Book Reviews

- Melville J. Herskovits, Helmut Schoeck, *Relativism and the study of man*. Princeton, New Jersey, W. van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1961; pp. x + 259., James M. Wiggins (eds.)
- E. Postel-Coster, H. Jans, *Volkenkundige Encyclopedie*, W. de Haan n.v., Zeist en Daphne, Gent 1962. 250 blz. tekst, 48 blz. ill., en tekeningen in de tekst.
- H. Th. Fischer, Rodney Needham, *Structure and sentiment. A test case in social anthropology*. The University of Chicago Press, 1962. 126 pp. text.
- R.E. Downs, Maurice Freedman, *Lineage organization in Southeastern China*. London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology No. 18, London, 1958. IX and 151 pp.
- Carl A. Schmitz, Raymond Firth, *History and traditions of Tikopia*. The Polynesian Society, Memoir No. 32. Wellington 1961. 203 pp., 2 Maps, Index.
- J. van Baal, Carl A. Schmitz, *Bieträge zur Ethnographie des Wantoat Tales, Nordost Neuguinea*. Kölner Ethnologische Mitteilungen, dl. 1, Köln 1960; 226 pp.
- Jacob Vredenburg, *Etudes rurales*. Revue trimestrielle publiée par l'école pratique des Hautes Etudes - Sorbonne. Sixième Section: Sciences économiques et sociales. Mouton

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BOEKBESPREKINGEN

SCHOECK, HELMUT and WIGGINS, JAMES M. (editors),
Relativism and the Study of Man. Princeton, New Jersey, W. van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1961 ; pp. x + 259. \$ 6.50.

It is difficult to believe, in the present climate of thought, that a symposium on the question of relativism in human affairs could be organized without the presence of someone competent to present the anthropological position. Lacking a student skilled in handling cross-cultural data, only a welter of confusions could result. And this is precisely what occurred in the symposium that forms the basis for this book.

Let us see, first of all, the disciplines that were represented in the group. The editors, according to the biographical note about them on the book-jacket, are sociologists, both on the staff of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Of the contributors, one is a psychologist (Carmichael), one is a botanist (Zirkle), one a theologian (Casserley), two are political scientists (Leoni and Strauss), one a economist (von Mises), one an historian (Malin). There were also a philosopher (Vivas), a professor of English (Weaver), an educationalist (Tietz), and a linguist (Pei). There were thus both social scientists and humanists; the group included those whose interests lay in the realm of ideas as well as those whose concern is with practical affairs.

As one reads through the chapters, a certain homogeneity in point of view becomes apparent. There is no member of the symposium who is not disturbed at the developments that mark the present trends of our culture; none who does not view with alarm contemporary changes in morals, modes of behavior, patterns of thought and ways of expression. The book gives the feeling that the discussions at the meetings where these papers were presented must have carried a strong emotional component. One is tempted to raise the question: Is not this book an example of the perennial cry of the elders against the innovations of the oncoming generation? Only in these terms can we explain the note of dissatisfaction that appears again and again when new ways manifest in various aspects of our culture enter into the discussion.

It is perhaps not without significance that the only papers wherein this feeling of dismay at change is subordinated to the intellectual problem are the two final ones on linguistics. Particularly in the chapter written by Pei, one feels the intellectual serenity that comes when the range of variation in any aspect of total human behavior is squarely faced, accepted as a fact to be reckoned with, and its implications objectively analyzed. It is worth noting, moreover, that this is really the only paper that makes a substantive contribution. This is found in its discussion of the roots of linguistic relativism in earlier thinking. Its analysis of relativistic excesses in the field of linguistics are coldly, clearly and convincingly analyzed. One can only say that it deserves a better setting than it has.

Most prominent among the confusions in the book is that between intra-cultural and cross-cultural relativism. It is difficult to understand why such a simple conception should be so hard to grasp. The kind of intra-cultural relativism envisaged by the various contributors — that is, the denial of validity to standards of conduct operating within a society — would not only bring on moral, but perceptual anarchy, and social life would grind to a halt. Every society has its codes; they are stable, and only to those within a given group does change seem important. Change in values and beliefs constantly occur, but with regularity. This is why, when seen in retrospect, we find all ways of life exhibit the phenomenon of cultural drift. The culture of no social entity is marked by the moral disintegration that intra-cultural relativism, if practiced, would bring on.

When we move to value-judgements drawn on a cross-cultural basis — and it is this, and this alone, that is the concern of cultural relativists — we are faced with quite a different problem. This has to do with the question of the existence of absolutes and universals in human culture. The problem is essentially methodological — how any human being, enculturated to the evaluative and perceptual modes of a particular way of life, can avoid the enculturative screening of experience in judging cultures other than his own. That is, since every society has its particular schedule of absolutes, how do we, as human beings who accept the schedule of our own society, attain objectivity in evaluating the schedules of other societies? The cultural relativist is content to withhold judgement until empirical proofs of the existence of absolutes that are also universals can be adduced.

In anthropology, the importance of this question has long been recognized, but in this book it scarcely even enters. Carmichael, one

of the few contributors who recognises the existence of the cross-cultural problem in relativism, like his colleagues in the symposium, becomes enmeshed in the shift from this to intra-cultural applications. Thus he states, "The idea . . . that there are some established esthetic values in the arts is . . . hard for those who now like to say that a fashionable non-objective painter who reports that he experiences great emotional satisfaction as he paints is necessarily as satisfactory an artist as was Titian." Or, again, "If we accept the suggestions . . . that there may be some absolutes in human conduct that can be discovered, we must have the courage to apply this knowledge in deciding the content of the education that we wish to furnish for the children of this or any other age" (p. 11). The statement of Vivas that, "Cultural relativism leads to individual relativism, which is to say, moral nihilism" (p. 52), flies in the face of everything we have learned from the comparative study of the processes of cultural conditioning. And these are only samples of the many other examples of confusion on this point that can be found.

