This is a neatly told tale, but how good is the evidence upon which it rests?

Pfeiffer does not overtly evaluate the evidence behind the conclusions he repeats, but here and there are passages that hint obliquely at problems in the proof and interpretation of conclusions that are stated elsewhere in the book. It is as if the author wished not to detract from the excitement of the story he is telling by too obviously dissecting the overenthusiasms of its chief characters, the anthropologists who have pieced together this story. Nevertheless, the book reveals much about the state of the science, and this may indeed be its main value for the professional reader: that it reveals the weaknesses of the field.

Unlike the emotional and darkly foreboding works of Robert Ardrey, or the glibly assertive essays by Desmond Morris, Pfeiffer's book is no personal sermon. Rather it is an embellished inventory of opinions, approaches, and topics deemed relevant in the study of human origins by a number of current scholars, some of whom Pfeiffer—an experienced science reporter—seems to have interviewed at their work. The subject matter falls roughly into three sections, which deal respectively with paleontology, prehistory, and "living pre-history," by which Pfeiffer means the lives of extant hunter-gatherers, nonhuman primates, elephants, and carnivores and the behavioral development of human infants. Pfeiffer's style is easy to read and would be appropriate to a subject which had a high degree of coherence. This is not, unfortunately, the case in anthropology. The author attempts at the same time to give a coherent account of human origins and to present honestly the contradictions and controversies in the interpretations of the evidence given by his various sources. These two purposes are in conflict. Pfeiffer's tone mimics that of his sources: he is assertive and uncritical when reporting the findings of fields such as primate behavior in which a rigorous methodology has not developed, and he takes a precisely logical and empirical approach toward deciding between multiple hypotheses when he discusses progressive archeology, in which at least an elementary scientific sophistication is emerging.

In discussing Neanderthal burials Pfeiffer says that "ritual expresses the belief or hope that a connection exists between repetition and truth, the notion that if a possibility is stated often enough it becomes a certainty." Such rituals are performed often enough by anthropologists. No single speculation has been repeated as often as that which relates predation by terrestrial carnivores to morphology (canine size), to manipulation of the environment (weapon making), and to social organization and sexual dimorphism (males defend females and young). This speculation persists in spite of the lack of even a single study of the relation of predation to the population dynamics of any primate species, and in spite of the findings of many studies on populations of other mammals which show that the relations between predation, population regulation, social organization, and selection are complex rather than intuitively obvious.

Elsewhere Pfeiffer notes that "unless a speculation suggests what [researchers] could possibly find by way of evidence, unless it suggests specific procedures for its own proof or disproof, it has very little value in stimulating new studies." These remarks, made in regard to the planning of archeological research, could stand as a criticism of much anthropological speculation.

The discoveries which Pfeiffer has chosen to relate to the public reflect anthropology's preoccupation with the spectacular to the neglect of systematic investigation of process. The baboon's "spectacular canine," the use of tools by chimpanzees, remains of the slaughter of large numbers of big game animals at several Middle Pleistocene sites, and other startling items are chosen as conceptual nodes around which the above-outlined model of human evolution is constructed. Fortunately a trend toward a more sober analysis of a more representative sample of evidence is also indicated, particularly among cultural ecologists and progressive prehistorians.

Anthropologists are portrayed by Pfeiffer as human beings, one might almost say as higher primates. The best parts of the book are the descriptions of investigators at work: Leakey running down antelope, Bordes knapping flint, Breuil shouting down his critics. Pfeiffer does not hide the violent and bitter disagreement in the field, the emotional attachment of investigators to their special theories. Yet by the end of the book the present state of understanding of human origins is not clearly revealed to the reader: the book is not a review of knowledge. Rather Pfeiffer has created a Michener-like overview of anthropology's search for human origins, a literary breccia of anecdotes, artifacts, and personalities in a matrix of sometimes mystical speculation on the causes of anthropogenesis.

