

tion of descent group; therefore, they have tended to manipulate the notion, to invoke a "principle of flexibility," or to distinguish between the "ideology" and the "composition" of the groups. Sillitoe has chosen another course. He claims not only that there are no descent groups in Wola society (Southern Highlands), but that only individuals, not groups, are relevant in it.

This reduction of society to a conglomerate of individuals is made possible by taking descent theory at its face value. Consequently, the *semonda*—the named, localized, exogamous, propatrilateral, and propatrilocal groups that compose Wola society—are not considered as descent groups. But it seems that, deprived of the possibility of accounting for these groups in terms of descent, Sillitoe is incapable of accounting for them altogether, except in purely empirical terms. He goes so far as to claim that they owe their "continued ordered existence as groups" to their "smallness" (p. 34)! And although he at one time concedes that "permanent, if somewhat vague, groups do occur and play a prominent part in the organization of Wola life" (pp. 30–31), in fact his model takes into account mainly two opposite terms: *individuals* and *society*. The emphasis, however, is on the individual, since "it is individuals that make up a society, which exists because it benefits them. This is Melanesian philosophy pure and simple" (p. 4). It seems that Melanesian philosophers are of the Hobbesian persuasion, except that they substitute "exchange" for "contract" (after all, they are not Englishmen). We are told that exchange has been devised by the Wola to overcome the original state of "Warre" (p. 4). This theory implies that self-interested and rational individuals preexist society. Self-interest and rationality prompt individuals to associate by means of exchanges. Exchange is the social principle that combines the maximum degree of "sovereignty of the individual" (p. 78) with the minimum of constraint. Its nature is such that it promotes sociability, while at the same time promoting competition and, therefore, self-interest (pp. 5–6). From this point of view, society exists only because of a contingent agreement or complementarity of the atomistic (p. 288), self-interested decisions of the individuals who exchange "only when they think it is favourable to them" (pp. 10, 22), not whenever there is an obligation to do so.

From another point of view, however, society has an ontological priority over the individual since it "uses the self-interested drive of individuals to support itself by harnessing it to values which guide behaviour so that it feeds back and reinforces the social order" (p. 8). Whenever Sillitoe is unable to account for the actions of the individual in terms of costs and benefits as conceived by the utilitarian, Hobbesian model, he attributes them to the influence of values created by a society which itself acts as a "rational individual." Thus, what cannot be explained as individual interest is explained as society's interest (i.e., in terms of "social functions"); but society is conceived of as an individual.

It seems quite clear that Sillitoe projects his own utilitarian philosophy onto Melanesian ideas; at any rate, he does not quote any Wola statement that would confirm his claim that "this is Melanesian philosophy pure and simple." I suppose that he would answer that the existence of this "philosophy" is implied by what the Wola do. But, quite apart from the fact that what the Wola do seems much more complicated than Sillitoe makes it out to be, it is dangerous to infer thought from action, especially if the actual ideas of those who act are not considered at all.

At any rate, the "individualistic" and the "functionalistic" models are used side by side in Sillitoe's analysis without any attempt to explain how they relate to each other. Moreover, neither really accounts for the existence of different types of exchanges, nor for the fact that they occur on certain occasions or take place between certain categories of people (e.g., rather than between undifferentiated "individuals"). To account for these configurations, one must consider Wola society as a system of rules and values. But this is precisely what Sillitoe does not do; his reference to rules and values is quite rhapsodic.

Finally, one must point out that the fact that individuals, not groups, are the subject of exchange in Wola society does not imply, as Sillitoe believes, that the Wola have an individualistic ideology based on the notion of the "sovereignty of the individual," nor that they conceive of society in Hobbesian terms. Self-interest exists in all societies, but it is a far cry from individualism, which implies a particular form of ideological legitimation whose existence among the Wola Sillitoe has not, in my opinion, convincingly demonstrated. *Give and Take* is valuable, however, because of the great amount of statistical data and case studies it furnishes on exchange; from this point of view it should be taken as a model by anthropologists working with similar societies.

**Social Organization in Aboriginal Australia.** WARREN SHAPIRO. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979. ix + 135 pp., map, references, index. \$18.95 (cloth).