The only chapter in the book which invokes anthropological findings is that of Vivas, who uses the writings of anthropologists as a stick with which to beat the cultural relativists. The doctrine of relativism, we are told, holds that, "The criteria of value judgements are determined by the culture. From this it follows that it is not possible to judge the values of one culture in terms of any criteria except its own, and, therefore, the objective indices of cultural inferiority or superiority cannot be established. An American cannot feel superior to Malinowski's savages because they are lousy and dirty. It's just a matter of cultural difference — although I do not see how we can deny they are lousy" (p. 46). Granting the validity of the statement about the Trobriand Islanders, to which no citation is given, one does not deny the fact; what is puzzling is the assertion that the American, free of lice, "cannot feel superior" to the lousy Melanesian. He not only can, but does feel superior; Vivas obviously does so. However, one could scarcely hold that our American, in his response, is reacting as a scientific student of culture.

Vivas bases most of his argument on an enthymeme:

"A culture determines the values acknowledged by its members. Therefore a culture determines the values its members ought to acknowledge."

The "implicit premise," we are told, is that:

"The values determined by a culture are the values that the members of that culture ought to acknowledge."

Yet there is no anthropological relativist, as far as is known, who either as a scientist or in his philosophy would sanction the "ought" in the shift from the first to the second of these propositions. Indeed, if we move from moral to perceptual relativism, the propositions lead to a *reductio ad absurdum*. How "ought" one to divide the continuum of color that makes up the spectrum? Even as stated, the enthymeme vanishes, for the so-called "implicit premise" is but a rewording of the explicit statements out of which it presumably arises. Space does not permit an examination here of how, moving from this distortion of the logic that directs the relativist position, the discussion in this chapter also distorts the position of the anthropologists who are cited. One can only conclude that this symposium would have been the better if it had entirely ignored the anthropological contribution.

The anti-relativist position of the papers reveal other points worthy of remark. Zirkle, accepting the universality of "scientific" relativism, seems to forget scientific objectivity when it comes to the science of man; certainly his discussion exhibits no lack of value-judgements. Most striking is the doctrine of what may be called neo-social-Darwinism, arrived at by an analogy to the biological struggle for survival. Animal behavior patterns, he tells us, "have been preserved and developed by nature to just the extent to which they aid the behaving organism to survive and reproduce" (p. 28). Quite aside from the anthropomorphism found in ascribing will and purpose to the reification of the concept, "nature," anthropologists must challenge his readiness to argue, from analogy, that survival is a criterion for evaluating human cultures. We read that "deviant subcultures are . . . checked and controlled almost automatically by natural selection" (p. 32); that "if the test of survival is applied to the different human cultures, they can easily be recognized as being fit or unfit" (p. 43). Unfortunately for the argument, all existing cultures have survived. How, in terms of this analogy, is the worth of these many surviving cultures to be "scientifically" evaluated?

Casserly, the theologian, gives one answer. He draws a distinction between "the absolute, which is certainly never absolutely known, and that which is absolutely known, for the absolutely known is nearly always not merely a relativity, but even a triviality" (p. 107). Presenting the thesis that "while it is true that man as we know him is always man in the context of the local and the temporal, it is also true that

man as he knows himself is always man face to face with the absolute" (p. 109), he cites the role of the prophet as "an important criterion" for evaluating cultures. "There are cultures so placidly successful as almost completely to exclude the prophetic challenges. There are others, on the contrary, that seem by their very nature to encourage and foster it..." Hence "we may distinguish between relatively closed and relatively open cultures and insist strongly on the higher value of the open kind of culture" (p. 109—110). One can but wonder how, in these terms, he grades the cultures of Africa and North America, which have long had "prophetic challenges"; to say nothing of the presumably lousy Melanesians, with their prophet movements called Cargo cults.

It is not possible here to give further examples of the confusions that mark this book. Because it is one of the most extended series of statements against cultural relativism, it is important for anthropologists to read it. For those of us who accept the logical postulates of cross-cultural research, and are willing open-mindedly to abide by the scientific principle of basing our conclusions on facts, the volume will provide many enlightening instances of ethnocentric reactions to the relativistic point of view. That it has proved disturbing to this sampling of students from so many disciplines testifies to the power of cultural relativism, giving evidence of the stimulus which the relativistic principle, willy-nilly, carries even to those who have not been exposed to the cross-cultural methods of anthropology.

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VOLKENKUNDIGE ENCYCLOPEDIE onder redactie van H.
Jans. W. de Haan n.v., Zeist en Daphne, Gent 1962.
250 blz. tekst, 48 blz. ill., en tekeningen in de tekst.
Prijs geb. fl. 8,90.

Het is aannemelijk dat een steeds groter publiek geïnteresseerd raakt in de kennis van vreemde en verre volken — hetzij door familierelaties in andere werelddelen, hetzij door eigen toeristische activiteiten, hetzij door de vele persberichten die van verre onze courant bereiken. De gedachte dat er behoefte bestaat aan een handig boekje, waarin men van alles over de volken der aarde zou kunnen vinden, ligt dan ook voor de hand.

Hoewel de hier te bespreken uitgave beknopt is, en van indeling overzichtelijk, voorziet zij m.i. om verschillende redenen toch niet in de behoefte. Van de vele bezwaren, die er tegen in gebracht moeten worden, is de voornaamste wel, dat de schrijvers het onderwerp waarover zij informatie wilden geven niet voldoende beperkt hebben. Terwijl het traditionele terrein van de volkenkunde meer dan voldoende stof zou hebben geleverd voor deze 250 blz., hebben zij te hooi en te gras grepen gedaan uit de archeologie, de godsdienstfenomenologie en de folklore. Daarnaast wordt nog zo'n ruime plaats gegeven aan de fysische anthropologie, dat de culturele anthropologie, die de hoofdschotel had moeten vormen, maar nauwelijks aan bod komt. Dit gebrek aan terreinafbakening wreekt zich in het hele werk, dat bestaat uit een zestal inleidende hoofdstukken, een afdeling foto's en een woordenlijst. Men heeft te veel over hoop gehaald om er in kort bestek een ordelijk geheel van te kunnen maken. Hierdoor komen ook de positieve elementen, illustraties, overzichtskaartjes van rassen en migraties bv., niet geheel tot hun recht.

