Haida rank and potlatch; cultural evolution; and cross-language parallels in parental kin terms.

Many of the reprinted papers are widely known among anthropologists; there is space to comment on only a few specific contributions. A recent study of Tenino shamanism exemplifies the author's sensitivity to ethnographic problems. Murdock saw that there was a discrepancy between the usual stereotype of the shaman as a neurotic witch doctor and the upright, responsible character of his Tenino shaman informant. Convinced that personal characteristics such as honesty, responsibility, and judgment were typical of shamans in this culture, he sought an explanation for the apparent anomaly in other customs. Two features were particularly significant: (i) the selection process whereby neophyte shamans were examined by established practitioners and unstable candidates eliminated; (ii) the part played by shamans in social control through the practice of in-group sorcery, which served a judicial function among the loosely organized Tenino. The author's long interest in the clarification of concepts in the field of social organization is well represented by one paper, "Cognatic forms of social organization" (1960), where refractory problems in the analysis of non-unilineal descent are reassessed, and an important typology of cognatic systems developed.

The problem of family and marital instability in non-European cultures offers Murdock an opportunity to demonstrate the efficiency of the Human Relations Area Files for cross-cultural comparison. In an incredibly short time, a sample of 40 representative cultures was assembled from the file, data on divorce was analyzed, and a paper was prepared for publication. In addition to documenting cultural extremes in divorce practices (from no permissible divorce among Inca to a premium on brittle marriage among Crow Indians), the author explodes the myth of the "oppressed aboriginal woman," for she has rights with respect to divorce equal to those of her husband in most societies; and he shows that the incidence of divorce in the United States is not alarming when viewed in the context of the incidence in other, presumably stable, societies.

The book contains only one article that has not been published previously; in that article Murdock attacks the concept of cultural relativity with his customary vigor. Rejecting both the "sentimental" formulations of Herskovits ("that all cultures must be accorded equal 'dignity' and equal 'validity,'" p. 146) and the more "hard-boiled" version of Sumner, he proposes an attempt to salvage the concept by means of research anchored in established principles of culture change. Scientific exploration of the choices people actually make when there is an opportunity for decision may yield valid measures of "the adaptive value and satisfaction-yielding quality of different ways of life and their component elements" (p. 150).

Readers need not agree with the theoretical stance espoused in these papers to find stimulation and value in them. Dealing with theoretical and methodological issues, Murdock is forthright and often convincing; in controversy, he is a doughty antagonist. The hortatory tone that obtrudes in some essays is, perhaps, not unbecoming in one who has devoted himself so wholeheartedly to making anthropology a science.

Alexander Spoehr, a colleague at the University of Pittsburgh, has written an appreciative foreword. Brief introductory comments by Murdock help to place each essay in perspective, and there is an informative autobiographical sketch.

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History of Medicine

Malaria in Vietnam and epidemic cerebrospinal meningitis in American army camps at home remind us that the battle against the microbial agents of disease is another human conflict that is far from won. In fact, the war against disease is perhaps man's most ancient struggle.

In straightforward prose, P. E. Baldry, the author of this book, **The Battle Against Bacteria** [Cambridge University Press, New York, 1965. 112 pp., $1.95 (paper); $4.50 (cloth)], tells the story of man's early attempts to deal with epidemic diseases, of Antony van Leeuwenhoek's discovery of microbes in 1676, and of the establishment of a causal relationship between bacteria and disease, 200 years later, through the efforts of Robert Koch, Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister, and others too numerous to mention here.

This part of the story is told in 26 pages of adequate but well-compressed text. The rest of the book is devoted to an account of the discovery of defensive measures, especially chemotherapeutic agents and antibiotics. In the final chapter Baldry, who is an English physician, points out that, although many infectious diseases have been brought under control, the battle is far from won because drug-resistant germs continue to crop up and thereby force us to develop new and more potent drugs. Furthermore, the conquest of many infectious diseases has contributed greatly to the population explosion, resulting in far-reaching and complex social problems, thus giving these victories a Pyrrhic aspect.

This is a nice little book, and the availability of the paperback edition affords it a good chance of reaching the wider audience that it deserves.

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Modern Biology

The primary aim of L. L. Langley, the author of **Homeostasis** (Reinhold, New York, 1965. 126 pp., $1.95), is to present the concept of homeostasis to undergraduate students of biology. In this he succeeds.

A number of examples of homeostatic mechanisms are presented. These examples vary in effectiveness. The chapters on blood pressure, respiration, and body fluid are, on the whole, well done. The remaining chapters could be improved.

The preface states this is not a text in physiology. Complete coverage is therefore unnecessary. The chapter on hormones, for example, discusses the control of menstruation far too briefly to provide real understanding for the uninitiated. The chapter would be much more effective if the control of one endocrine gland were discussed in depth. As presented, the endocrine system is comprehensively reviewed but in a manner so abbreviated that it is difficult to understand.

Because temperature control involves several organ systems, it would be advantageous to present it later in the volume. With this exception, the principal defect in this chapter is the failure to provide a clear treatment