Pfeiffer's work reveals a great excitement and a feeling of wild adventure in the discovery of human origins. This excitement has spread to the public, perhaps to an extent which has not been equaled since Darwin's time. Whereas before World War II there was scattered evidence and much speculation, today there is much speculation and much unassimilated evidence. The likelihood is that we stand upon the threshold of discoveries which will reveal the sources of human evolution in detail which was unimaginable not long ago. Pfeiffer's book shows anthropologists upon that threshold, an unruly, lusty throng, crowding at the door.

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Symbolic Behavior

The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure. VICTOR W. TURNER. Aldine, Chicago, 1969. x + 214 pp., illus. $6.50. Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures, University of Rochester, 1966.

The ability to create highly complex and flexible symbolic systems distinguishes human behavior from that of other species. From antiquity to the present day, scholars have seized upon this fact to justify making an absolute distinction between man and nature. While modern evolutionary theory rejects this dichotomy, seeing biological and cultural evolution as reciprocal processes of adaptation based upon genetic abilities to learn and invent behavioral repertories, symbolic systems in human communities are often analyzed as if they were entirely unique phenomena.

In recent years, however, ethological

studies have demonstrated considerable learning and symbol-using abilities in species other than man. These studies are having great impact among social and cultural anthropologists, partly because some of the ethologists are students of primate behavior from within the anthropological camp, but also because ethology and cultural anthropology share a point of view based on similar fieldwork traditions and orientation toward ecological and evolutionary problems.

The influence of ethology has combined with other trends, particularly in linguistic anthropology and in the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss, to renew and recharge concern about the man-nature relationship and about methods for analyzing symbolic behavior. This has given rise to a movement, or subdiscipline, called symbolic anthropology.

Victor Turner is a leading theoretician of symbolic anthropology, and *The Ritual Process* is the most wide-ranging and accessible statement of his ideas. Turner's ideas are derived from many sources, but he has welded them together in a manner distinctively his own. In *The Ritual Process* he draws upon psychoanalytic and Gestalt psychology, the works of van Gennep and Lévi-Strauss, the empirical tradition of Anglo-American anthropology, and a broad knowledge of the humanities.

The influence of ethology on Turner's work became apparent to me only after reading the introductory essay he wrote for a recent symposium. He there answered a complaint that symbolic anthropology is not as original as its advocates claim it to be.

> I think that what is radically "new and better" is . . . a new way of looking at ritualization and the symbols indissociable from it that has been challengingly thrust upon anthropology by natural and biological sciences, notably ethology. For there undoubtedly are homologies (sameness of relation) and not merely analogies (similarity of relation) between human and animal ritualization. . . . The break between nature and culture is manifestly important . . . but surely just as important is the evidence for continuity between different and, especially, successive biotic levels of organization [*Forms of Symbolic Action*. Proceedings of the 1969 Annual Meeting of the American Ethnological Society. University of Washington Press, 1969. p. 15].

Turner does not refer to ethological studies in *The Ritual Process*, or in his monographs on ritual symbolism among the Ndembu of northwestern Zambia. But his approach to symbolic behavior is rooted in intensive field research guided by the inductive effort to comprehend Ndembu culture, and in the essay just quoted he asserts,

> If anthropologists were anything like as minutely descriptive as ethologists, or, indeed, any other natural scientists, they would provide a far stronger basis for the development of theory than hitherto they have done [p. 16].

One result of Turner's conviction that "rich theory" springs from "rich data" is that *The Ritual Process* will boggle some readers with more data on Ndembu ritual than they care to know. Nevertheless, Turner's ideas are as rich as his data, and this book is a major statement of them.

Turner draws the basic metaphors for his theory from linguistics and from electrodynamics, rather than using the mechanical and organic metaphors that have long served social anthropologists. Claiming that symbols are the smallest meaningful units of ritual action, he begins the book by describing the semantic structure of the dominant symbols in particular Ndembu rituals. He also conceives of these symbols as *forces* in social *fields*.