De woordenlijst, die het grootste deel van het boek beslaat, maakt een zeer onevenwichtige indruk. Een verdienste ervan is wel, dat de meeste volken der aarde er in te vinden zijn (trouwens: waarom wel de Belgen, niet de Fransen, wel de Ona, niet de Bororo?), maar het is volstrekt niet duidelijk waarom vrijwel alle volken, waarmee de volkenkunde zich van ouds bezig houdt, met enkele regels worden afgedaan, terwijl men over andere niet uitgepraat raakt. Achter het trefwoord Slavische volken vinden we 2½ blz. tekst, aan de Scandinavische zijn er zelfs bijna 4 gewijd, waarin o.m. te lezen staat dat de Lappen lui van aard zijn, waardoor zij niet tot intensief gebruik van hun bestaansmiddelen zijn gekomen. Dit is een populaire voorstelling van het soort, dat men met deze uitgave juist zou moeten bestrijden! De Papoea's moeten het met 11 regels doen, met de vermelding dat zij „van oorsprong koppensnellers en kannibalen, thans echter hier en daar gekerstend zijn.” Afgezien van het feit dat kerstening niet de enige manier is om van het koppensnellen af te komen, past de geciteerde generalisering slecht in een wetenschappelijk werk.

Wanneer we gaan zoeken naar zaken en begrippen is het al niet veel beter. Waarom vermeld dat de Stonehenge een prehistorisch bouwsel in Zd Engeland is, terwijl zoveel begrippen, die voor de volkenkunde van belang zijn, ontbreken? Men zoekt, om maar wat te noemen, tevergeefs naar de woorden: ruilhandel, ploeg, (a)symmetrisch connubium, dualisme, goddelijke bedrieger. We lezen wel dat een strijkinstrument

een zeer verbreid snaarinstrument is, dat d.m.v. een stok tot klinken wordt gebracht, en dat een clan is: „in engere zin: stamverband in Schotland. In ruimere zin: bepaalde groepen, bijv. met een bepaalde totem.” Om dat te weten te komen zou men zich geen Volkenkundige Encyclopedie behoeven aan te schaffen!

De culturele anthropologie komt, zoals gezegd, in dit werk maar nauwelijks aan bod. Heel opvallend is de volkomen negering van het sociaal, speciaal het sociofamiliaal aspect van de cultuur, dat in de vakliteratuur zo'n belangrijke plaats inneemt. Over huwelijksregelingen is er niets te vinden, aan incest en exogamie worden slechts luttele regels gewijd. Op blz. 85 lezen we over exogamie, dat het „een uitermate gezond principe is, om welke reden het dan ook bij diverse primitieve volken voorkomt.” Voor een critiek op deze simpele visie zie C. Lévi-Strauss, *Structures élémentaires de la parenté*, blz. 14—19.

Onder de woorden „matriarchaat” en „patriarchaat” in de woordenlijst wordt niet vermeld dat en waarom ze in onbruik zijn geraakt. Daarentegen wordt gesteld: „Een bekende matriarchale cultuur is die der Menangkabauers op Sumatra.” Sic!

Het zal geen verwondering wekken, dat bij een dergelijke verwaarlozing van het sociaal aspect, ook de religie, die hiermee zo nauw verband houdt, geen adequate behandeling krijgt. In een hoofdstuk Religie en Magie vernemen wij veel over het Jodendom, het Buddhisme, de antieke godsdiensten, de hybris — typische term uit het Christelijk theologisch vakjargon —; niets over bv. totemisme, een cosmisch dualisme, verband van de religie met de sociale orde, weinig en onbevredigende informatie over het begrip magie. Op pag. 98 wordt dit zelfs gelijk gesteld met „bijgeloof, dat gemengd met Godsgeloof (= religie) voorkomt” — een waarde-oordeel, dat hier niet op zijn plaats is.

Tenslotte helaas nog een bezwaar tegen de vorm: het boek is in een onverzorgde stijl geschreven, met veel anakolouthen, Germanismen (een paar van de hinderlijkste: seksuaalsymboliek, p. 39, principen, p. 44, beelding, p. 46 en 50, hoogcultureel, p. 48, het Eskimoïsche, p. 91), drukfouten en slordigheden (Boaz i.p.v. Boas, p. 178, Intong Java, p. 87).

De behoefte aan een volkenkundige encyclopedie blijft m.i. onverdeeld bestaan. Men zou dit boek kunnen zien als een uitdaging aan de beoefenaren van de culture anthropologie, die wel gauw met bezwaren klaar staan, maar zelf weinig positieve bijdragen leveren aan de zo nodige popularisering van hun vak. Voor hen is waarschijnlijk de grootste handicap dat zij huiverig zijn voor een overzicht dat vele

volken moet omvatten, en voor een willekeurige uitstalling van rareiteiten. Deze bezwaren zouden misschien gedeeltelijk wel te ondervangen zijn. Bv. door een zorgvuldig samengestelde bibliografie te publiceren (in het onderhavige werk ontbreekt iedere bronvermelding), en door uit te gaan van bepaalde cultuurgebieden, zoals in Das Fischer Lexicon, Völkerkunde, niet zonder success gedaan is.

E. POSTEL-COSTER

RODNEY NEEDHAM, *Structure and Sentiment. A Test Case in Social Anthropology*. The University of Chicago Press, 1962. 126 pp. text. Price \$ 3.50.

Mr. Needham is our "angry young man" in anthropology, and he knows that many of us see him as such. "I am given to understand", he writes in the Preface of his book, "that what I have elsewhere written with the innocent desire simply to express an argument clearly and concisely — has sometimes been taken as curt or contentious". So he is "an angry young man" *malgré lui*, and he promises amendment. "I have to observe, therefore, that I have tried expressly to obviate this danger; but no man can properly appreciate his own style or tone, and I can only hope that no inappropriate note of asperity will obstruct the assessment of what to me appears a temperate argument".

Such a "temperate argument" is then to be found at the end of the first paragraph of the "Introduction". Needham's book is a critique of the well known monograph of Homans and Schneider, and in the paragraph mentioned we read: "I think — that its conclusions are fallacious, its method unsound, and the argument literally preposterous".

Needham's method of criticising strikes me as contradictory to the typical British way, greatly admired by the non-British, of using "understatements". He always seems to need the strongest words, apparently without the faintest notion that these inevitably injure his argument.

Homans and Schneider's book is itself explicitly and almost exclusively an attack on Claude Lévi-Strauss's "Les Structures élémentaires de la Parenté". Needham's monograph is a critique on Homans and Schneider, while this review will be an appreciation of Needham's work. The result will be that I am saying that what Needham is saying about what Homans and Schneider were saying about what Lévi-

Strauss was saying, is not as convincing to me as Needham thinks it to be. And after having read my review all people concerned, or others, will perhaps be saying that what Fischer was saying about . . . , etc. A rather hopeless affair.

