicians will sometimes
undertake rituals on behalf of friends who need to find a flat or a job, and in one
case a man enacted spells to help a woman he had met in Belgium overcome her
epilepsy. Imagination is practically the London magician’s only tool. If
instrumentality is called for, then one imagines that instrumentality. (It is
interesting, in this light, that John Lennon claimed he was accused of trying to
work magic through his song ‘Imagine’.)

*Persuasions of the Witch’s Craft* must be the first full-scale ethnography of
psycho-babble. Here is an example from page 246: ‘Uranus in the sixth house of
psychism is perfect for an astrologer, which I’ve got [sic]. Jupiter—I’ve got
Jupiter in the ninth, which is to do with convention, and tradition...Jupiter’s all
about the past, the right and proper way to do things. That’s what I like, you
know, about being British.’ The ethnography is detailed, and I wonder if witches
and other New Age faithful will not comprise the most appreciative readership for
most of it. The busy anthropologist interested in religion and cognition will turn
to the book’s concluding analytical chapters. Here the author tries to account for
how normally rational, upstanding members of contemporary society manage to
accommodate magic in their lives. How can computer programmers, for example,
accept or even ‘believe’ in magic?

Most magicians remain sceptics for a long time, but as their experience of
magic deepens, as they attend more rituals and interpret them in the company of
fellow witches, they gradually place trust in magic. They slowly shift to another
way of seeing and interpreting the world. Their heads full from science-fiction
reading, imaginative pathworking sessions or whatever else is going, they begin
to dream vivid fantastic dreams. Events which earlier they would have deemed
coincidences come to be treated as consequences or side effects of magical action.
Wrist-watches stop or pipes burst because of the presence of magical energy. The
sceptic ends by defending magical practice against outsiders who cannot under-
stand the ‘plane’ on which magic works. Luhmann thus concludes that action
precedes belief. One gets involved with magic and then begins to believe in it.

Comparatively little attention gets paid to *why* individuals turn to magic in the
first place. It is asserted, for example, that computer people who know program-
ning languages and are able to control and manipulate vast data banks already
possess talents comparable to those of the magician. Do these very programmers
not refer to themselves on occasion as ‘wizards’? Luhmann contends, quite
plausibly, that magic fits easily into the categories and world-view of computer
specialists and that this accounts for the ease and frequency with which they
become magicians. Do we want to stop here? Perhaps it is too obvious to point
out that magic highlights and depends upon human spiritual and emotional contact.
Its rules and rituals are indisputably humanistic, and this quality must be very
different from the computer world, where people interact with machines.

This book very ably shows and analyses *how* people get involved with magic
and how they come to find magic convincing. It draws very widely and
thoroughly on theories from cognitive and psychological anthropology and is a
useful guide to a very hot area of our discipline. One must not forget, however, that cognition takes place in a social context, often for reasons that are politically or economically motivated. This book tends to leave such issues unconsidered. Flights of fancy, feigned or felt, may transport one from the position of sceptic to that of believer. They also serve to elevate one in a hierarchy that places adepts at the top.

CHARLES STEWART


These two books provide excellent, though very different, examples of writing on South Asian migrant groups in Britain. Although they are very different in style and analysis, the similarity in subject-matter—the ‘social organization’ of migrant Pakistanis in two British cities—renders them highly complementary. They also represent differing outcomes of the development of sociological interest in minority groups in Britain.

The earliest literature, such as Dessai’s pioneering Indian Immigrants in Britain (1963), took the ‘broad sweep’ approach, gathering together the scant official data and supplementing these with anecdote and cursory observation. From the latter part of the 1960s and through the 1970s, anthropologists were responsible for a succession of works that narrowed the focus down to a single group in a single location, but they were still determined to provide a well-rounded ethnography. The success of this approach was limited, however, for several crucial areas continued to be ignored, as they were in other branches of anthropology, most notably gender and proto-capitalist economic strategies. Classic studies from this period include Jeffery’s Migrants and Refugees: Muslim and Christian Pakistani Families in Bristol (1976), Tamb-Lyche’s London Paidars (1980) and Dench’s Maltese in London (1975). The sociologists meanwhile were producing ‘issue-oriented’ works: for example, Castles and Kosak’s Marxist study Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe (1973), and Rex and Moore’s classic, Race, Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrooke (1969).

In the 1980s, the two approaches began to draw together, as anthropologists became increasingly wary of the ‘total ethnography’ approach, while sociologists
realized the need for a sensitive ethnographic unpacking of the ‘problems’ that interested them. Single-volume ethnographies decreased, and the emphasis came to rest increasingly on collections of papers. An attempt to meet these two lacunae was seen first in the publication of Ward and Jenkins’ edited volume *Ethnic Communities in Business* (1984), and then in Westwood and Bachu’s collection *Enterprising Women: Ethnicity, Economy and Gender Relations* (1988). In the late 1980s and at the start of the 1990s it seems as if the wheel has turned full circle: ethnography from all areas of the world has become fashionable again, and works are now deemed ‘new’ ethnographies, or even, examples of ‘the new ethnography’. Neither Shaw’s nor Webner’s book is ‘new’ ethnography in the fashionable sense, but both reflect growing trends and concerns.

Shaw’s book is a return to the monographs of the 1970s, but written with a sensitivity and understanding that surpasses all but the very best. In particular, her linguistic ability (conspicuously absent from some earlier monographs) and her detailed ethnographic knowledge of Pakistan give the work a scope and depth that is belied by the innocuous title and the—to my taste—rather crude jacket illustrations and design. Shaw’s particular strength lies in marrying well-founded anthropological generalizations with acutely observed detail and first-person testimony on the part of the informants. Her focus is on the whole ‘community’ of Oxford Pakistanis, but she gives us very much an insider’s view (by way of case-studies and direct quotation) and writes largely from the point of view of the women. This is not directly discussed in the book, but it is clear that this siting of herself on one side of the gender boundary is as much a theoretical strategy as it is a pragmatic one; for it is through a complex system of reciprocal gift-giving, *lenā-denā*, that Oxford’s Pakistani women weave a network of contacts throughout the city. This network intersects with another, in which women also play a key strategic role, the *birāderi* or notionally endogamous group. *A Pakistani Community in Britain* is not, however, a ‘women’s studies’ work but one which sensitively and clearly investigates the lives of a group of people living in an English city.