Scientists in many disciplines have gained insight into phenomena by shifting the metaphors they use to describe them. Certainly anthropologists have frequently revitalized old truths about human life by using new imagery for them, and over time this method may lead to real scientific gains. The method is susceptible, however, to mere fashionableness, as when Turner at one point imagines strings of linked ritual symbols in the form of double helixes.

The old truths in Turner's conception of the human condition have a psychoanalytic cast, but they are radically different from the run of psychoanalytic anthropology, particularly as it has evolved in the United States over the past generation. The standard idea taken directly from Freud has been that religious symbols are projections of individual psychological traits, and that the symbolic aspects of behavior function primarily to disguise other, truer aspects or motives of behavior. On the whole, this approach debunks religion by unmasking its infantile, sexual, and aggressive origins.

Turner disavows such "theological concerns" (p. 4), but, in fact, he exactly reverses these evaluations by locating the sources of religion in fundamentally humane and genuinely cathartic phenomena. By making sublimation processes, rather than projective mechanisms, the key to his interpretation of ritual action, Turner contrives to analyze ritual symbolism as reality-oriented ways of dealing with humane experiences and needs, rather than as neurotic disguises for expressing destructive and otherwise immoral wishes.

"Structure and Anti-Structure," the subtitle for Turner's book, refers to his most comprehensive formulation of ritual action. The phrase posits a dialectic in human life between bonds based on structured social roles and statuses, and anti-structural or generic human bonds that ignore, reverse, cut across, or occur outside of structured relationships.

The concepts of *liminality* and *communitas* define what Turner means by anti-structure. Liminality occurs in the middle phase of the rites of passage which mark changes in an individual's or a group's social status. Such rites characteristically begin with the subject's being symbolically killed or separated from ordinary secular relationships, and conclude with a symbolic rebirth or reincorporation into society. The intervening liminal phase is thus "betwixt and between" the categories of ordinary social life, and Turner extends the concept of liminality to refer to any condition outside, or on the peripheries of, everyday life. It is a sacred condition, and one in which communitas is most evident. The bonds of communitas are anti-structural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, nonrational, I-Thou relationships.

Turner assigns a role in human history to the tension between structure and communitas as comprehensive as the one Freud attributed to the opposition between life and death instincts. Structure, or all that which holds people apart, defines their differences, and constrains their actions, is one pole in a charged field, for which the opposite pole is communitas, or anti-structure, the egalitarian "sentiment for humanity." The electrodynamic metaphor intrudes by a pun or "Freudian slip" in a paragraph subtitled "Dialectic of the developmental cycle":

> . . . for individuals and groups, social life is a type of dialectrical [sic] process that involves successive experience of high and low, communitas and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality [p. 97].

In the liminal phase of Ndembu rites of passage, as in similar rites the world over, communitas is engendered by ritual leveling and humiliation. In hieratic social structures, communitas is affirmed by periodic rituals in which the lowly and the mighty reverse social roles. In such societies, too—and at this point Turner begins to draw his examples from European and Indian history—the religious ideology of the powerful idealizes humility, orders of religious specialists undertake ascetic lives, and cult groups among those of low status ritually play with symbols of power. The world over, millenarian movements originate in periods when societies are in liminal transition between different social structures. In the second half of the book, Turner glosses his illustrations from the traditional cultures of Africa, Europe, and Asia with comments on modern culture, referring briefly to Gandhi, Bob Dylan, and such current phenomena as the Vice Lords and the Hell's Angels.

But how do ritual symbols *work*?

According to Turner, they condense many references, uniting them in a single cognitive and affective field. In this sense, ritual symbols are multivocal, but their referents tend to polarize between physiological phenomena (blood, sexual organs, coitus, birth, death, and so on) and normative values (kindness to children, generosity to kinsmen, respect for elders, and the like). The drama of ritual action—the singing, dancing, feasting, and other acts—causes an exchange between these poles in which the biological referents are ennobled and the normative referents are charged with emotional significance. The exchange achieves genuinely cathartic effects, causing real transformations of character and of social relationships. It makes desirable what is socially necessary by establishing a right relationship between involuntary sentiments and the requirements of social structure. In this sense ritual action is a sublimation process in which symbolic behavior actually creates society.

