

Book Reviews

Evans-Pritchard, Sir Edward. *A History of Anthropological Thought*. Edited by André Singer. Introduction by Ernest Gellner. xxxvi+218 pp. London and Boston 1981. Faber and Faber. Price: \$15.00.

This volume contains fifteen brief critical biographical essays on the Baron Montesquieu, Lord Kames, Adam Ferguson, John Millar, the Marquis de Condorcet, J.F. McLennan, W. Robertson Smith, Sir Henry Maine, Sir Edward Tylor, Vilfredo Pareto, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Sir James Frazer, Emile Durkheim, and Robert Hertz, as well as an appendix with even briefer sketches of Max Müller, H.J. Nieboer, Arnold Van Gennep, Marcel Mauss, Franz Baermann Steiner, Bronislaw Malinowski, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Arthur M. Hocart, Jack H. Driberg, and Leslie A. White. Most of this material appeared earlier as essays in various journals, as prefaces to republications of these writers' works, or as obituaries.

Evans-Pritchard died suddenly while still reformulating these materials into a study of the intellectual origins of social anthropology. We therefore cannot be sure what the final form of this work would have been, but as it appears here almost nothing is added (and in some cases much is deleted) from these earlier versions so that while it may prove convenient for some to have this scattered material under one cover, few are likely to learn anything new about the author. According to the editor, the only major unpublished item appearing in this collection is the one on Durkheim and that expresses such a querulous, negative, and narrow attitude as to be better left buried.

If one accepts, as this review does, that Evans-Pritchard was one of the giants in social anthropology, then one can only welcome any publication that makes some of his less accessible past publications more readily available. Unfortunately, some of these, indeed the most important (those on Lévy-Bruhl and on the British intellectualist interpreters of magic, Frazer and Tylor), have been severely cut and altered from their original forms. Furthermore, the editor fails to make completely clear to the reader from precisely where various portions of the text derive. Instead, Singer merely lists Evans-Pritchard's various relevant publications at the back of the volume. Even a cursory examination of this slapdash account reveals omissions in citation; for example, the useful and amusing essay on Comte was actually published earlier in 1970 as a pamphlet by Manchester University. The dates and original forms of these essays are of crucial interest, revealing both their relation to Evans-Pritchard's own ethnographic works and to his changing attitudes toward other writers. Editorial care in such a collection where one is presenting a posthumously assembled amalgam is important, yet here it is so slovenly that it would not pass muster as a graduate student project.¹

A person who purchased this volume on the basis of its title would likely be disappointed; this is certainly not a coherent, integrated account of the development of social thought as it relates to anthropology, not even in the narrow sense of British social

¹ I single out only one example among the editor's many errors and misleading vagaries and that because it directly concerns me. I edited the standard bibliography of Evans-Pritchard's work; it unfortunately requires more corrections and additions than Singer indicates (p. 205; see my notes in *Man* 10.1972: 476-477). True, this is a small point, but not when this is characteristic of the editor's general fault of often not getting things quite right.