Book Reviews

The Anthropological Adaptation

Women in the Field. Anthropological Experiences. PEGGY GOLDE, Ed. Alpine, Chicago, 1970. viii, 344 pp., illus. $8.95.

Women in the Field is a collection of essays by 12 women anthropologists, ranging from established scholars to relatively recent Ph.D.'s, who describe a variety of field experiences in Africa, Oceania, Europe, Asia, and North and South America. Peggy Golde asked her contributors to interweave three themes: personal and subjective; ethnographic; and theoretical or methodological. Her own objective was that the book would be "an ethnography of ethnographers" as each participant reported on "her subjective view of her own world, values, and aims and on how her work might reflect sex identification as well as her professional training." She hoped that "the resulting information about the consequences of gender might sensitize male anthropologists to the problem and implications of sex roles and provide data they could use to contrast and compare with the responses they themselves elicit as researchers." She goes on to say, "Systematic comparisons of this kind are necessary if we are to establish the extent to which aspects of responses and roles are determined by the sex of the investigator, not only because of the nature of the responses of the society being studied but because of sex role training, attitudes, and biases transmitted to each sex in our own culture."

There is something disquietingly faddish about all this, tending to raise women's liberation issues where in fact none exist, and promoting as new questions what are very old theoretical concerns in anthropology. Women have been doing a noteworthy share of creditable fieldwork since early in the last quarter of the 19th century, when anthropology was still a new discipline, and the significance of the sex of the investigator has long been recognized. Edwin B. Tylor, the so-called father of modern anthropology, observed in 1884 after a visit with Matilda and James Stevenson at Zuni that there were many things women would not disclose to men and that at least half the work of field research should rightfully fall to women. Nor is Golde's notion a new one that women enculturated in American society who are also trained as anthropologists might be expected to have more "perceptiveness about feelings" than men. When women formed their own anthropological society in 1885, their constitution set forth a very similar view. The Women's Anthropological Society lasted less than 15 years; the membership simply transferred to the originally all-male Anthropological Society of Washington, itself founded only six years earlier than the women's society. A founder of the women's society, Matilda Stevenson, returned to Zuni alone as a young widow and in a long career worked at many other pueblos as well. Her publications and those of her female contemporaries as well as of later women all bear out the generalization made by many of Golde's contributors that it is probably easier for women to learn about the male aspects of most cultures than it is for men to learn about the female aspects. For all that, men have published on menstrual taboos, parturition, child care and training, and a host of supposedly "female" topics. Franz Boas, one of the leading figures in the earlier years of American anthropology, established a methodological tradition in anthropology in welcoming women to the field, recognizing that their work is as important as that of men if we are to have complete and balanced ethnographies.

Whatever problems women may have in terms of academic salary, rank, and advancement (and even in this context anthropology has a better record than most disciplines), fieldwork has always been the general requirement of all cultural anthropologists, and anthropologists have given a good deal of thought to the nature of their field roles and the biases they might bring with them to the field. Naturally one's sex figures in such assessments, but, even as the accounts in Golde's book make clear, it is the particular field situation itself that determines whether sex, age, temperament, previous life experiences, general health, fortuitous skills, race, or even simple physical size will be major assets or liabilities.

In most of the 12 accounts, one gets the feeling that decisions and adaptations incumbent upon being a woman were taken in stride at the time they occurred along with any number of other and often more critically pressing considerations in adjusting to the field situation and getting on with the business of research. In retrospect, most of these ethnographers seem to be reaching too obviously to find something to say relevant to the presumed focus of the book. The only recurrent theme that Golde manages to tease out of the accounts that is peculiar to female fieldworkers is "protectiveness." Bureaucrats and professors responsible for the fieldworker and the host community take protective attitudes in many instances but not all, and these seem as much related to the fieldworkers' youth as to their sex. One wonders if the same theme would not appear in regard to young males if the companion volume *Men in the Field*, suggested by Ernestine Friedl, were actually assembled. The truly recurrent themes are the difficulties of finding the "right" community in which to study particular problems, handling the almost predictable accusation at some point in one's fieldwork that one is some kind of "spy," and the problems of health and well-being. Mosquitoes, dysentery, hepatitis, broken bones, and the like are a good deal harder to cope with than proposals, threats of sexual assault, or even working in the face of local taboos regarding one's sex. In regard to the writers' interweaving of the personal and subjective, ethnographic, and theoretical or methodological aspects of their work, there is a discernible continuum of age and experience. Some of the younger women's writings are almost embarrassingly personal and subjective, whereas the writers with many years and different kinds of fieldwork are more relaxed and detached in their personal comments and are much more concerned with theory and method than are most of the younger women. One of the curious shortcomings of all but a very few of the accounts is the neglect of the strictly ethnographic. There

is an implicit assumption that the reader is an anthropologist, or at least a graduate student who would presumably benefit most from such experiences, and has read all the formal, organized, substantive publications to which heretofore unpublished incidents and personal reactions relate.

NANCY OESTREICH LURIE
Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The Politics of Joy

The Greening of America. CHARLES A. REICH. Random House, New York, 1970. xii, 400 pp. $7.95.