Turner's formulation is a refreshing change from the pedantry of social anthropologists who have too often repeated the notion that religious symbols *reflect* social organization and promote social integration, and from the sophistry of psychoanalytic anthropology which reduces religion to a neurotic symptom. These approaches treat symbolic behavior as an epiphenomenon, while Turner gives it ontological status.

Turner has been developing his ideas in publications for more than a decade, and among anthropologists I believe that they now constitute what Thomas Kuhn would call normal science. They will probably remain the assumptions for most new research for another generation, but eventually anthropologists will have to face issues that Turner neglects. So far, no anthropologists have dealt in a sustained manner with the ways individuals and communities lose their religion, or with the failures of religious institutions to cope with historical changes initiated by scientific and technological knowledge.

Secularization processes continuously reappear in history, and, despite repeated failures of nerve, they seem to grow more pervasive through time. Considering Turner's convincing analysis of the source of religious rites in universal human circumstance, the wonder is not that people continue to create symbolic ritual systems, but that these systems go stale or become perverted, and that people lose belief, often with anxiety, but also with a sense of liberation.

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Boas in the Field

The Ethnography of Franz Boas. Letters and Diaries of Franz Boas Written on the Northwest Coast from 1886 to 1931. RONALD P. ROHNER, Ed. Translated from the German by Hedy Parker. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1969. xxx + 334 pp. + plates. $12.50.

This is an important book about this man, written principally by himself. Franz Boas was an outstanding figure in American anthropology for over half a century. His students, and students of his students, have trained the majority of today's senior anthropologists in the United States. In a brief but significant essay the editor-compiler and his wife describe the theoretical bases of North American ethnology when Boas began his Northwest Coast work and the standard field methods of ethnographers of that day. From there on, Boas is allowed to speak for himself through his letters to his family, except for a few short paragraphs that explain the backgrounds of the field trips: source of support, Boas's institutional affiliation at the time, and so on. An occasional explanatory parenthesis or footnote concludes the editing.

Rohner, by his minimal, always impartial comment, dons the armor of neutrality, thus shielding himself from charges of being an ill-willed detractor or an uncritical adulator. (The dust jacket says that "gradually more impartial assessments are being made" of Boas's contributions to anthropology, but then we know what kind of people believe what they read on dust jackets.) A less disciplined approach might have led to the replacement of the staid subtitle by something more vigorously descriptive, such as "The Ethnography of Franz Boas, or, The Captain Hated the Sea." For one of the first of the revelations to emerge from the letters is that Boas, the man who always stressed the need for more research in anthropology and less vacuous speculation under the guise of theory formulation, hated fieldwork. The actual collection of data, the long hours of recording data and texts, translating them, then transcribing the day's work until late at night, he took in stride, though he often mentioned his weariness, his fingers stiff and cramped from the hours of scribbling. What he detested was the ambient of fieldwork.

The Northwest Coast was a frontier when Boas began his work. Comfortably appointed hostelries were few and far between. The white pioneers built just enough shelter for themselves and their families; the casual traveler (read "anthropologist") they put up, not always with good grace, in a storeroom or a shed. At Kincolith in 1894 Boas wrote:

> My bed seems to get harder every day. It is just a soft cushion, not a mattress, so that I can feel the hard floor through it and my hips start to get numb. . . . When the east wind blows it comes in through the window, and how! [p. 163].

Food was something to be wolfed down to keep the body alive, not exquisite tidbits to delight the palate. At Bay Center, Washington, 1890:

> The fodder here is ghastly, especially the awful American bread, which lies in your stomach like a brick. And the beans! [p. 123].

And there was the rain rain rain and soggy cold that chilled one's very soul. And travel problems. Sailing schedules were irregular, or, more accurately, nonexistent. If one planned a fortnight