Shaw begins with a detailed and historically grounded account of the migration of the Pakistanis from the Panjab and other regions of northern Pakistan. Her discussion then moves through the early years of settlement in Oxford and the composition of households into the two major areas of investigation: caste, *birāderi* and marriage, and gift-giving and other forms of reciprocity (chapters 5 and 6). For both areas Shaw stresses the flexibility of the formal systems by which Pakistanis operate and provides, through case-studies, examples of the ways in which people, primarily but not exclusively women, negotiate relationships to create a sense of enmeshing. That is to say, ‘community’ is an emergent and processual phenomenon, not an a priori characteristic of such migrant groups. A rather less satisfying chapter on patronage and political leadership follows this discussion, and the book finishes (perhaps a little abruptly) with a chapter on the so-called second generation and its attitudes towards marriage.
Although there is an index, the book contains no bibliography, and the references are kept to a minimum. Its style and the tone of some of the references indicate that it is intended to reach beyond the narrow circle of academics interested in Asian minorities in Britain and indeed beyond anthropology and academia. It would seem ideal reading for those involved in the practical end of the race-relations industry; for example, two personal anecdotes (pp. 1-2 and pp. 135-6) relate how Shaw felt a sense of failure when trying to mediate between certain individuals and the local (white) state structures, and, although the experiences were educational, they act as salutary warnings against well-meaning but ill-informed attempts to promote 'racial harmony'.

Werbner's book may be contrasted with Shaw's on many levels. To begin with, Werbner's book is clearly 'designed', forming as it does one of the early volumes in Berg's new 'Explorations in Anthropology Series' for University College London. From the tinted photograph and six typefaces on the restful grey and green front cover, through the complex diagrams and horizontal-format tables inside, to the challenging statement of the series' intentions on the back cover, this book says: 'new', 'modern', 'path-breaking'. While Shaw's book takes the anthropological study of Asian-origin minorities in Britain outside academia, Werbner's book attempts to place it right up there as serious theoretical anthropology. This is certainly to be applauded: the study of minority groups in Britain has for too long been a ghettoized discipline, confined to internalized debates and attracting little interest from other anthropologists. Werbner demonstrates that serious theoretical work can be produced from data gathered right on the doorstep. I have to confess, however, that the particular theoretical stance she takes is not really to my taste. After Shaw's perceptive and highly readable volume, I found Werbner's rather cold and clinical. This seems, paradoxically, to be the result of too much attention to detail, of too many individuals and their doings. It is possibly because the particular events and people seem almost to be used as ciphers, demonstrating a point but appearing to lack character.

Like Shaw's, Werbner's book is based on a doctoral dissertation. In Werbner's case, her work was carried out at the University of Manchester, and the influence of the Manchester 'school' is strong. Network analyses are used extensively, and there is a flavour on occasion of structuralist-influenced transactionalism (for example in chapter 9, 'Wedding Rituals and the Symbolic Exchange of Substance'). Like Shaw, Werbner presupposes no a priori 'community', but unlike Shaw she indicates that it might be possible to locate an analytical community through computer-generated matrix analysis.

Despite the title of the book, there is no extended discussion of the details of migration, although there are short descriptions in the first chapter and then throughout the rest of the book. While I would still have preferred there to be such a discussion, I take Werbner's point that migration must be seen as a process, and that that process continues after the migrants have technically arrived. Like Shaw, Werbner is arguing for a processual view of migrant-group dynamics; her four or more years of fieldwork in the late 1970s, presumably followed by
continuing contact, allow her to take a moderately longitudinal view and prompt her, for example, to seek some way around the essentially static nature of much network analysis by introducing the idea of ‘transitivity’. This is a gravitational phenomenon, whereby denser areas of a network (Werbner’s networks are mostly of an informal leisure-based type, many of her male informants being self-employed, rather than factory-workers) tend to become more dense over time as two parties linked by a mutual third forge their own link.

One of Werbner’s main foci is the gifting phenomenon, lenä-denä, and other aspects of the gift economy. Although her discussion is similar to Shaw’s, Werbner goes a step further by examining the intermeshing of (largely female) gifting networks with (largely male) trading and business networks, both of which, by being locked within the migrant economic enclave, tend to mutual reinforcement. There is a semantically closed but dynamic cycle whereby mundane commodities are transformed into gifts that, by their exchange, support valued social relationships and enable businesses to prosper (through mutual aid societies and informal loans), thus indirectly generating further commodities. This I found the most challenging and exciting aspect of the book: an ethnographically rooted and original contribution to the debate on gifts and commodities; Werbner makes use of, and then goes beyond, Gregory’s Gifts and Commodities (1982).

The book certainly has much to commend it (for example, the critique of positivist social geographers and their ideas of residential zoning on pp. 14-17) and it is packed with information. My criticisms are minor: little or no discussion of Pakistan or the Panjab, an absence of diacritics, and occasional irritating mistakes with regard to South Asia (Gujarat State, in India, is apparently intended in a reference on p. 91 (n.4) to ‘Gujrat’, a ‘region’ of India, when Gujarat is in fact a district in the Panjab). The very density of the information, however, and a rather awkward style, make it a difficult if rewarding read. I have already used A Pakistani Community in Britain as an introductory ethnography for undergraduates and shall be using The Migration Process for work on the economy with more advanced students.