I have read Needham's critical remarks and I have learned from them, but owing to what I have just remarked I will refrain from enumerating them here. Moreover, criticising Homans and Schneider, Needham admits that the terminology of Lévi-Strauss himself gives rise to confusion. The distinction e.g. between preferential and prescriptive marriages, as made by Needham, is not made by Lévi-Strauss, who speaks about "*unions privilégiées*". Even if one can agree that in specific passages when using the term "preferential", Lévi-Strauss means "prescriptive", in the sense it is used by Needham, this is not always so (Needham, p. 11). The same kind of comment could be made in regard to the term "final cause". Here Needham does not accept Homans and Schneider's definition, but prefers what he calls "its common acceptance", and again he must admit that Lévi-Strauss's terminology is not always felicitous (Needham, p. 24 sq).

The most interesting and important chapter of the book is the one called "Analysis". After having finished with the more direct attack on Homans and Schneider's book, Needham gives a clear exposé of the Purum of the Indo-Burma border, and by doing this he is more convincing than in all that what he said before. Homans and Schneider's psychological explanation is difficult to accept, and Needham's objections to several statements of the authors are very convincing indeed. After having read this chapter one has again the courage to read the Conclusions (Chapter V), which give an excellent contribution to the understanding of prescriptive matrilineal cross-cousin marriage and to the non-existence of the prescriptive patrilineal one. "What I claim, then, is that a hypothetical patrilineal system would be so obviously difficult to work as to be reckoned for practical purposes socially impossible. — Admittedly, the argument by which we have arrived at this conclusion is not Lévi-Strauss's, but the result comes directly from taking his idea seriously, whereas Homans and Schneider neglect utterly to do so". The idea meant here is the statement: "marriage with father's sister's daughter is not capable of attaining any other form than a multitude of little closed systems . . ." (Needham, p. 115 and note 31).

H. TH. FISCHER

MAURICE FREEDMAN, *Lineage Organization in South-eastern China*. London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology No. 18, London, 1958. IX and 151 pp.

Although this book was written by a social anthropologist, it is not based on fieldwork in the area concerned. The author was, moreover, restricted in his sources primarily to published materials in European languages, with the exception of two modern Chinese works which he had specially translated. In spite of these handicaps, however, which the author is frank to admit and deplore, he has managed to construct a convincing, though necessarily tentative, model of the lineage system of Southeastern China during the last hundred and fifty years and one which should not only serve as a stimulus to further research on the social structure of the area, but which also presents sociological problems of general interest and importance.

Central and southeastern China, it seems, were centers of strongly developed lineages for the last six or seven centuries, in contrast to most of the rest of China. These agnatic, exogamous groups tended to be localized within a restricted area. Thus very, and perhaps most, commonly a single village might consist almost exclusively of a single lineage, or it might contain two or more territorially distinct lineages, or a single lineage might be spread over two or more adjacent villages. The villages varied considerably in size, but many seem to have been quite large, reaching as many as 5000 inhabitants, and all were typically walled and armed, reflecting the warlike conditions prevailing in the area.

Although rice was by far the most important crop cultivated in the region as a whole, it was not grown exclusively on a subsistence basis, and sugar, tea, oranges, and many other horticultural products as well directly involved the peasants in the commercial activities of the region, which were greatly stimulated by the foreign trade of the ports of Kwangtung and Fukien. This combination of agrarian and commercial activities permitted the growth of economic differentiation and class distinctions within village society. There was considerable concentration of landownership in private hands and tenant farming was widespread, but in contrast to most of the rest of China, corporate holdings were important. These were held primarily by a village or lineage and its segments and, to a lesser extent, by various public or private organizations or associations. The amount held varied greatly, but in Kwang-

tung, where such holdings were more extensive than in Fukien, they seem to have accounted for about one third of the cultivated land of the province. In general it seems that it was the prosperous lineages which tended to possess common property, whereas the poor ones had none. Nevertheless small individual households appear to have formed the basic economic unit, and considerable economic diversity was possible within a single lineage, which might contain landlords, merchants, craftsmen, and peasants.

The lineages were divided into various segments, although the hierarchy of these segments is not very clear. However, it appears that the most important ones structurally speaking were the lineage (*tsu*) and sub-lineage (*fang*) at the top of the scale and the family (*chia*) and compound (*hu*) at the bottom. Intermediate branches (*chih*) seems to have been important only with respect to ancestor worship. Another type of religious grouping was constituted by the mourning grades (*wu fu*), which officially, though not necessarily in practice, included a wide range of an individual's agnatic kin and did not therefore constitute a discrete lineage segment. The *wu fu*, however, were most closely linked to the lower level units in the lineage system, whereas the intermediate units were associated with ancestral halls. Domestic ancestor worship ceased with the fourth ascending generation, at which time the tablets were destroyed or buried and replaced with another kind in ancestral halls, but construction of these halls and admission to them depended upon economic resources. Therefore the formation of these units did not follow the purely genealogical structure of the lineage, but tended rather to reflect its power structure.

A fundamental aspect of the social differentiation found within the lineages was the unequal access it provided to the benefits stemming from the national political system, for it appears to have been difficult for members of the lower classes to enter the bureaucracy, contrary to the traditional theory which saw it as a means of upward mobility for such people. Links between the lowest member of the national bureaucracy, the county magistrate, and the local population were maintained via his office staff, petty officials in the towns and villages, and the local gentry. The *pao-chang* or *ti-pao*, a sort of constable, was the most important of the second group, but the status of such people was not high and they were not leaders of their communities. The gentry, on the other hand, were important for their ability to intercede with the magistrate as equals and for their dominant position in village government.

Lineage leaders were chosen on the basis of age and generation and not in accordance with a fixed order of seniority among the lineages or their segments. When it happened that such a leader came from the humbler levels of the lineage, it appears that his influence was less, and that the lineage elite tended to run things despite the theory of equality among lineage members. There is also evidence of lineage segmentation along power and status lines, involving the manipulation of genealogies to this end in spite of their being recorded. The dominant elites tended to divert lineage property to their own ends and also acted as intermediaries between the central government and the people in the collection of taxes. Some of them even extended their control in this respect to less powerful neighboring lineages.

