husband died, since the wife has no rights in his property. 'If you do not work to support yourself and the children' said one trader, 'You could be left with nothing and find yourself as poor and lost as a person driven mad by a god' (a lunatic). The interviews repeatedly reveal the gap between ideal and reality in the husband's ability to support his wife and children. The men elaborate their hierarchical model, quoting both Akan proverbs and the Bible, and then mention that a wife will 'understand' if they cannot provide what they should. But they are adamant that the same 'understanding' does not permit a man to do domestic work. It would have been interesting to hear the women's views of ideal domestic roles, and to have seen something of the reality of the lives of these men's wives (who are rural women, not city traders).

The commentary implies that polygamy and the Asante kinship system have created the reality gap. Social and economic changes since the British conquest at the turn of the century should, however, be given some responsibility. For example, the women traders continually stressed that they had to work to educate their children, one of a father's traditional responsibilities. Although education once meant a father taking his sons to work alongside him at his own trade, now it means finding enough money for school fees. Claims on money earnings due to rising food costs, from both wife and matrilineal kin, make saving for education difficult. At the same time, the matrilineage has been greatly weakened by the political and economic changes of the twentieth century. If the matrilineage continued to hold resources for its members then the fragility of claims on husbands and fathers would be less of a problem.

The picture given of contemporary Asante marriage portrays men as exploiting women for their services, by pitting them against each other in polygyny, and by insisting on dominance in domestic life; while women appear to be stoically putting up with this (though not in the songs), but to invest very little affect or commitment in marriage, focussing instead on the hard work that makes them economically self-sufficient. The commentary asserts that 'women have no status in the domestic domain, and only achieve respect with the birth of children and as elders.' But this seems at odds with the obvious vigour and assertiveness of the women themselves. They don't look and act downtrodden.

The film allows the husband/wife relation, almost always the most subordinated of a woman's relationships, to define the domestic sphere. In a residually matrilineal society like Asante, women's consanguinal relations remain very strong. After pointing out that Asante women frequently live in their family homes, apart from their husbands, the film ignores their relations with either male or female kin. The domestic duties of cooking, child-rearing, and dispute settlement normally take place in a context dominated by children, sisters and neighbours as much as husbands. The viewer gets glimpses of a crowded compound and a list of the morning chores of a schoolgirl, but little idea of the way domestic work is shared within a compound.

This conjugal emphasis leads the film to present the cohesion and independence of market women as an isolated phenomenon, contrasted to their domestic subservience. While the market is not as exclusively female-dominated as portrayed, neither is the home as male-oriented as asserted. Household relationships and kinship ties offer women many roles and statuses, and these provide the experience in authority and loyalty upon which market organizations build. The evident sensitivity and skill of the interviewer could have drawn out the central issues and flavour of these relations as clearly as she did those of the market and marriage.

The message of this film, that Asante women control the huge Kumasi market but not their own lives, does not really fit the complexities of the situation. First, no one, nor indeed any organisation, controls Kumasi Central Market; it is a vast arena for market forces worked out in a specifically West African idiom in which bargaining, credit, clientship, and 'greeting' are managed so as to set up relationships in which bringing, wholesaling and retailing can take place. Indeed it is specifically through their skills in the management of relationships that women traders are able to survive. But secondly, who does control their own lives? Not the husbands portrayed as failing to support their wives and children. These men are struggling, like Asante women, to make a living in a economy in a state of collapse, and to find effective roles in a society that is no longer a proud kingdom, but a partially articulated segment of a newly emerging socialist state. Life for Kumasi women traders is a struggle; it does not fall neatly into domestic subservience and market autonomy. It is probably significant that women successful as traders often have their own compounds — they construct their own domestic domains.

Gracia Clark and Esther Goody

1 The survey was conducted by G. Clark as part of a study of women traders.

THE KWEGU

Beside the River Omo in Southern Ethiopia live some people who call themselves and their language Kwegu. They are very few in number, perhaps no more than 500, and are found in widely dispersed settlements along the river. Very little is known about the Kwegu as a whole. Their language is thought to be East Sudanic (Bender, 1976). In 1974, I made a short visit to the southern-most Kwegu settlement near to where the Mago river joins the Omo. These Kwegu have close connections with the Kara, another small group who make their living in much the same way as the Kwegu, principally by cultivating sorghum by the river, fishing, hunting, and collecting honey. Further upstream are Kwegu who share their cultivation sites with Mursi people, and further north others do so with Bodi people. Both the Mursi and Bodi are relatively large groups (the Mursi number about 5,000 and the Bodi are about 3,000) who make use of a wide range of land in addition to the river cultivation sites, as they also herd livestock and cultivate fields in the bush.