MARCUS BANKS


We are accustomed to thinking of Turkey as a state whose heavy-handed policies towards its own ethnic minorities generate a refugee problem rather than the reverse. In fact, Ottoman and modern Turkey have had a long history of receiving
substantial numbers of refugees from Central Asia and the Balkans. Svanberg's dilemma, in demonstrating an awareness of Turkey's human-rights record on the one hand and 'the Ottoman tradition of a generous refugee policy' (p. 62) on the other, is understandable. There is, however, plenty of room for cynicism. As Svanberg himself points out, refugees and immigrants from the Balkans and the Crimea bolstered the strength of the Muslim millet (religious community) under the rule of Sultan Abdulhamit II and provided manpower to a population depleted by countless wars. Circassian immigrants renowned for their military prowess packed sensitive border areas, and refugees from Central Asia added weight to the pan-Turkish myths that legitimated the modern Turkish state. Today, those who can lay no claim to Turkic ancestry, such as those fleeing the Iranian revolution, and the thousands of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis rendered homeless by the recent Gulf crisis, are classified as 'tourists' and experience the less benign side of these policies.

The Kazaks of Turkey are a small community of some 5000 Turkic-speaking Muslims who were forced to abandon their pastoral nomadic existence in Xinjiang following a history of marginalization at the expense of tsarist, Soviet and Chinese expansion. Resisting the Chinese communists in Xinjiang proved futile—Kazaks fled to Mongolia, Tibet and the Soviet Union, and some sought refuge with the Chinese nationalist government in Taiwan. In 1941, a small group of Kazaks fled China and reached India. Following the partition of India they, and the new arrivals who managed to survive the two-year journey over the Himalayas, were forced to move once again to Pakistan. In 1952, they were granted permission to settle in Turkey and sailed to Iraq to complete the rest of their epic journey to Istanbul by train. Many were resettled in small villages in southern Anatolia, though a number stayed in Istanbul. Upheavals in the rural economy and rapid urbanization resulted in many of the village Kazaks migrating back to Istanbul in the 1950s, joining millions of Turkish villagers, and from there—as opportunities arose—leaving Turkey to seek work in Western Europe and the Arab world.

At the outset, Svanberg limits his analysis to the question of Kazak refugees in Turkey, the aim of the book being to tell us something about the Kazaks and something about Turkey (p. 29). However, the fieldwork that Svanberg draws upon collates material gathered amongst Kazak refugees not just in rural and urban Turkey, but also in Sweden, Berlin, Taipei and elsewhere. The substantial fifth chapter, investigating 'Kazak Cultural Patterns in Exile', deals amongst other things with Kazak birth rituals in rural south Anatolia, engagement parties in Istanbul, funeral rites among Kazaks near Izmir, Friday mosque attendance in Taipei and the acquisition of horse-meat for consumption in Berlin. In this rich ethnographic material I found it difficult to identify processes of change peculiar to Kazaks in rural or urban Turkey. Even within Turkey, the different contexts in which Kazak identity is adapted and asserted are not clearly defined. The position of a Kazak living in a government-constructed refugee village in southern Anatolia, in bitter competition for land claimed by a neighbouring village of Yörük Turks, and of a Kazak running his own leather workshop supplying 'Afghan' coats to
European hippies in a suburb of Istanbul are quite different. We are not looking at a single process of migration, assimilation and counter-assimilation involving a single ‘in’ group and a single ‘out’ group, as the overall outline of Svanberg’s analysis would imply, but a complex knot of such processes.

In the final section, Svanberg discusses the factors that have resulted in the regeneration of ‘Kazak culture’ in Turkey. This has arisen as a result of the activities of a number of political entrepreneurs who succeeded in distancing Kazak interests from those of Uighur and other ‘Türkistanli’ groups, encouragement from the state and various political organizations, and a certain pride in the economic niche in the leather industry that the Kazak have successfully managed to carve for themselves in Istanbul. The use of Herskovits’ term ‘counter-acculturation’ to describe this process is somewhat misleading. Undoubtedly, this regeneration has taken place not in spite of, but because of the assimilation policies adopted by the state, in whose eyes the Kazaks are speakers of ‘the’ Turkish language, Muslims, and committed anti-communists. A perception of difference is explicitly cultivated amongst specific ethnic groups by many authoritarian states as ‘evidence’ of their power to unite. One must also take issue with Svanberg’s statement that the Kazaks have not politicized their assertion of ‘ethnic identity’ as have the Kurds or Alevi. The politics of Kazak ethnicity conform for the most part to that of the dominant group and is thus invisible, whereas that of the Kurds does not. These points do not, however, detract from the value of Svanberg’s book in providing rich material for the discussion of ethnicity and its relation to involuntary migration.

MARTIN STOKES


Having acknowledged that in many ethnographies women are represented through the eyes of men, Roger Just sets out to establish the ‘cultural assumptions of the male society which has chosen to record its views for posterity in the enduring authority of written texts’ (p. 3). To this end, an impressive array of Greek texts (all composed by men) are examined for evidence that might shed light on the way women were understood in ancient Athens.

Since men were debarred from participating in Athenian democracy unless their parents were both Athenian and married, the legal status of women (wife, concubine, courtesan) had important implications for men, of which women were necessarily aware. Presenting a variety of textual evidence (mainly legal), Just demonstrates that because women had this power to confer citizenship on their offspring, and because they had personal rights of religious and economic
inheritance, they could be manipulated (often by their kyrios or guardian/protector) to serve alliances beneficial to men.

Just takes issue with the common premise that fifth-century Athenian women were subject to 'Oriental' domestic seclusion. His sources show that Athenian women attended the theatre, the market, religious festivals, weddings and funerals—all public occasions at which men were also present. He does, however, concede that there were probable differences in the conduct of women according to the social class or status group they belonged to, and he suggests that different rules of morality were drawn up according to the status ideology of the householder. Just as political differences existed, so too did an ideological distinction between the 'domestic world of women' and the 'public world of men'. This even affected Athenian notions of beauty, as the highly valued pale complexion was achieved by lack of outdoor exposure. A strong sense of impropriety was felt if an unrelated Athenian male intruded upon a free woman.