Lineage segmentation did not account for all the groupings within the village, however, for voluntary associations seem to have played a not unimportant role. One village, for example, included associations for mutual aid, parent burial, the manufacture of sugar, irrigation, boxing, and music, of which the first was primarily for the poorer people.

There was no fixed pattern of marriages between kin groups, though a preference for matrilineal cross-cousin marriage existed here and there. The wife was almost entirely absorbed into her husband's group, which was, moreover, considered superior to her own. Nevertheless, affectionate relations were said to exist between a man and his mother's brother and matrilineal and affinal ties often served as the basis for political and economic activity. Considerable hostility and fighting between lineages were common in the region, and to protect themselves weaker lineages would sometimes band together by means of marriage, agnation or by the linking of their surnames.

The state judicial system, which reached no lower down than the above-mentioned county magistrate, afforded the lineages considerable autonomy, for the state discouraged appeals to its courts, preferring to have the lineages settle their own affairs. The separation of state and local government was further strengthened, moreover, by the policy of never appointing magistrates to office in their own territories. The government's main concern was with suppressing rebellion against itself, which was chiefly organized by secret societies, of which the dominant one in the southeast was the Triad. The membership of these societies cut across lineage lines and they tended to attract the poor and weak in their opposition to the state and the social order.

Such in brief were the principal elements of the social organization

of southeastern China as the author presents them. It is noteworthy that a lineage system was able to survive in a heterogeneous society with a centralized government, contrary to what the usual anthropological theories of unilineal kinship organization might lead one to expect. The chief factors mentioned by the author to account for it are the absence of seniority in the line of descent, which permitted the development of class differences, and the ambivalent relationship between the lineage elites and the bureaucracy, which were closely linked on the basis of class, yet were separated by the administrative policies of the government. One might also add the prevailing warlike conditions, which were, of course, evidence of the lack of effective control by the central government, intentional or otherwise, and under which the lineages were the principal sources of protection. The Chinese system, therefore, differed in important respects from the African ones on which most lineage theory has been based, and serves as a useful corrective to ideas derived from them.

The author's analysis of the material he has offered in this book is extremely perceptive and, it would seem, has been carried as far as the material will allow, but of course the conclusions he arrives at are only provisional for several reasons. As he points out, his account is based on data referring to only a few scattered lineages. Therefore we do not know how typical they were, nor just how all the various elements of the total social organization which he has isolated were integrated with each other in any one area. At the same time more concrete information is needed on such matters as inter-lineage collaboration and the organization and government of the village communities, for although the concept of lineage control of the villages is clear enough, the mechanics of that control are not.

It is unfortunate that a field study of these problems in China is not longer possible, although a study of the lineages in the New Territories of Hong Kong would still be valuable, as the author suggests, in spite of the very different conditions now prevailing there. There is, however, undoubtedly a great deal of material in Chinese and even Japanese language sources which could fill many of the gaps in our present knowledge of the subject.

Particularly important would be the study of historical data to show the development of the various institutions and their interrelations. Obviously there must have been a certain amount of stability in the system as a whole, since its various elements seem to have existed side by side for several centuries in spite of (or perhaps even to a certain

extent thanks to) the semi-anarchic conditions under which they operated, but this need not mean that their relations with each other and their internal structures remained unchanged throughout this period. The author points out that the region was remarkable for its large-scale lineages, interlineage fights, and secret societies, and suggests that the three were functionally connected, in the sense that "alliances against the state formed by the secret societies counterbalanced the opposition generated between lineage communities when agnatic organization was carried to a high pitch." The author does not elaborate on this theme, but if it is true that increases in lineage wealth were accompanied by progressive segmentation and social differentiation within the lineages and that secret societies recruited their membership mainly from the lower classes, one would expect both institutions to expand together under conditions of rising economic activity and social differentiation in the region. In other words, as the lineages grew in power, forces opposing the social order grew with them. The maintenance of the balance between them, however, must, of course, have been dependent to a considerable extent not only on their own relative strengths, but on the attitude and strength of the central government. One gets the impression that this balance of power was becoming increasingly precarious, however, in the face of the changes brought about by the economic and political developments of the 19th and 20th centuries, and that the conditions described in this book were therefore not typical of the entire period of lineage history. It is essential, therefore, to know the earlier social history of southeastern China before we can have a full understanding of its lineage organization and the reasons for its development and persistence.

It is to be hoped that this book will indeed serve to stimulate the further research that it suggests and in particular that it will not be ignored by sinologists on the simple ground that it has not been written by one of them, for collaboration between anthropology and sinology are surely essential in this field.

University of Illinois.

R. E. DOWNS

FIRTH, RAYMOND, F.B.A., *History and Traditions of Tikopia*. The Polynesian Society, Memoir No. 32. Wellington 1961. 203 pp., 2 Maps, Index. Price 25/—.

The author presents a study which had been long delayed for several reasons. The most important of them was that the structure of Tikopia society and the recent changes had to be studied first before one could hope to understand the stories of the past. "The Tikopia traditional material is interpreted as being relevant primarily not to the social conditions about which a tale is told, but to those in which the tale is told." (p. 4). And somewhat later he states his basic methodological principle. "I am concerned primarily with the kind of oral traditional material which the Tikopia in general or some social group or group representative regard as true, and which they demonstrate by their actions to be regarded by them as having significant bearing on their social structure and on the organization of their affairs, especially their relations with other members of their society." (p. 14).