ARAM A. YENGOYAN  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

This volume is primarily devoted to the issue of whether or not there is an aboriginal social organization that underlies local variations throughout the different "tribes" of Aboriginal Australia. Although the author draws heavily on his Miwuyt field data, the coverage of other societies is interesting, precise, and illuminating as a means of understanding the themes which underwrite Aboriginal Australian social organization. Starting from the question of what parent-hood is and what it means, Shapiro develops his approach to cognition in which rules and structures are embedded as an underlying logic

generating specific social forms. Matrilineal, patrilineal, and kindred ties are the bases upon which these various forms manifest themselves as groups and kin categories, and through which behavior is explained and interpreted. Ritual lodges, residence groups, moieties, class systems, and semimoieties are discussed in terms of various principles of kinship, exchange, and locality. Each chapter on these subjects is well illustrated with ethnographic evidence combined with theoretical statements. Ethnography and theory serve as bases by which to evaluate earlier positions expressed by Radcliffe-Brown, Elkin, and Lévi-Strauss.

A number of insightful and critical observations are made, one of which is the author's discussion of affinal networks and the dynamics of conjugal bonds that embed family groups within larger units of society. These processes are to be understood as realms of jurisdiction on how decisions are made within overlapping sets of structural demands. Here the author notes the variations in marriage bestowal arrangement as they relate to kin bonds, and how patrilineality and matrilineality operate and influence bestowals, avoidance, and other interpersonal constraints as well as gift giving and alliance. The dynamics of each situation of exchange requires the determination of various options and forms which might take place and how the total social fabric relates to these constraints. Another contribution is the elaboration of the concept of play in aboriginal societies. Here Shapiro demonstrates that changes and inversions in many societies must be understood as forms of conscious play in which individuals attempt to elaborate structures to greater degrees of complexity and internal variance. This process has been noted in terms of cultural factors and as linguistic play, and it reconfirms Kroeber's early pronouncements on the role of secondary explanations in regard to aboriginal social organization. Shapiro is to be commended for his understanding of these issues and for the presentation of new ideas in a lucid and insightful manner.

The author's stated theoretical approach is cognitive in orientation, but one is not sure in which form this cognition occurs. Throughout the volume, the influence of formal semantic analysis is apparent, but surely there is more to cognitive issues than the mere quest for rules and structures which generate behavior. There is no doubt that rules and structures are verbally expressed and behaviorally adhered to in most aboriginal societies, but rules and structures articulate questions of cosmology, ontology, and epistemology to behavior, contextual markers, and frames of reference. Structures, as rules, do not operate as cleansed vacuums; they are the dominant means by which aboriginals relate to and through the Dreaming, the processes of which have generated the total human experience. Shapiro (p. vii) states that his efforts plainly rival Maddock's portrait of aboriginal culture. Yet, both Shapiro and Maddock have sought a highly

cognitive understanding and interpretation of aboriginal life, and both argue that, as a total way of life, aboriginal societies cannot be dismissed as pragmatic, functional adaptations.

What is apparent is that Maddock's approach leans closer to the Lévi-Straussian conception of what aboriginal culture represents, and it is this point that leads to the divergence on which Shapiro insists. The argument is not only one of empirical questions per se, but one that involves a concept of society through theoretical constructs which themselves generate the kinds of "facts and data" considered to be acceptable and plausible. Once again, anthropological interpretations dictate the quality of the portrait which is sought. The author has attempted to minimize the influence of past thought on his efforts, and to a certain extent he has succeeded in an admirable fashion. But all of us are prisoners of the past and we pay the price of history, albeit a theoretical one.

**Hunters, Pastoralists and Ranchers: Reindeer Economies and Their Transformations.** TIM INGOLD. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980. ix + 326 pp., figures, tables, notes, bibliography, indexes. \$24.95 (cloth).

HAROLD K. SCHNEIDER  
Indiana University

Interest in nomadic or pastoral societies has risen dramatically in recent years. While Ingold's book concerns itself with more than pastoral societies—namely, hunting and ranching groups—its focus is pastoralism. Furthermore, one of its main features is a novel definition of pastoralism which allows Ingold to group together both the Circum-Arctic reindeer-herding societies and those of places like East Africa, where livestock are tamed rather than allowed to run wild. This definition is built on the notion that pastoral systems are distinguished from hunting and ranching ones in that people relate to the animals by protecting them (mostly from wolves, in the case of reindeer) in the pastoral systems.

Central to Ingold's essay is a concern with the relationship between the man/animal tie and social structure. While reindeer herders and more conventional pastoralists have certain similarities, they are also very different since reindeer herders are primarily "carnivorous pastoralists," while such people as East Africans are "milk [milk] pastoralists." Ingold claims that this difference, which requires that the latter people control and contain their animals at all times, is the basis for the divergence in social-structural features. This divergence, in turn, gives rise to agnatic descent in East Africa and bilateral descent in the Circum-Arctic, or bridewealth in East Africa and bride-service in the Arctic.

This summary does not do justice to the richness of Ingold's complex treatment of the sub-