While Athenian women had no constituted civic role to play, they were often instrumental agents in the policies of men. Sculptures, funeral reliefs and comic dramas all illustrate the closeness of relationships that existed between men and women in households where women could wield significant influence and authority. Yet Just still maintains that, on the whole, a physical relationship with one's wife had more to do with her childbearing capacity than with erotic or emotional sensuality. He also discusses the heterosexual relationships between men and women of different social categories, as well as the socially accepted and widespread phenomenon of homosexuality. But we are reminded that the plot of Aristophanes' Lysistrata (a sex strike by the wives of the Athenian citizens at war with Sparta) implies that most Athenian men would expect to find their sexual satisfaction with their wives.

The last three chapters analyse the characteristics typically attributed by men to women, as demonstrated mainly with reference to dramatic texts. That men should define women as their emotional counterparts is scarcely surprising. Thus the Athenian female acquired standard associations of 'timidity', 'self-indulgence and excess', 'enslavement to desires', 'irrationality and lack of judgement', in antithetical contrast to their opposed male virtues! There are many references in Greek comedy illustrating such associations, including dipsomania and a voracious sexual appetite, while tragedy furnishes many examples of the 'weak', tearful female. The author develops these ideas to show how female attributes were viewed by men as forms of enslavement, a concept which was abhorrent to the free Athenian male. Because of their disciplined, emotional and irrational nature, Athenian women had to be placed under the supervision and protection of a kyrios or 'guardian'. And just as women were excluded from city life, so too were their natural characteristics seen as being untamed and uncivilized: 'their integration into society was, as it were, artificial—the result of their subjugation and domestication by men' (p. 215).

The last chapter is devoted to showing how female characters from Greek myth and legend have constantly reinforced this view of the 'wild' and unknown
aspect of the female psyche. An examination of the marriage rituals that symbolize the introduction of cultivation offer an interesting analogy with the civilizing effects of marriage. Just sees the legend of the Amazons, for example, as a clear illustration of how the Greeks located women outside the boundaries of civilization, and how they were also symbolic of any challenge to Athens from the outside, particularly from the Persians (an idea also to be found in Hartog’s recent *The Mirror of Herodotus*). Just’s analysis of Medea and the Bacchants arrives at a similar conclusion, suggesting that a permanent tension surrounded the position of women, who were both necessary to society but also estranged from it. This position is symbolized in the choice of Athena as the patron goddess of the Athenians, that is, a female with distinctly masculine qualities.

The discussion and textual examples in the last three chapters certainly provide more imaginative stimulation than the critical review of legal texts dealt with in the early part of the book. But feminist scholars may be disappointed by Just’s analytical reliance upon familiar antithetical devices in characterizing male and female qualities in Athenian discourse (man:woman; public:private etc.) that was arguably more complex and contradictory in practice. Nevertheless, the book is very readable and well paced, though it might perhaps have been more logical to develop first the examples of female irrationality amply demonstrated in literary sources. Having done this, one could understand more readily why women in Athens were excluded from the public sphere and why they had to have a male protector placed over them to guard their honour and interests.

SHAHIN BEKHRADNIA


If you heard about someone going out shopping in a Super Gran Turismo to buy Irish cake, Sorbet du Temps, Alpen Weiss and Crispina, then returning home to read Beruf and Elleteen, while drinking Sweet Kiss, or perhaps Protein Jeune, and smoking the odd Cherry, you could be forgiven for being confused about where the person in question was located. It would not be far-fetched to suggest somewhere in Europe, or perhaps a cosmopolitan part of North America like New York or Montreal, but you would be a long way out. For these product names are all currently in use for locally made goods many miles away in Japan. In Japan too—a monolingual country where Japanese is the only language widely understood for more than the most basic of exchanges—foreign words stand out
everywhere. In advertisements, shop signs, on clothes and on television, foreign visitors may constantly see and hear reminders of their own native environments, but they will be reminders only. It is unlikely they will make much sense of them, they may even find them hilarious, or possibly, quite offensive.

Harald Haarmann has set out to examine and analyse this abundant use of foreign words and phrases in Japan, particularly in a manifestation he calls 'impersonal multilingualism', the multilingualism of the mass media as opposed to its use in colloquial speech. In this form, he argues, the use of languages foreign to Japan can be seen as having prestige functions, allowing members of the community to feel cosmopolitan and 'modern' without ever leaving their own shores. However, the language chosen is definitely not that of minority communities present in Japan, such as the Koreans, nor is it even necessarily language used by other native speakers. It is language adopted by Japanese people for their own purposes, and different languages have taken on different roles in vernacular discourse. English, for example, by far the most commonly used, is a vehicle of modernity; French, one of elegance. German is associated with the serious world of business, but also with the untranslatable Gemütlichkeit; Italian, on the other hand, stands for sporty cars and tasty cookery. Haarmann writes: 'whereas Japanese is the basic means for the transfer of practical information, foreign languages...predominantly serve as "exotic spices" in order to titillate the visual and auditory senses of the public' (pp. viii-ix).

Haarmann's study does not stop with this rather impressionistic statement, however. Indeed, this is just the beginning of a careful and detailed presentation of the use of foreign words in the Japanese media, a discussion of some of the attitudes of its consumers, and an attempt to draw out some of the lexical and semiotic implications for the more colloquial language. Using this detailed Japanese case as his prime example, Haarmann then tries to show how it is just an extreme version of a process he calls world-wide 'symbolic internationalization'. In the final chapter, the Japanese material is compared with linguistic borrowings elsewhere, notably in Vietnamese, Finnish, German and Maltese, where he illustrates both differences in the positive avoidance of borrowings from certain languages and similarities in the prestige functions and subsequent symbolic value of foreign elements.