Tikopian oral literature is classified by the Tikopians themselves into three categories. (1) *Ararafanga*, stories of relatively recent affairs, conversational statements. The doings of ancestors up to about the third generation, preserved by eyewitnesses or by hearsay, come in this category. (2) *Tara tupua*: specific items of traditional information. Many of them are in narrative form, others again are short accounts of incidents or descriptive statements. They deal commonly with ritual matters. In contrast to *Ararafanga*, which has a secular character, much of the *Tara tupua* is considered sacred. In general *Ararafanga* refer to the recent past while *Tara tupua* refer to the remote past. But there is no clear cut line between them. (3) *Kai*: these are narratives which show strong dramatic interest. Such a story has its regular opening, by which usually the dramatis personae are established (without reference to time), then develops with multiple repetition of action to some kind of climax, after which the story ends suddenly. In contrast to *Tara tupua* which are genealogically located in many instances, *Kai* are usually timeless, as far as Tikopia "history" is concerned. The author proceeds to show, that there are several sub-categories of *Kai*, varying greatly in their context and significance: (a) original fiction, i.e. inventions of today, (b) traditional tales the text of which has been handed down for generations. They deal with spirits, the relations between them and human beings. They may be further sub-divided into *Kai pariki*, bad tales, and *Kai fakafiakata*,

laughter raising tales, which are just not to be told in the presence of affinal kin. Then there are long stories of beings of a semi-supernatural character, who either do not enter the Tikopia religious scheme, or who do so only marginally. Some people believe these tales to be true, others are doubtful. But they have enough air of authenticity to present a problem for the ordinary Tikopia. Still another type is strongly integrated with the religious system of the Tikopia. It is regarded as sacred and not publicly told. These tales are to some extent the property of the kin groups with whose origins and whose gods they deal. At the head of this category is the *Kai Tapu*, the so-called Sacred Tale, which narrates the adventures of *Tafiki* and *Karisi*, the gods, who are basic to the ritual of the *Kafiki* clan. (pp. 11—13).

The author is, however, of the opinion that groupings of traditional tales on native terminological grounds alone is inadequate for a final classification. The Tikopia categories are not mutually exclusive. They emphasize formal principles but should not be understood as classifying contents or religious functions. Concerning his historical aim the author presents his material in three stages, which rest upon distinctions made by the Tikopia themselves. (1) A period of eight to ten generation from modern times, during which a fairly coherent and consistent account is given of what one said to be the doings of men. (2) The next period anterior to the former, cannot be measured in generations. The genealogy is a notional one, and there is considerable uncertainty by most Tikopia as to the accuracy of such names. (3) This most ancient period deals primarily with relations between the gods of Tikopia and the formation of Tikopia society. The author presents his material then in the reverse order. The whole section of his book dealing with theses historical reconstructions is called "The sequence of Tikopia *Quasi-history*". (the italics are mine).

According to FIRTH the Tikopia seem not to have possessed any cosmogony of a very general kind. "I could not obtain any evidence moreover, that the Tikopia possessed any creation stories of the conventional Polynesian kind, whereby mankind was formed by a particular generation act." (p. 22). The Tikopia have been primarily interested in the first people who inhabited their home. But these people have not been conceived as plain human beings. They operated almost indifferently in the heavens or other locale of spirits, and on earth, especially on Tikopia.

He, then, distinguishes four sets of tales about basic origins. (a) The initial emergence of the land and the appearance of people thereon.

(b) The procreation and birth of major tutelary deities associated with food resources, and the distribution of these sources among them. (c) The supplementation of the island peak by endowing it with low-land. (d) The procreation and birth of the principal twin deities of the ranking chief of Tikopia, the *Ariki Kafika*. (p. 25). After discussing the content of the tales as to the basic origins, FIRTH proceeds to the presentation of the material relevant to the origin of the major social units. This is, of course, the most important and conclusive part of the book. The point here is, that different social units claim as their original ancestor a deity or semi-deity, and by this device they connect their existence with the whole set of religious beliefs as expressed in their tales.

There emerges one culture-hero, the supreme deity of *Kafika*. He was, according to FIRTH, a mortal man and became deificated after his death. In the next chapter FIRTH dissects all the relevant material reflecting struggles with invading "Tongans". At the end of this section he remarks, that he has dealt primarily with events on the island itself, that is, he has dealt with the fairly stable resident population. He did not deal with the large amount of tales concerning the adventures of Tikopia abroad.

In summarizing this vast material he states: (1) The sequence of events described in reference to the genealogical frame over the last five generations (i.e. back to 1825) between *Matakai* and the present day is likely to be reasonably correct. Beyond this there is no verification of traditions. But two themes constantly appear in all the tales: the propensity of the Tikopia men to engage in overseas voyaging and the drive to acquire land. This ocean voyaging seems to have been a two-way process, and though Tikopia did not gain as much as it lost, the landfalls from overseas must have been an important source of recruitment. (p. 159).

There, then, were immigrants rather before 1700 A.D. from *Samoa* and *Uvea*, about 1725 A.D. from *Luangiua*, and rather before 1800 A.D. from *Anuta* and *Rotuma*. The great struggle of the *Taumako* brothers against the invading *Tongans*, and the foundation of the modern lineage of *Taumako* by a *Tongan* immigrant about the middle of the 17th century. (p. 160).

The sources, from which the immigrants have come to Tikopia, can be grouped in an inner and an outer arc of islands. The inner arc is constituted by the Duff-group, *Anuta* and *Rotuma*. In addition, cultural sources, though not necessarily of immigrants, would include in

this arc the Banks-Islands and *Vanikoro*. The outer arc is constituted by *Luangiua*, *Atafu*, *Uvea*, *Samoa* and *Tonga*. The inner arc is mixed Polynesian- Melanesian, the outer arc is Polynesian. By this analysis FIRTH came as far back as the 17th century. (p. 161).

Sako, the great culture-hero, is supposed to have lived just before the last traceable direct ancestor of the social units. This would put him at the end of the 16th century. "The grandfather of *Sako*, the human being *Puremato*, on this time scale could have arrived in *Tikopia* — say, from *Pukapuka* or *Somosomo* or even from *Samoa* — in the late 15th or early 16th century." (p. 162).

Finally, there is direct evidence that there had existed some lineages before the establishment of the present clan system. The *Kafika* people did not deny the authenticity of the original lineages. What actually has happened cannot be said from the source material at hand. But whether or not there was any ancient stratum of Polynesian population on *Tikopia*, the modern *Tikopia* society is the result of a fusion of a number of elements from a variety of islands—mainly Polynesian but probable some Melanesian also. The nucleus of *Tikopia* population not so very different from the present in culture and society was in existence as far back as the beginning of the 15th century." (pp. 156—166).

Undoubtedly, FIRTH has written an admirable book. In a way it is the classic genealogical treatise dealing with the well-known Polynesian-type material. FIRTH developed the method further, because he projected the different tales on the "screen" of present social organization. It was only in that combination that he could hope to achieve *his* historical aims. As far back as the 17th century one can accept FIRTH's results as valid. Beyond that point there can only be guesswork. But, as FIRTH himself remarks, there are good guesses and bad ones. And it is quite a legitimate scientific task to search for some good guesses, which approach an acceptable degree of plausibility. As was to be expected FIRTH is very cautious in this part of the book.

