

create (primarily through use of sympathetic mass media) for Governor Carey of New York and President Carter.

This book provides a powerful lesson on these matters and more. I found it flawed by a periodic absence of important relevant information and by a lack of empathy for the health bureaucrats trapped in their own maze of dilemmas. I was also put off by the tone, sometimes bordering on the ingenuous, in which the virtues of "citizen participation, a central concept in our democracy" (p. 56) are extolled. But these amount to minor matters of complaint for the official evaluator; there is much rich material here—resulting from the dogged pursuit of issues and evidence that are effectively investigated all too rarely.

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## Inferences from Artifacts

**Symbols in Action.** Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture. IAN HODDER. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1982. x, 244 pp., illus. \$39.50. New Studies in Archaeology.

Most archeologists would accept that societal and ideational aspects of culture are underdetermined by the economic infrastructure. The most salient aspect of much material culture is, however, stylistic, relating directly to social patterning and pervasive ideological themes. Archeologists thus, technical and methodological problems aside, have to be continually working back and forth from one analytical level to another, while attempting to control inference by reference to expectations generated through analogy. Hodder often fails to differentiate between style and culture-in-general, but it is with the interpretation of stylistic aspects of material culture that *Symbols in Action* is concerned. The currently dominant approaches to style in archeology fall into two broad categories. In the normative view, the degree of stylistic similarity between bodies of material culture reflects the extent of interaction between social groups, of whatever scale; in the systemic approach, style is seen primarily as a vehicle for the exchange of information about social identity, especially employed between groups at intermediate social distances. Hodder demonstrates that the reality is far more complex.

In a series of ethnoarchaeological stud-

ies in Kenya and Zambia that involved the, undoubtedly exhausting, inventorying of hundreds of compounds, Hodder argues that, far from passively reflecting social differences, style is strategically manipulated to symbolize and justify inter- and intrasocietal relations. Among the mainly pastoralist Njemps, Tugen, and Pokot of the Lake Baringo region in northern Kenya, for example, stylistic differences in many types of object, whether produced by specialists or domestically, are correlated with the degree of competition between the societies for pastures and cattle and, within these societies, with the tensions between gerontocratic elders and men of the warrior age grade. Hodder even claims to detect in the decoration of womens' gourds their silent revolt against male domination. In the Zambian Lozi state, the elite manipulate material culture as symbols of power to legitimate their rule and to create a mystique of unity among unequal citizens of diverse origin. These studies are crammed with fascinating detail, and although we may wish to quarrel with certain inferences or to complain about a lack of ethnographic depth and, in some cases, of documentation, there is no doubt that, besides providing a rich source of analogy, they significantly extend and develop this aspect of theory.

The second half of the book, even if ultimately less successful, is more ambitious and even more stimulating. The relations between style and society are extremely subtle, and it is not possible to predict in any simple or direct way which items of material culture will be chosen for elaboration as vehicles of expression, or in what way. Why, we may ask, are Tugen and Njemps spears identical even in zones where the two groups are in competition? The answers to such questions require a more profound understanding of ideology and cognitive processes, and, in Hodder's view, a structuralist approach. In chapter 8, provocatively entitled "Dirt, women and men . . .," he attempts to show through a study of three "tribes" of the Nuba Mountains, Sudan, how the stylist component of "each material trait is produced in relation to a set of symbolic schemes, and in relation to general principles of symbolic meaning which are built up into particular arrangements as parts of social strategies." The primary principles in this case are taken to be concepts of purity (pure/impure = male/female = cattle/pig, and so on) and of the insider/outsider dichotomy that "structurally transform" social relations into material culture.

One of several difficulties here is that, although we may agree that, within any one "simple" culture, expressions of style are likely to be unified by reference to an underlying conceptual scheme, this is very hard to demonstrate—even ethnographically. Once a hypothesis has been set up, it is by no means easy to decide what sorts of evidence militate for and against it. For example, "Purity and fertility can be assured either by safeguarding the entrance to the granary with the clean, or by confronting impurity with the unclean." Negative evidence, by a sleight of inversion, becomes positive. Hodder does not seriously address this epistemological question, nor in a sketched application of his approach to the Late Neolithic of the Orkneys does he convince. A year or more's fieldwork among the Nuba and monographic treatment of the question would be needed to investigate the flow of causality from infrastructure to "social system" (that is, structure) and "social structure" (that is, superstructure) and its implications for stylistic expression.

This is an exciting book with wide-ranging implications, and it is well produced save for the critical but often illegible distribution maps. The author deserves only praise for raising far more questions than he is able to answer, and for providing a wealth of ideas and data that materially advance the discipline and will fuel productive controversy.

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## The Leguminosae

**Advances in Legume Systematics.** Papers from a conference, Kew, England, July 1978. R. M. POLHILL and P. H. RAVEN, Eds. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1981. In two volumes. xxii, 1050 pp., illus. Paper, £30.

Biological systematics has lately come into its own again, as the need and the materials for synthesis have built up. Intellectual discipline is entering a subject in which the predominant conservatism has meant unwillingness to think and the radical countercurrent has owed more to idiosyncrasy than to insight.

Insight distinguishes the first two introductory chapters of this symposium on the legumes, "one of the great lines of dicotyledonous evolution," as E. J. H. Corner puts it. Those chapters (by Polhill and Raven, with the collaboration of C. H. Stirton) show what modern syn-