Haarmann demonstrates both the extraordinary aspects of this Japanese cultural borrowing and the way in which it may be subsumed into a more general theory of acculturation. In written advertising copy, for example, Japanese, together with the various languages from which it borrows, provides several writing systems to draw upon, and this range of choice offers possibilities for multiple meanings as well as for 'stimulating and attractive optical sensations' way beyond those of most other languages. In television commercials, the Japanese use foreign names, foreign actors, foreign locations and foreign slogans for a much greater range of even home-produced items than any other people in the author's considerable acquaintance. Although it is clear from research on audience attitudes that many of the foreign words and phrases remain quite alien to Japanese viewers, it is also
evident that some of them are gradually being absorbed into colloquial language too, even at basic levels such as those dealing with numbers and colours.

Haarmann's general sociolinguistic theory is concerned with the adoption of elements of language, notably English, as part of a process of internationalization, but specifically through features which go beyond the needs of practical communication. These are the features with symbolic value, found particularly in commercial ventures such as advertising and sales drives, whose adoption he calls symbolic internationalization, but which, with time, may also enter the language of their adoption for more straightforward practical communicative purposes. Haarmann presents the Japanese case not only to provide a detailed example of this process, but also in the hope of stimulating research elsewhere into the working of this form of symbolic internationalization, which he briefly shows exists in a number of other linguistic contexts.

The book is interesting on several counts. First, it is probably the most systematic description and analysis of the extraordinary phenomenon of Japanese adoption and adaption of foreign words and other symbols, particularly for their own commercial purposes. It therefore brings an objective, quantitative eye to a subject that foreign visitors to Japan have for years noticed and discussed in a more impressionistic way. It also offers a number of explanations for why the phenomenon should be so widespread in Japan, yet succeeds in casting it into a wider sociolinguistic theoretical framework, important for Japan specialists who grow tired of the country being described as 'unique', a 'special case'. The value of the theory itself is a matter I must leave linguists to assess.

From an anthropological point of view the book is a little frustrating, for it seems to change tack just when the analysis becomes most intriguing. A detailed discussion of the use of specific foreign words is, for instance, limited to a very few examples, such as the use of various forms of 'new' in the context of modernity, and the association of élégance with Frenchness. There is also little attempt to relate to each other different words from the same language in their Japanese context, which might enable one to build up a more detailed picture of local meaning. The chapter on semiotic implications of foreign language use, which includes a promising discussion of the impact of the simultaneous presentation of different writing systems, is not only very short, but also moves rather quickly into a more linguistic concern with the way the mass media provide a bridging function, allowing the words they use to move eventually into colloquial language. Nevertheless, the book will be of intrinsic value for researchers in many areas because of the comprehensive nature of the lists it provides of loanwords used in various Japanese contexts. This cannot help but complement the usually more ad hoc gleanings made by observers in this field. Haarmann's detailed presentation of data thus opens up his study beyond his stated aim of stimulating comparison from linguists working in other areas.

JOY HENDRY

It is a pleasure to review a book that lives up to the promise on the cover. The Poison in the Gift is indeed 'a detailed ethnography of gift-giving in a North Indian village that powerfully demonstrates a new theoretical interpretation of caste'. The detail and the density of description are impressive, and the whole is marshalled to form a sustained attack on Dumont's Homo Hierarchicus (with others, such as Mauss, Heesterman, Matrion and Inden, and Trautmann, being chastised for going along with Dumont in one way or another). Of all the attacks on Dumont that have emanated from Chicago over the years, this is the most radical and at the same time the most grounded in solid ethnography.

It is a great and welcome strength of The Poison in the Gift that its author was not afraid to devote the bulk of her space to rituals and the language used to articulate them. Ritual in India has too often been left to textual scholars. In some places the accumulation of Hindi words makes for heavy going, but the overall coherence of the book, and the pervasive themes running through the rituals, carry one through.

The symbolic heart of rituals in Pahansu, Raheja's village in western Uttar Pradesh, is the transfer of inauspiciousness. 'Inauspiciousness' translates a number of Hindi terms, all of which refer to unwelcome states or afflictions which bring misfortune. Since Dumont, Raheja argues, anthropologists have been concerned above all with ranking or hierarchy, but this is to miss what caste is really about. The form of inter-caste relations may be hierarchical—though even this Raheja contests—but their content is the removal of inauspiciousness.

It is the duty of the specialist castes to take gifts (ḍān), and the associated inauspiciousness, from donors. (To get rid of the inauspiciousness received in this way, they have to pass on the gifts to others.) In this context, Brahmans, Barbers, Sweepers and so on, are all equally recipients of inauspiciousness, and their rank vis-à-vis the donors is irrelevant. The local dominant caste, the Gujarats, are proud of the fact that they give but do not receive ḍān (except for the gift of a virgin' at marriage). They do, however, give ḍān to their own married-out daughters in many ritual contexts. Specialist castes give ḍān in this way even more often: in many of the contexts where Gujarats give ḍān to specialists, specialists themselves give it to their married-out daughters. This suggests a radically new perspective on north Indian hypergamy. The son-in-law is no longer the superior, god-like figure of other ethnographies; rather, he has the difficult task of accepting the ḍān of the bride and the associated inauspiciousness, and his wife has to continue to accept such ḍān on various occasions thereafter.

In complete contrast with gifts called ḍān there are other prestations, not believed to transfer inauspiciousness, which are viewed simply as payments for services rendered. Whereas it is the right of the jajmān (patron) to give ḍān,
which his Brahman, Barber etc. cannot refuse, it is the right of the service caste to receive these other prestations, and they feel no shame or reluctance to claim their due in this case. Raheja claims that all previous discussions of the jajmāni system, that old anthropological chestnut, have been vitiated by the failure to distinguish these two sharply contrasted types of prestation. Her discussion also has important implications for the analysis of kingship in South Asia, as she is well aware, since Gujars occupy the position that, on a wider and more munificent scale, Hindu kings once did.