The outstanding record of FIRTH's research work in the past justifies the authority he is granted, and the respect which is paid to him. And I must confess that I read this book with great pleasure and that I certainly gained much enlightenment. If I venture now upon some critical comments, it may be regarded as the result of the stimulation received by FIRTH's arguments.

To my mind his basic methodological principle embodies a pitfall. He was and is primarily concerned with material which the *Tikopia* regard as true. One must, of course, add, which the *Tikopia* regarded

as true during his stay. As we have in mind a historical reconstruction over many generations, we have to distinguish between two different categories of data: oral tradition and its exegesis.

The interaction of both represents the meaning, which is given to the oral tradition at a given time. Of this, however, we only know the situation during FIRTH's field-work. Whether the oral traditions was differently interpreted by the Tikopia in the past we do not know and we never will know by direct analysis. FIRTH does not make a remark to this point, but his whole argumentation makes it clear that he would agree with this comment.

Concerning the interpretation of the oral tradition by the Tikopia themselves one must make a further distinction. There is a difference in the meaning a piece of oral tradition has for an individual or a group and the meaning this same piece of tradition has as part of an integrated set of religious beliefs and practices.

KLUCKHOHN and many others have made it clear that values often are implicit. They operate without being explicitly formulated as laws or codices. This is certainly the case with the religious section of illiterate cultures. The point now is, that oral tradition (myths and tales) cannot be regarded as explicit statements of values. They embody these values. They give them pictorial expression. But the principles which led to the formulation of these myths and tales have no bearing on the interpretation of them in the course of generations. Therefore the statement of a man as to the meaning of a certain piece of oral tradition at a given time cannot be regarded as the only objective source, neither for the analysis of the religious pattern of this culture nor for historical reconstruction. The *exclusive* application of this strictly empirical method, then, may lead to a complete misinterpretation of the situation in spite of this true scientific tool (the empirical fallacy).

I may be permitted to illustrate this argument from the book under review. FIRTH had been given a tale, which was interpreted as picturing the origin of baldness in men. "The account — which is hardly more than a passing reference — is that in ancient times the sky was very low, quite close to the earth. By continually rubbing their heads on it as they passed underneath, men became bald. The story did not attempt to explain why women as well as men did not go bald, and why baldness should have persisted when the sky assumed its present distance. This is the only story I could discover — apart from one of the origins of death — which attempted to account for the attributes of human beings in general." (p. 24).

I do not not deny that FIRTH's informant explained this piece of tale as the picture for the origin of baldness. And I certainly do not assume that FIRTH did not see the other possible meaning of this story to be discussed presently. But the point is that he stuck to the interpretation given to him by his informant. About this his own phrasing leaves no doubt. But seen in the context of similar tales, particularly in Melanesia, it becomes quite clear that we are dealing with the fragment of a cosmogonical (not an anthropogonical) story, explaining the origin of world by an initial separation of heaven and earth. Only a short look at parallel cases will show that the situation before this separation is always pictured as unfavourable to the existence of mankind. The space between heaven and earth was too narrow to go erect. Mankind simply could not exist, and the separation of heaven and earth was a necessary creation-act without which the world in its present shape, including the living conditions for mankind, could not have originated. The mentioning of the baldening effect during the pre-existential state is a narrational addition, just a dash of colour to make the picture more impressive. It does not only occur in the Tikopia set of tradition but is known, too, from other parts of the world in the context of this cosmogonical story. If FIRTH wonders why the story does not explain that women did not go bald and that baldness persisted after the separation of heaven and earth, one may answer, because the story was not concerned with baldness at all.

This was only the individual interpretation of FIRTH's informant. And even granted that the whole population at the time of FIRTH's stay held this opinion, comparison with parallel cases in other parts of the world, particularly in those parts which are inhabited by populations closely akin to the Tikopia, must show that there is a different meaning behind the story, apparently not known or not valued by the Tikopia at FIRTH's time.

It could be agued that I am concentrating on a point of minor importance as there is only this faint example in the Tikopia material. I agree, but it serves well to illustrate the point which becomes of major importance if we turn our attention to the culture-hero *Sako*. FIRTH states that he is a mortal man, who became deified after his death. The evidence of this statement rests upon the text of the creation-myth and upon statement by his informants. The "god" is living exactly at the border between the realm of gods and mankind. The *Kafika*-clan connects its own existence and claim of supremacy (sic) by the family of *Sako* with the gods of the creation. There are

two possibilities: either Sako was a mortal man and all the godly attributes were projected onto him later, or he is a god, who was given some human characteristics, just to fit the connection. What kind of proof does FIRTH present? A complete genealogy cannot be accepted as proof. It is to be expected in both cases. Following his main methodological principle FIRTH sticks to the statements of his informants about this problem. But belief-statements of an individual or a group on matters of its own religion cannot be accepted as objective sources.

What one believes to be true, need not necessarily be true. This is the more the case as we have to do with a statement of a mixed historical and religious content. I may add, that even for the analysis of religion such a statement has limited value. But this is another problem.

Using the oral tradition as FIRTH has done can only lead to a historical reconstruction which the Tikopia at the time of FIRTH's stay on the island regarded as true. This is not necessarily the real history of Tikopia. In the concluding chapter of his book FIRTH raises this point himself: "But evidence obtained by modern archaeological techniques tends on the whole to suggest that some Polynesian islands have been populated for much longer than was previously estimated, judging primarily by the genealogical timeframe." (p. 166). But the point of my comment is, that independent of archaeological suggestions a critical view of the limits of FIRTH's basic methodological principle leads already to the same doubts. And I am well aware of the fact, that this critical view leads to a very fundamental discussion. But this cannot be carried out in the context of the review of a book, which in its own limits is a masterpiece. It may, however, be a good thing, if FIRTH would publish his material on oral tradition as a neutral source so that it could be analyzed with the help of other methods too.

Basel.

CARL A. SCHMITZ

CARL A. SCHMITZ, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie des Wantoot Tales, Nordost Neuuguinea*. Kölner Ethnologische Mitteilungen, dl. 1, Köln 1960; 226 pp.