This film, in the Granada 'Disappearing World' series, was made among Kwegu who share their river cultivation sites with Mursi, and are known to anthropologist David Turton through his research on the Mursi. The Kwegu have always intrigued me, as they do their neighbours, for they are the only people who are truly at home on the dangerous river and in the dense forest which flanks it. It was with great interest, therefore, that I came to view the film, which was directed by Leslie Woodhead.

The Kwegu film is remarkably similar in style and form to its predecessor, *The Mursi,* made by the same team. Each concentrates on a single, exclusively male institution; for the Mursi, public debating and for the Kwegu, the patron-client relationship which links Kwegu men with Mursi men. While the footage of each film deals with relevant activities and actors, a disinterested narrator provides factual information and the anthropologist gives his analysis and interpretation of the institution in question. The anthropologist's commentary plays a prominent part in this design, and has strong influence on the viewer's perception of the people who are the subjects of the film. An important question is, therefore, to what extent the anthropologist's analysis is valid. To answer this question with regard to the Kwegu film, I will consider the footage separately from the commentary.

Visually the film is very pleasant and easy to view. We see some strikingly good-looking Kwegu men engaged in a number of activities, and are introduced in particular to a young man called Dachu. We see some men skilfully manoeuvre their long unwieldy canoe while others plunge into the rapid waters of the crocodile-infested river in search of a rifle. We watch Dachu collect wild honey, repair a rifle and set an antelope trap, and we see how a canoe is made out of a huge tree trunk. Mixed with these Kwegu scenes, there are ones where Mursi cattle come down to the river to drink and Mursi youngsters dance. In the second half of the film we witness negotiations for a Kwegu marriage. Subtitles allow us to follow the discussion which takes place between a Bodi man, who represents the groom, and the bride's father, who argues for more bridewealth on account of his daughter's having borne a child already. The film ends with the launching of the newly constructed canoe by a jubilant crowd of Mursi and Kwegu men. Interspersed throughout the film are shots of individual Kwegu and Mursi men talking about their relationship with each other; a Mursi man tells how his Kwegu has abandoned him in favour of a Bodi man, and how he has to find himself a new Kwegu; a Kwegu man describes how the Mursi would kill him if he did not have his own Mursi to protect him; one man tells us that Kwegu women no longer produce many children, and

others seem to agree that the Kwegu don't bother to observe their own customs any more, that they have begun to marry the Mursi, and will eventually become Mursi themselves.

The main shortcoming of this footage is the almost total absence of women and children. We only catch a few fleeting glimpses of women, and never get to hear their opinions. What do Kwegu women do, and how are their lives affected by the patron-client relationship their men-folk have with the Mursi? I presume that Kwegu women work side by side with Mursi women on the river cultivation sites. What is their relationship like? What do Kwegu or Mursi women have to say about themselves and each other? How can the film purport to be about the Kwegu and yet so totally neglect Kwegu women and children?

A second shortcoming of the film footage is that, although we get to hear what informants have to say, we have no idea what questions they are responding to, nor who poses them. Presumably it is the anthropologist who asks the questions, but what language does he use, in whose company is he seen to be, and from what perspective does he formulate his questions? David Turton has conducted most of his research among the Mursi so it is quite probable that the language he uses is Mursi, that he is seen to be in the company of Mursi friends, and that his questions derive from a Mursi perspective. It seems quite likely, therefore, that the comments which the Kwegu informants make reflect their desire to please, or not to offend, the Mursi and the anthropologist friend of the Mursi, rather than their own considered opinions.

The film footage is accompanied by a running commentary, the main message of which is that the Kwegu are dominated, exploited, considered second-class citizens, and have their continued existence controlled, by the Mursi. According to Turton these things are achieved by the Mursi through their monopoly of cattle and their threat of force. Turton explains that in order to marry, a Kwegu has to hand over livestock, but since the Kwegu have no livestock, therefore they need the services of the Mursi. Thus, he asserts, the Mursi 'have brought about a situation in which the very reproduction of the Kwegu, their continued existence, depends on the Mursi, and there can be no more real dependence than this'. Turton then explains that the Mursi need the Kwegu to ferry them across the river to the valuable cultivation sites on the West bank. It is in order to gain the services of a particular Kwegu man that a Mursi man offers to pay bridewealth on behalf of that man. Turton acknowledges that the Kwegu can pick and choose their Mursi patrons, but insists that they cannot choose to do without them. During the marriage negotiations, the commentary explains what is going on and what has taken place beforehand in private. We learn that one rifle and several goats have already been given and that the Bodi man who represents the absent groom agrees to hand over in addition to these, 100 bullets and some 28 goats. It is explained that the bridewealth will be shared out among the bride's