To my mind, there are two critical questions raised by Raheja's book. How pervasive is the complex of ideas and practices relating to inauspiciousness which she has described so well? Secondly, do her findings refute Dumont, as she herself believes? No doubt the jury will be out on these issues for some considerable time, but it is worth hazarding some immediate judgements.

Raheja is probably right to castigate previous researchers for not paying sufficient attention to inauspiciousness, to the different categories of prestation, and to the double-edged nature of dān. However, I wonder whether she does not presume too wide a distribution for the exact complex of ritual interdependence found in Pahansu. She writes: 'Fuller's assertion that in the South notions of dān as tained by evil and sin are absent or at least relatively unstressed may simply be an artifact of his focus on temples and temple worship' (p. 36). Raheja recognizes three possibilities in the transfer of inauspiciousness (p. 84): it is transferred either directly to specialist (or daughter), or to specialists (or daughter) on behalf of a spirit or divinity, or directly to spirit or divinity with no human intermediary. The latter possibility is only rarely exemplified in Pahansu. In a note (p. 260-1, n. 10) Raheja mentions that two or thee Gujar families in the village have joined the Radhaswami sect and do not participate in the complex of dān described for the rest of the village. She speculates that the prevalence of transfers to people, and the relative lack of transfers to deities, has to do with the small influence in Pahansu of bhakti devotionalism (of the sort practised by the Radhaswamis). One could take this lead from Raheja herself and, adapting her judgement on Fuller, say that her stress on the transfer of inauspiciousness to other human actors is an artefact of her focus on a small village in Uttar Pradesh in which temple worship is unimportant.

In short, while it is certainly true that anthropologists should have paid greater attention to dān and other prestations, it is by no means clear that all South Asians agree with the inhabitants of Pahansu that inauspiciousness must always accompany dān. It may do so, in some circumstances, and particularly when given in connection with death or severe misfortune, but there are methods of preventing the transfer. In other parts of South Asia it is probable that much greater use is made of transfers to deities and spirits. This is so among the Newars in Nepal: there is considerable disagreement between them over whether inauspiciousness is transferred to specialists with dān, although the possibility and the danger are acknowledged.
In rejecting Dumont, Raheja returns to a Hocartian interpretation of the caste system, which places kings at the centre. Instead of hierarchy, she wishes to talk of mutuality and centrality: the former refers to contexts of inclusion, where specialists and daughters are referred to as 'ours', the latter to contexts of exclusion where they are treated as other and as recipients of dān. This is a welcome change of emphasis. Dumont certainly pushed his interpretation further than he should: his theory of Hindu kingship has always been the weakest point in his overall position, and Geertz's acceptance of it in Negara led him to overlook the strong similarity between kingship in Bali and medieval India. However, Raheja's attack on Dumont is restricted to the presentation of data, rich as they are, from one village. She does not attempt to synthesize data from the whole subcontinent, nor does she propose a sociological framework that includes the West, in the manner of Homo Hierarchicus. Furthermore, Raheja does not deny that concepts of purity and impurity are used in Pahansu; rather, like her Gujar informants, she plays down their importance for most interaction within the village. One can therefore imagine a revised Dumontian framework incorporating Raheja's insights, though no doubt others would prefer the reverse. Whatever consensus emerges on this, if indeed a consensus does emerge, Raheja has written a book no South Asianist can afford to ignore.

DAVID N. GELLNER

FRANCIS ZIMMERMANN, The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats: An Ecological Theme in Hindu Medicine [Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care], Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1987. xiii, 223 pp., Figures, Maps, Tables, Appendix, Notes, Sources, Index. $30.00.

This is a work of remarkable scholarship in which the author attempts to do no less than characterize the very nature of Hindu medical knowledge and to demonstrate its shaping by environmental realities, religious values and the demands and constraints of poetic language. Zimmerman also sets out to show how an orthodox science concerned with prolonging and saving life reconciles the need for violence, in the form of providing animal flesh to nourish human flesh, with Hindu religious principles. The condensation of such an endeavour into a volume of little more than 200 pages means that the book at times makes difficult, even impenetrable reading, especially for those unfamiliar with Ayurvedic doctrine; yet overall it is a lucid and convincing work. A short review cannot hope to do justice to the wealth of material presented in this volume, and I will attempt only to summarize some of the main arguments.

Ayurveda is shown to be an anthropocentric science which subsumes ecological, zoological and botanical classifications and descriptions into a system
of therapeutics. The consideration in successive chapters of Indian geography, the subcontinent’s history of human migration and land clearance, the distribution of animal species, and the circulation and cooking of substances and juices in a great ecological chain of being demonstrate the interweaving of cosmology and ‘biogeography’ into the applied science of Hindu medicine. The book is replete with topics upon which social anthropologists are likely to pounce in delighted recognition, the contents page being thick with titles such as ‘A Dialectic of Space and Time’, ‘A Multifaceted Knowledge’, ‘Logic and Cuisine’.

Zimmerman acknowledges his intellectual influences—Bachelard, Foucault, Dumont—early in the book, and any suspicions that the work may conceal notions heretical for a pupil of the last of these are quickly put to rest. Zimmerman asserts that while medicine, being concerned with the urgency of physical sickness, tends peculiarly to contradict the principles of orthodox Hinduism, it is encompassed none the less by the religious tradition. His portrayal of the ‘ecological theme’ of Ayurveda generally supports this view; the concepts of ‘appropriateness’ (sattva) and of a continuous ecological flow and cooking of juices (previously proposed by him in other work and incorporated here) could be characterizations of more general themes in Hindu culture, and bring to mind particularly the ‘transactional’ or ‘ethnosophiological’ approach developed by Marriott and other anthropologists of South Asia at Chicago.