De schrijver van dit werk verbleef van december 1955 tot juli 1956 in het Wantoot-dal, dat gelegen is aan de Zuidzijde van het Finisterre-

gebergte in het Huon-schiereiland. Hij is de lezers van dit tijdschrift bekend uit de uitvoerige bespreking door Mohr het vorig jaar gewijd aan zijn *Historische Probleme in Nordost Neuguinea*, waarop dit boek in zekere zin een vervolg is. Ofschoon het vóór alles een beschrijving wil geven, vindt men er zo talrijke verwijzingen in naar de theorieën in dit eerdere werk ontvouwd, dat men het er moeilijk los van kan zien. Zijn zienswijze op deze theorieën heeft Uw referent in *Nieuw-Guinea Studiën* gegeven. Hij zal daar niet verder op ingaan, doch zich zo veel mogelijk beperken tot een bespreking van het ethnografisch materiaal, dat ons hier geboden wordt.

Alleereerst zij opgemerkt, dat het niet een beschrijving bevat van de bevolking van het Wantoat-dal, zoals die heden leeft en werkt, doch een reconstructie van hun cultuur, zoals ze bij de eerste aanraking met Europeanen zich voordeed. Waar er sedert veel veranderd is (de zending is hier reeds meer dan 30 jaar werkzaam) berust een belangrijk deel van het materiaal op navraag. Dat geeft aan vele beschrijvingen een ietwat schematische vorm. Slechts op enkele plaatsen komen de Wantoat tot werkelijk leven, zoals in de beschrijving van het Jangga Matana-ritueel, waarbij men op ingenieuze wijze een stortvloed veroorzaakt door boven op de berghelling een serie vijvers te construeren, die men door niet minder ingenieus aangelegde leidingen laat vollopen en dan plotseling alle tegelijk laat leegstromen, waarop het water een aantal boompjes meesleurt, welke boompjes iets te maken hebben met de jongere generatie. Wat zij ermee te maken hebben is echter niet recht duidelijk. Wij zouden er veel meer van willen weten dan de schrijver tijdens zijn kort verblijf heeft kunnen achterhalen.

Dit is overigens op zichzelf niet weinig. Wanneer het ons niet bevredigt komt dit vooral, doordat de auteur ons zijn materiaal steeds weer presenteert vanuit de gezichtshoek zijner nogal provocerende theorieën. Wanneer men die theorieën niet deelt, is dat bijzonder hinderlijk; het gaat er tenslotte niet om te weten, wat de auteur van deze mensen denkt en welke overwegingen hij hun toeschrijft, maar wat de mensen zelf denken en doen. Men is dan geneigd de schrijver de tekortkomingen zijner beschrijving zwaarder toe te rekenen dan men hem op grond van de korte onderzoeksperiode gerechtigd is te doen. Ook Uw referent heeft telkens de neiging moeten onderdrukken die tekortkomingen op rekening te schrijven van des schrijvers theorieën, welke hij nu eenmaal niet deelt. Geheel zonder oorzaak is die neiging overigens niet. De vaagheid in de omschrijving van de Sippe, waarop Oosterwal in *Nieuw-Guinea Studiën* reeds attendeerde, is bepaald wel

een uitvloeisel van theoretische preoccupaties, die de schrijver weerhielden van een duidelijke beschrijving. Vooralsnog lijkt het zeer kwetsief dat hier de term Sippe terecht gebruikt zou zijn.

Het meest belangwekkend in het boek is de beschrijving van de bevoeiingstechniek, die ook voor andere doeleinden wordt toegepast, zoals voor het wegslijpen van grond op zodanige wijze, dat aan de benedenzijde van een op een helling aangelegde tuin een zo diepe geul wordt gegraven, dat zij aan die zijde een natuurlijke bescherming vormt tegen varkens. Bevoeiingstechnieken worden ons ook uit het centrale bergland gemeld. Het is merkwaardig te zien hoe juist deze geïsoleerde bergbewoners zowel met bevoeiing als met landbouwmethoden een vorm van technische perfectie hebben weten te bereiken, die men juist daar niet verwachten zou.

Rest nog te vermelden, dat de laatste dertig bladzijden van het boek gewijd zijn aan „Linguistische Notizen” die een ander bewijs leveren van de grote activiteit welke Dr. Schmitz tijdens zijn verblijf aan de dag heeft gelegd.

J. VAN BAAL

ETUDES RURALES, *Revue trimestrielle publiée par l'école pratique des Hautes Etudes - Sorbonne*. Sixième Section: Sciences économiques et sociales. Mouton & Co, Parijs, Den Haag. 1961.

Dit franstalige tijdschrift, waarvan het eerste nummer in Juni 1961 verscheen, zal zich in hoofdzaak gaan bezig houden met de wetenschappelijke studie van het platteland.

Geografisch zal haar werkterrein West-Europa en de Middellandse Zee-landen omvatten.

Etudes Rurales is geen vaktijdschrift in de enge zin van het woord; de redactie zal n.l. haar kolommen ter beschikking stellen van historici, geografen, economen, sociologen, psychologen, etnologen en landbouwkundigen voorzover deze specialisten het platteland als studie-object hebben. Men vraagt zich in dit verband af wat onder 'platteland' (campagnes) verstaan wordt.

De door de redactie in haar voorwoord gegeven omschrijving van des groupes qui, directement ou indirectement, vivent du travail de la terre lijkt nogal vaag.

Naast de publicatie van oorspronkelijke artikelen zullen in het tijdschrift ook boekbesprekingen opgenomen worden, evenals bibliografische kanttekeningen, betrekking hebbende op de studie van het platteland door een der eerdergenoemde deelwetenschappen.

In het eerste nummer wordt reeds weerspiegeld wat de redactie zich ten doel stelt en we treffen o.a. bijdragen aan van een socioloog, een sociaal-historicus, een psycholoog en een econoom.

Een afzonderlijke paragraaf, gewijd aan de sociologie en economie van het platteland in Nederland, willen we niet onvermeld laten. In het kader van deze rubriek wordt een tiental publicaties besproken van de landbouwhogeschool in Wageningen en het landbouw-economisch instituut in den Haag.

Een jaarabonnement (4 nummers) kost *f* 21.00.

JACOB VREDENBREGT