Charles A. Reich has written a manifesto for the lumpenbourgeoisie, a call to bloodless revolution through the politics of joy. The author, who is a professor of law at Yale, is true to the adversary tradition. *The Greening of America* is essentially an *amicus curiae* brief filed in behalf of the affluent young against the "American corporate state," the "relentlessly single-minded" complex of key governmental, business, educational, and voluntary institutions which is dedicated to one value: "technology-organization-efficiency-growth-progress." Reich has advised his clients that the accused, despite his blush of health, is now quite mad, no longer able to function, and is indeed in the terminal stages of a malignant disease. The plaintiffs need do no more than spend their days with good companions, their voices raised in song and laughter, while they serenely await victory by default.

Reich is nothing if not eclectic. He has recruited corroborative witnesses from every sector of dissident radical, liberal, or humanist thought. He shares the orthodox Marxist view that free enterprise is a euphemism for monopoly, that formal equality is a mask for economic privilege, that the few exploit the many, and that even the prosperous worker is reduced to the level of a commodity. His theory of politics is virtually a paraphrase of C. Wright Mills: all the key institutions in society are dominated by a national power elite. Nor is Reich the first man to deplore the Indochina war or to detect serious flaws in our system of distributive justice, restrictions on civil rights, the manipulation of taste and opinion by the communications media, or decline in civilized amenities. His abhorrence of "plastics" as substance and symbol is widely shared in the faculty club. He does seem to have a particularly strong animus against Disneyland and Jumbo Jets and a near-obsessive repugnance toward homogenized peanut butter, but aside from these crotchets Reich's diagnoses of current pathologies are derivative.

The novel feature of Reich's analysis is a thoroughly revisionist theory of revolutionary strategy. The customary radical perspective on revolution has assumed that some "oppressed" groups are, by virtue of their particular aspirations and social characteristics, peculiarly fit to serve as instruments of our common salvation. The most sophisticated theories are not content to impute superior virtue or benevolence to a class of destiny; they appeal instead to an accidental convergence of their self-interest with the necessary conditions for the emancipation of all mankind. Thus, for example, it has been argued that in seeking relief from its misery the proletariat is irresistibly driven to create a socialist commonwealth of brotherhood and abundance; that in striving for equality blacks inevitably move the entire society to a higher level of moral sensibility; and that in insisting on more flexible definitions of sex roles women inescapably also benefit men.

Reich has cast the prophetic young as history's darlings despite the fact that they do not satisfy the conventional standards of eligibility defined by the Western radical tradition. Members of a revolutionary stratum should have a sense of collective identity, experience severe deprivation, perceive themselves as victims of an identifiable enemy, command the stamina to engage in protracted struggle, maintain confidence in their ultimate victory, and possess the will and the ability to organize the new order. Lacking any of these characteristics even the most sullen and embittered groups pose no genuine threat to the status quo. For these reasons Marxists, for example, have never sought to mobilize the "lumpenproletariat" as revolutionary allies. They have regarded the permanently unemployed, petty criminals, hoboes, and tramps as too degraded, depraved, and demoralized to convert discontent into effective protest.

Radical theorists have typically also belittled the lumpenbourgeoisie as a significant social force. Unfettered spirits, café intellectuals, dabblers in the arts, dealers in Utopia, sexual adventurers, and aging adolescents cast as Young Werther have been the despair of every serious leftist movement. Reich's heresy lies in his endowing the spiritual heirs of yesterday's bohemians and beatniks with messianic powers.

He comes to this faith out of the conviction that the profound crisis in the American corporate state is a surface manifestation of a deranged "consciousness," an archetypal world-view that is shared by capitalists as well as workers, blacks as well as whites, victims as well as their oppressors. The traditional left is thus misguided when it mistakes the nominal transfer of power for a revolutionary act. American society is the legatee of two stages of consciousness—one developed during the period of 19th-century industrial development, and the second during the New Deal era—which together comprise a *Weltanschauung* that is antagonistic to life.

Consciousness I is recognizable in such familiar rubrics as "the Puritan ethic," "rugged individualism," and "social Darwinism." It is the internalized creed of "farmers, owners of small businesses, immigrants who retain their sense of a nationality, AMA-type doctors, many members of Congress, gangsters, Republicans, and 'just plain folks.' In the second half of the twentieth century the beliefs of Consciousness I are drastically at variance with reality."

Reich is not really very much exercised about Consciousness I. Like an agnostic more scornful of the Unitarian than of the fundamentalist, he reserves his full fury for the votaries of Consciousness II: "businessmen (new type), liberal intellectuals, the educated professionals and technicians, middle-class suburbanites, labor union leaders, Gene McCarthy supporters, blue-collar workers with newly purchased homes, old-line leftists, and members of the Communist Party USA. Classic examples of Consciousness II are the Kennedys and the editorial page of The New York *Times*. It is the consciousness of 'liberalism,' the consciousness largely appealed to by the Democratic Party, the consciousness of 'reform.'"

The Consciousness II man believes in science, rationality, technology, administration, planning, organization, the welfare state, and meritocracy. There is a schizophrenic void between his work and his private life. Except among family and selected friends he is constrained by the norms to conceal his emotions, deny his yearnings for openness, spontaneity, and play.