The book falls roughly into three parts. The first three chapters describe aspects of the ‘biogeography’ of the Indian subcontinent as represented in the three primary treatises of Ayurveda. Here, Hindu medicine is portrayed as resting on a fundamental ecological opposition between jangal, dry lands, and anupa, marshy lands, from which further distinctions and oppositions follow. The polarity between these two ecological types is, in Zimmerman’s view, a literary collective representation that is based on empirical realities. Accordingly, his exegesis is supported by extensive reference to empirical data and the use of maps showing the spatial distribution of ecological regions, fauna and flora. Particular attention is given to the positively marked category of jangala and to the reversal of meaning from Sanskrit to English ‘jungle’.

In chapters 4 and 5 the ‘logico-poetic’ nature of Ayurvedic texts is considered. Ayurvedic discourse is composed of profuse combinations and recombinations of adjectives that are used selectively, in accordance with the compositional constraints of the hemistichal structure of the texts, to qualify the various subjects under consideration (meats, plants, environments, people). The constraints of poetic form are shown to shape the actual content of the texts (medical knowledge) by dictating the choice of a particular term from a range of possible synonyms. The details of this discussion are difficult for the reader unfamiliar with Sanskrit or theories of poetics to follow, but its implications are easy enough to grasp, and the overall argument compelling.

The final chapters, where the uneasy relationship between medical discoveries and the dictates of religious doctrine is addressed, are probably the most interesting for social anthropologists of South Asia. The flesh (and blood) of carnivores is the
ultimate remedy for the restoration of human health in Ayurveda, because in the Indian ‘Great Chain of Being’ that which is organically most similar to an organism is also most nourishing for its eater. Zimmerman endorses the standard view that Ayurveda’s weaknesses as a medical science result from the constraining influence of Brahmanism. As an orthodox science (sastra), Ayurveda reiterates the themes of dharma, sacrifice and non-violence that are pre-eminent in the enveloping Hindu tradition; but as medical science, priority is given to artha, health or prosperity in life. The use of meat and blood in therapeutics is justified by reference to Vedic injunctions that allow the rules of moral conduct to be disregarded in order to save human life. Indeed, we learn that in such circumstances the special dharma specified in religious texts for times of emergency and distress is realized, wherein violence committed for saving human life is not a source of sin. An associated discussion of the special place of the king as hunter and meat-eater, and of the focus placed in the medical texts on preserving royal health, itself makes a significant contribution to the understanding of kingship in India.

*The Jungle and the Aroma of Meat* is an elegant and fascinating exploration of the different layers of knowledge that comprise Ayurvedic medicine and its particular articulation of dimensions of orthodox Hindu tradition. Although parts of the discussion are frustratingly intricate and even obscure, those who are familiar with almost any aspect of Hindu culture will find clearly recognizable images and ideas in the medical doctrine that Zimmerman explores. More specifically, the book shows how the repetitive and often apparently spurious discourse of the texts provided practical medical knowledge. It is written with persuasive elegance and conviction, and for the language alone, in its weaving of enthusiastic commentary and poetic flourishes that self-consciously evoke the flavour of the Ayurvedic texts they describe, this book deserves strong recommendation—at least to South Asianists.

H. S. LAMBERT


Many readers, especially citizens of the two countries concerned, might not think a comparison of Sri Lanka and Australia an obvious project to undertake. For Kapferer, an Australian who has conducted field research in Sri Lanka during times of strife, matters are different. The problems addressed in this book are those of modern nationalism, a political development of recent European origin that now has a worldwide effect. Nationalism is about the state and the person and
the relationships between them. That the particular configurations of different nationalisms will vary is to be expected from the differences in historical and cultural circumstances in which they take root. Nationalist ideologies tend to exploit these very particularities. Scholars of nationalism face the dilemma of approaching a nationalist ideology within its own terms, and therefore being captured by it, or from without, and therefore risk imposing on it the presuppositions of some other ideology, very likely another modern nationalism.

The dilemma is explicitly addressed by Kapferer, who does not claim to be able to escape from the limitations of his own ideological background. Emotionally, Kapferer may well be more of an Australian nationalist than he admits, and by that paradox familiar to anthropologists he may in the same way be a Sri Lankan nationalist. Intellectually, he is opposed to nationalism and its violent potential. The violence and intolerance of his subtitle are the real occasion for addressing nationalism.

The nation and the state form a unity in the nationalism of the Sinhalese Buddhists. Other peoples are enclosed by the state and held subordinate to the Sinhalese Buddhists, protecting their integrity as persons: ‘The encompassing and ordering power of the state is hierarchical, and the integrity of nations, peoples, and persons within the Sinhalese Buddhist state is dependent on the capacity of the state to maintain by the exercise of its power the hierarchical interrelation of all those it encloses’ (p. 7). The fragmentation of the state leads to the fragmentation of the nation and of persons.

Australian nationalism is, of course, the very opposite of hierarchy. In egalitarian Australian ideology, the state is subordinate to the will of the nation and people. Persons are autonomous individuals. Their integrity is endangered by the ordering power of the state, which mediates between nations, peoples and persons.

Australian nationalism, which Kapferer takes to be an almost perfect example of the ideological form of the modern Western type, and Australian racism exhibit the potentially destructive and socially fragmentary powers inherent in the modern Western nation state. The escalating ethnic violence in Sri Lanka since 1983 reveals the weakness of its own formula. Both the egalitarian and the hierarchical forms of nationalism have destructive implications for peoples subjected to them.

The book is therefore of interest to anyone concerned with the modern state and nationalism. It is not just a regional tract for Sri Lankan or Australian enthusiasts. The author has attempted a form of comparison in which the integrity of the two cultures is maintained, with neither reduced to the other, while they mutually illuminate each other. To say that the process only serves to exaggerate differences is to overlook the fact that both Sri Lanka and Australia are treated as exemplifying a modern phenomenon, the state and the nation comprehended in an ideology of nationalism.