Darchu, a Kwegu, checks out a shot for the Disappearing World film, The Kwegu, *reviewed here by Jean Lydall.*

relatives who have come to the negotiations for that reason. Turton wonders why the Kwegu should use goats in their bridewealth when they don't keep any. The Kwegu, he explains, tell him it is because the Mursi insist upon it. Turton further wonders why the Kwegu do not recognize that the Mursi get more out of the relationship than they do themselves. The Kwegu, he explains, consider the services which they provide as trivial compared with what the Mursi do for them: giving them the means to get married and reproduce.

Although the commentary comes across as very authoritative, it leaves some viewers rather bewildered. How, one wonders, can these handsome, self-possessed Kwegu men, whom we see skilfully going about their business and talking eloquently to the camera, be merely second-class citizens in Mursi society, dominated and exploited, their very existence controlled by the Mursi? Only when we realize how biased the commentary is can this question be answered. My eleven-year-old daughter commented that the film seems to be more about the Mursi than about the Kwegu. Indeed, the commentary tells us little about the Kwegu besides their relationship with the Mursi, and this we are told about only in so far as it involves men. Turton tells us that the Kwegu are exploited by the Mursi; how can he account, then, for the material benefits which accrue to the Kwegu as a whole as a result of their relationship with the Mursi? One rifle is worth five head of cattle in Mursi (Turton, 1980) and five bullets are worth one goat. The bridewealth agreed upon in the marriage negotiations which we see in the film consists of one rifle, 100 bullets and some 28 goats. This is to be provided by the Bodi patron and represents a net material gain for the Kwegu as a whole. When one takes such material gains into consideration it is not difficult to understand why the Kwegu consider the services they provide the Mursi with as trivial in comparison. Rather than the Mursi exploiting the Kwegu, it could be argued that the Kwegu make the Mursi pay through the nose for the ferrying services they receive.

The Kwegu, we are told, do not keep

livestock. What happens, then, to the goats they receive as bridewealth? Presumably the recipients have these goats looked after for them by their own patrons until such time as they wish to convert them into rifles, bullets or meat. The few glimpses we get of Kwegu women show that they wear skin clothing; presumably the skins of goats acquired as bridewealth from Bodi or Mursi. We see that Kwegu men possess their own rifles and bullets; presumably acquired as bridewealth from Mursi or Bodi. Why should the material wealth which the Mursi offer their clients be incorporated in the Kwegu bridewealth system? In so far as the Kwegu can control the marriages of their daughters, it is reasonable to suppose that they will favour those suitors who can offer the highest bridewealth, that's to say those with Mursi or Bodi patrons. In order to compete for a wife, therefore, a Kwegu man is obliged to find himself a patron who will provide a suitably large bridewealth. The reason why the Kwegu use goats in their bridewealth is not so much that the Mursi insist on it, as that the Kwegu insist on it by insisting that their sons-in-law procure as much bridewealth as possible.

We are told that the Kwegu are second-class citizens, and in support of this idea Turton tells us that 'in the eyes of the Mursi' the Kwegu have low status because they have no cattle. There is no reason to suppose, however, that in their own eyes the Kwegu consider themselves of low status because they have no cattle. Why should they want cattle? They have no cattle-herding tradition and the land along the river, with which they are intimately associated, is quite unsuitable for cattle. The Mursi may underrate the life of the Kwegu, but the Kwegu's own way of life may well seem to the Kwegu superior to that of the Mursi. We are told that the Mursi control the very existence of the Kwegu by controlling Kwegu marriage. In the film, however, we learn that the bride, whose marriage is being negotiated, has already born a child! Clearly marriage is not, in a strict sense, a prerequisite for reproduction among the Kwegu. Furthermore, so long as the Kwegu can pick and choose their patrons, how can the Mursi effectively control Kwegu marriages? We are told that the Kwegu are obliged to have Mursi patrons because of the threat of force, and yet they are able to abandon their Mursi patrons in favour of Bodi ones. Although Turton does not acknowledge their existence in the film, the Kwegu who live at Mago represent an alternative way of life to having either Mursi or Bodi patrons. Given these alternatives, the Kwegu man who agrees to have a Mursi patron must do so for positive rather than negative reasons; because of the benefits he can gain for himself and his in-laws, rather than because of the threat of Mursi force.

