(not empirically verifiable or quantifiable). Here he draws heavily from Levi-Strauss, still a major influence at the University of Chicago (where Weiss did his doctorate) it seems, with his continual references to binary opposites like hot-cold, interior-exterior, control and lack of control. In good Levi-Straussian fashion Weiss seems convinced that empirical phenomena are mere surface manifestations of the “deep structures” of reality which ultimately must be intuited. Weiss makes a giant leap from his perceptions to his conclusions. It begs the question, does his work reflect a Haya reality or merely one he imposes upon them? The results yield tantalizing food for thought, but, like Levi-Strauss’s “raw and the cooked,” seem half-baked and not easy to digest.

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Today, the Nuer comprise only 4.9% of the population of the conflict-ridden Republic of the Sudan. Yet the Nuer have become internationally known. The British social anthropologist Sir Edward E. Evans-Pritchard brought them into the forefront of attention. His trilogy — *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (1940), *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer* (1951), and *Nuer Religion* (1956) — achieved recognition as one of anthropology’s classic case studies. Now, scholarship on the Nuer is further advanced by Dr. Hutchinson. Not only does she correct Evans-Pritchard in a number of instances, but she brings the story of the Nuer up-to-date.

This book concentrates on the rural Nuer’s social and moral dilemmas during the 1980s and early 1990s. Chapter 2, “Blood, Cattle, and Cash: The Commodification of Nuer Values,” stresses: “Although increasing recourse to monetary exchange between the 1930s and the early 1990s did not sunder people’s bonds of identification with their cattle, it did foster a significant contraction of Nuer concepts of self-bond and sociality” (p. 50). Chapter 3, “Guns, Warfare, and the State: New Contexts of Power, Violence, and Leadership,” discusses the moral dilemmas among Nuer caused by governmental rule and the two civil wars in Sudan. The incorporation of Nuer into the armed forces led Nuer to contemplate the possibility of killing fellow Nuer “in the line of duty.” Chapter 4, “Cattle over Blood: the Changing Symbolism of Gender, Marriage, and Filiation,” “constitutes the analytic heart of this book” (p. 52). It shows how the general significance of the cattle-over-blood ideology is being eroded in matters of courtship, marriage, and divorce.

Other chapters explore the impact of non-indigenous religions on Nuer practices. Chapter 5, “‘Incest Is Blood and the Cow’: Struggles over the Control of Reproduction,” probes public rethinking of incest and exogamic prohibitions. The older generation has undergone a dramatic loss of power in enforcing conformity to its definitions of incest. Chapter 6, “The Emergence of Bull-boys: Political Leadership, Legitimacy, and Male Initiation,” highlights the appearance from the late 1940s of educated Nuer youths who reject the rite of initiation.
This has provoked controversy over the role of initiation in the transfer of agnatic spear-calls, named age-sets and collective cattle rights across the generations. This chapter also notes the hidden power of literacy. Chapter 7, “Cattle Aren’t Killed for Nothing: Christianity, Conversion, and the Enduring Importance of Prophets,” pinpoints exogenous and endogenous factors undermining the sacrificial role of cattle in Nuer social life. Most important is acceptance of Christian doctrines demanding the total rejection of cattle as objects of spiritual dedication and sacrifice. Also Protestantism, particularly Presbyterianism, helps secularize much of Nuer social and moral life. Nevertheless, several Nuer prophets gained a following. The most powerful is Wutnyang Gatakek. On the other hand, Islam wins few Nuer converts because of its insistence on circumcision and method of prayer.

“Afterword” presents the author’s speculation about the Nuer’s future. The second civil war means continued Nuer decline of confidence in the inherent “security” of their cattle wealth. Many displaced Nuer will return from northern Sudan. The issues of water and oil will rise. The complete collapse of educational opportunities during the second civil war will have catastrophic consequences. The civil war’s “culture of violence” will persist to erode the people’s confidence in the efficacy of persuasion and compromise. Major public rituals of purification and atonement must emerge. Will future political leaders take responsibility for rectifying past atrocities? “And what will become of all the children who have been forcefully conscripted into the fighting ranks of rebel and national armies?” (p. 356).

Nuer Dilemmas represents meticulous research and outstanding scholarship. The author lived in Nuer villages between December 1980 and February 1983, January and February, 1990, and several months in 1992. She gained the friendship of many Nuer and her book is permeated with insightful interviews which allow the author to profusely document her account of Nuer life. Wonderfully, she uses footnotes.

This volume contains helpful material for readers. “A Note on the Nuer Language” illuminates linguistic intricacies. The thirty photographs aid understanding the text. The four maps and five figures are well-chosen. An appendix, “Comparative Divorce Rates among the Nuer, 1936-83,” supports the writer’s claim that jural divorce rates surged among the Nuer in that period. The nineteen-page bibliography is valuable, while the index is excellent.

This reviewer quibbles in a few regards. Certain lengthy sentences may tax the reader’s attention, e.g., on p. 217:

Whereas prior to the creation of government chiefs and courts it was apparently impossible for a man to claim formal paternity of a child conceived by an unmarried girl whom he failed to marry (Evans-Pritchard 1951b: 121), his “right” to claim that child through the payment of a cattle fee (ruk) was increasingly upheld by the courts — even in situations where the young man himself originally denied in court that the child was his so as to avoid marrying the mother (Howell 1954: 175-176), though in the latter cases higher ruk fees could be demanded.

In the bibliography, three types of items — books, dissertations, and articles — are lumped together; perhaps there should be three separate categories. Some of the photographs could have been improved. Finally, there is the matter of Commander Riak Machar Teny of the Southern Sudan Independence Army, with whom the author had extended interviews in 1990 and 1992. Her book does not mention that Machar’s Nuer forces “destroyed scores of