Kapferer’s writing is fluid and powerful. He presses his analysis with determined energy, and he attempts to give various positions their intellectual due. Although only committed nationalists would disagree with his evaluation of
nationalism, the intellectual manner and ease of the prose may distract the reader’s attention from the fact that the book is an extended polemic setting out a political position to which the author is very strongly committed. The fact that this is so can be seen from a recent objection by a Sri Lankan scholar to applying ‘nationalism’ to Sri Lanka because of its pejorative associations. Saying that the inter-ethnic violence in Sri Lanka is related to a Sri Lanka nationalism is therefore a political and not just a scholarly choice.

The book has been criticised because its description of difference can play into the hands of the nationalists it opposes. But such a criticism can be and has been used against almost any style of scholarship: it amounts to a demand for silence and must be resisted. The complexity of the two cultural systems, as described here, guarantees the groundlessness of any charge that the author has treated Sri Lanka and Australia as mirror-images of each other. Even stranger is the charge that the picture presented in this book precludes rational criticism of nationalist politics. Finally, it is wrong to say that Kapferer uses Dumont’s work, to which he is of course deeply and explicitly indebted, as the sole key to nationalist logic. Much of the book’s programme is Dumontian in inspiration, but the product is not that of a disciple.

The work invites, and can be expected to draw, controversy from both scholars and laymen. It will probably prove a battleground for disputing the nature, practice and purpose of comparative anthropology. It is an excellent example of what comparative anthropology can be, and it is likely to become a popular teaching text.

R. H. BARNES


This very thorough and useful survey of the literature on the people Rousseau defines as ‘central Bornean’ covers not only published work but a large body of unpublished work as well, including the archives of the Ministry of Colonies in The Hague; manuscripts in, and the archives of, the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Leiden; and the Harrisson Central Borneo documents. This information has not been gathered together before, although Rousseau himself has already published an extremely exhaustive bibliography on central Borneo (in a 1988 Special Issue of the Sarawak Museum Journal).

Rousseau admits in the conclusion to his new book that the category ‘central Borneo’ may be a questionable one. It is basically defined geographically: central Borneo peoples live in ‘the area above the rapids’, and central Borneo has as its historical core the Apau Kayan. However, he also separates off central Borneans
from the 'lowland ring of shifting cultivators' on the basis of a lower population density and also, more importantly, the presence of a 'developed stratification system with which is linked hereditary chiefship' among those central Bornean people who are agriculturalists (p. 11). (He also provides an exhaustive discussion of hunter-gatherers resident in this area.) He argues that while (as he has argued before) one cannot make a sharp distinction between an egalitarian lowland ring and a stratified central Borneo, there is 'an ideological contrast in the management of inequality and political structure' (p. 12). However, he admits that there are people whom he has not included among his central Borneans who have the more developed 'stratification' that he sees as typical of central Bornean agriculturalists, such as the Maloh and probably the Ngadju. He also admits that there are no rituals or beliefs common to central Borneo as a whole. It would thus appear that it is the geographical definition of the category of central Borneo that Rousseau relies on. However, the fact that he argues that some central Borneo peoples have moved down river and now occupy lowland niches confuses the issue and tends to shift the definition of central Borneo away from geography, placing emphasis instead on cultural links that are difficult to define.

One of the focuses of the book is an interesting discussion of ethnicity. As well as examining ethnicity and inter-ethnic relations between different agriculturalist groups Rousseau also looks, in the context of his discussion of ethnicity, at the relationship between agriculturalists and nomadic hunter-gatherers and at that between central Borneans and Malays.

Rousseau looks at a number of features of central Bornean groups that are characteristic of non-central Bornean groups as well. This includes a swidden system of agriculture focusing on rice as the staple, combined with a reliance on the forest for protein and other foods and for materials for handicrafts. However, he argues that in central Bornean groups there is a greater involvement of men in rice agriculture than is typical of, for example, the Iban.

Another feature of the groups Rousseau classes as central Bornean that is also typical of the other Bornean groups is the focal nature of the household, which is the social, jural, economic and religious basic unit. The household is, as with other Bornean groups, based on the stem family. The position and status of the individual within the household is marked by the use of teknonyms, death names and old-age names.

One of the main focuses of the book is the subject of social stratification. Rousseau argues, as he has elsewhere, that there are two ritual levels but three estates among central Borneo agriculturalists, and that these central Borneans are at 'an early stage of class formation', in other words, that there is exploitation of the lower estates by the upper (p. 199). His model derives largely from the Kayan data with which he is most familiar and does not in its entirety apply to certain groups that he includes in the category of central Bornean—particularly the Kelabit and related groups, as he is himself aware. Rousseau suggests that among the Kelabit 'aristocrats' are not as strong as they are among other central Bornean groups. I would suggest that the difference lies in the fact that there are no clear-
cut divisions between strata among the Kelabit and related groups, but rather a hierarchy with an infinite number of points.

Rousseau tends to stress the discontinuity between strata, emphasizing the class divisions he sees emerging. It might be useful in this context to consider the nature of status differentiation among the Kelabit. It can be argued that the differentiation between individuals belonging to different households is parallel to that between individuals within the household, which Rousseau has highlighted as characteristic not only of central Bornean groups but of groups in other parts of Borneo as well. Among the Kelabit the household is internally differentiated into ‘big people’ (lun merar) and children (anak adik), with the term ‘big people’ also being used to refer to leaders of the longhouse. Thus the parent-child axis is used as a model for hierarchical differentiation. The leading couple of the longhouse—the equivalent of Kayan aristocrats—may be said to be conceptualized as the parents of the other members of the longhouse, which, it may be argued, can be presented as equivalent to a symbolic higher-level household.

It is possible that such an analysis might be fruitfully applied to other central Bornean (and indeed other Bornean) societies. It might also add to our understanding of the nature of stratification in the area and lessen the gap and explain similarities that Rousseau has himself pointed to between societies that appear to be ‘stratified’ and those, like the Iban, that appear in some ways to be ‘egalitarian’. Such an approach to ‘stratification’ has the advantage of presenting status differentiation as an integral part of the social, economic and religious system of the group, rather than as a problem that has to be explained.

MONICA JANOWSKI
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