Thus Turton's view of the Kwegu proves to be a biased one. The Mursi see the Kwegu as inferior to themselves, and it seems that Turton has adopted the same point of view. What I find remarkable about the Kwegu is how, despite their small number, and despite having no livestock, they have been able to manipulate their relations with the Mursi and Bodi in such a way as to avoid being dominated, exploited, and their very existence controlled, by either group. By monopolizing canoes and being masters of the river and its forests, and by playing Mursi off against Bodi, they have kept their independence and secured themselves a profitable source of wealth.

Jean Lydall

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BOOKS

R. Littlewood and M. Lipsedge: *Aliens and Alienists* (Penguin, £3.95).

Littlewood and Lipsedge examine the relationship between ethnic minorities, racialism and psychiatry in England by drawing on their practical experience as psychiatrists in London, and with reference to social anthropology, history and the sociology of knowledge. The strongest argument contained in their book is a sharp denunciation of the way in which psychiatry can be used to legitimize racist attitudes. This volume will play a central role in all future discussions in this field.

Although anthropology provides the authors with the spectacles through which they view the problems — the concept of ethnocentrism being central to the authors' perceptions of immigrant groups — it is when they discuss specific anthropological theories that the book is weakest and tends to confuse anthropology and psychoanalysis.

This book is both complex and comprehensive, and the 450 references cited do reflect the quality of its discussion of issues such as migration, poverty and discrimination in England; the role which psychiatry has performed; the difficulties which doctors encounter in the diagnosis of psychological disturbances among members of other cultures; and the difficulty of distinguishing between cultural norms and personal idiosyncrasies. The book suggests that, in an attempt to gain access to the wider society, members of ethnic minorities may utilize the vocabulary of illness derived from that society (i.e., the vocabulary of scientific medicine) when explaining their own problems.

In the first chapter, two main assumptions are made. First, mental illness is regarded as a meaningful relationship between the individual and the situation in which he or she operates. Second, it can be understood only within the framework of a culture. After presentation of the case of a young West Indian who was admitted to the mental hospital in which the authors worked, the background of the two groups involved — the ethnic minority and the psychiatrists — and their different positions in British society are briefly examined as a prerequisite for understanding the situation. The chapter ends by raising questions concerning the relationship between mental illness and culture, the extent to which beliefs shared by a whole group can still be regarded as symptoms of illness, and the problems of deciding when a belief becomes a delusion.

Chapter 2 describes changes in the way in which dominant ideologies perceived 'outsiders' (aliens). The term alien is used to refer to both geographical outsiders (foreigners) and internal outsiders, including the mentally ill. At the end of the 19th century 'science' supported the assertion that one group could be naturally superior to another and the idea of 'race' was clearly established. After the Second World War, with racio-genetic explanations for social characteristics largely discredited, new categories came into use. A 'non-coercive' type of control which turned blacks into passive consumers of sociological and psychiatric expertise, was developed. In the fifties, therefore, blacks were seen as socially, rather than biologically, disadvantaged; and black family studies started to appear. The authors indicate several studies that suggest how racialism in psychiatric treatment may occur in various forms, and claim that 'racism is not a science nor a disease but a set of political beliefs which legitimates certain social and economic conditions' (p.67). The chapter encounters a pitfall when it distinguishes membership of a 'racial' or pathological group in terms of status ascribed by others, from religious identity, achieved by the individual (p.41). I would suggest that this distinction might mistakenly lead to another, that between the biological and the social. Why should 'race' and pathology necessarily be ascribed and religion be achieved? Both history and social anthropology afford many examples of situations in which the individual has no choice in relation to his religious affiliation. Biological and cultural differences both exist only within the framework of a special culture that attributes meaning to these differences.

Chapter 3 discusses the idea that mental illness has to be seen against the background of particular cultural traditions, taking as a case in point the question of 'black depression'. Depression, according to the authors, is considered by psychiatrists to be associated with more 'mature' and 'sophisticated' societies. Littlewood and Lipsedge counter this argument by suggesting that the use of more 'physical' measures of depression (such as sleep disturbances, constipation, loss of energy, loss of appetite, decreased sexual desire) would indicate overall equal numbers of depressed people in different countries. The fact that the word physical is put into quotation marks by the authors does not prevent them from using it to suggest that depression can be found in all cultures. A footnote on the same page, however, emphasises that psychiatry is concerned with the *emphatic* understanding of the individual in his own terms and I would suggest that it is between these two poles — the biological and the cultural — that the tension of the chapter lies.

Chapter 4 examines the relationship between mental illness and immigration and the way in which these two variables are correlated in various types of explana-