

anthropology and ethnology, despite the existence of international organizations and important journals, this is not yet the case.

Fél and Hofer state in their introduction (p. 9), "We wrote the manuscript for an English-speaking, mostly American audience," using ideas of social anthropology. Although they deal extensively with change in the pre-war period, they report (p. 10), "Our main objective . . . was to study and describe that traditional peasant culture which still thrived in Átány in its originally undiluted state." Consequently and perhaps understandably, they devote approximately two pages (in an epilogue) to collectivization in their 440-page volume. They do clearly state, however (p. 383), "The goals which motivated the efforts of the Átány people in the old days—the acquisition of land and fine animals and the founding of a self-sufficient farm for one's successors—have lost their meaning." Their book, remarkably free of ideology, is rather written with warmth and love for the culture they describe. It is one of the best ethnographies I have encountered. The authors are acutely aware of the different approaches taken by those in the *Volkskunde* tradition and by students of peasant culture.

Cresswell, an American trained in French social anthropology, says that the region he studied was in a state near anomie at the time the fieldwork was carried out. Perhaps in part because of this, he presents much background information on Ireland from a historical and human geographical point of view. (His detailed and painstaking work is marred by major printing and binding errors between p. 208 and 239, as for example where one turns p. 213 and discovers p. 234 on the other side. Also, some sections appear twice.)

Cresswell, doing his fieldwork in the mid-'50's, basically takes the present as his point of departure. The Hungarian scholars, who began their work in 1951 and continued through the 1960's, devote their energies to reconstructing the traditional culture. But these monographs do not seem to be so far apart in general import.

The desire to document a culture is clearly present in the motivations of the authors of both studies, along with an awareness of the present state of dissolution of cohesive peasant subcultures in both countries. Despite their different scholarly traditions and the fact that in one case the study was done by an outsider while in the other by members of the culture concerned, they seem to share a fundamental con-

cern with the significance of traditional rural ways of life—an importance diminished not in the least by the fact that these rural lifeways are now becoming memory cultures. These are parent cultures in that they form the family backgrounds of many if not most of the people in Hungarian and Irish cities and towns as well as those who have migrated abroad. It seems logical, in attempting to assess the significance of these monographs, to enquire as to which aspects of the cultures described (especially nonmaterial aspects) will endure among their scattered descendants. Cresswell seems to be touching this point in his perceptive conclusion (p. 530, translation mine).<sup>4</sup>

But disintegration and "de-structuring" do not necessarily signify the destruction of a society. From the viewpoint of today's Ireland, the traditional Ireland has disappeared, certainly, without possibility of returning, but the Ireland of tomorrow already potentially exists.

by W. H. HUDSPETH

*Beckenham, England. 28 x 70*

Robert Cresswell's first introduction to Europe was when he came over with the American forces in the Second World War. After demobilization he settled in France, and upon graduating at the University of Paris he undertook a year's scientific research into Irish society. Ireland having become an area of major ethnological interest, his exhaustive study in the land of saints and scholars considerably adds to our understanding of issues of anthropological interest. Having chosen the parish of Kinvarra, near Galway, on the west coast of Ireland, as the centre of his studies, Cresswell was carried by his ensuing questionings to many other distant parts of the country. Geology, orography, hydrography, climate, flora, fauna, history, all come under microscopic review. This is followed by an analysis of the land, the population, production, distribution and consumption, social organization, concepts, signs, and symbols. The study is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the development of the peasantry of the country and will serve as an historical-ecological-anthropological framework.

<sup>4</sup> "Mais désintégration et déstructuration ne signifient pas forcément destruction d'une société. L'Irlande traditionnelle, voire l'Irlande d'aujourd'hui, disparaît, certes, sans possibilité de retour, mais l'Irlande de demain existe en potentiel déjà."

It is one of the most interesting analyses of a European peasant community yet written.

Fél and Hofer's book is a penetrating study of a European peasantry by two distinguished Hungarian ethnographers, who naturally have a somewhat different approach from that of English and American anthropologists. The original Hungarian text was translated by György Bónis and polished and adjusted to current anthropological usage by Dr. and Mrs. A. Richard Diebold, Jr. The book, beautifully produced, is a pleasure to handle. The village of Átány, standing on the Great Hungarian Plain and belonging to the jurisdiction of Heves County, is the centre chosen for investigation. The purpose of the research was not only to depict the situation in the village at the time of research; a period of .50 years was also embraced in the immediate experience of Átány's adult population, and happily some of the adult informants could accurately remember much more remote days. As the traditional culture sought by the researchers was most tenaciously held onto by the landowning peasants, known as the "proper peasants," these were the chief object of enquiry. Studies were made of the village and villagers, of the family, of the intricate network of social relations, of the ways of life and social strata, and of the community's religion, administration, and government. The book, which makes fascinating reading, is a definite contribution to the question of what the social relationships are between land, farmer, community, and nation. There is always the danger of an investigator finding what he or she wishes to find.

by HENRI LAVONDES

*Papeete, Tahiti. 25 x 11 70*

Cresswell's work seems to me to lie at the intersection of two genres: a university one, of French conception, that of the doctoral thesis, and an ethnological one, that of the monograph. It owes to the first of these genres its voluminous aspect, an implacable attention to detail, a formidable erudition that lead the reader astray in the meanderings of a particularly abundant statistical and cartographic display and leave him winded from following the thread of a thought—a thought of undoubted value, but at times one which the mass of data accumulated serves more to conceal than to illustrate. As for the genre of the monograph, this work indisputably belongs to that category inasmuch as

the ethnographic description of Kinvarra constitutes its heart. This being said, Cresswell's monograph, when compared with similar works by other ethnologists of his generation, may well be considered absolutely original. While more and more contemporary authors are considering the monograph as a tool for making certain theoretical adjustments and putting aside the considerable part of the materials collected that has nothing to do with the restricted topic of study, Cresswell explicitly states his concern to supply documentary material of such a nature and in such a form that the reader can at once verify the analyses put to him and, in turn, produce his own analysis. One should be grateful to the author for this concern, even if the documentation weighs the heavier for it. Of the new "readings" of the book that are thus made possible, one might have as its theme social transformation in the midst of a population undergoing a dizzy demographic decline.

The fact that only about 30 pages in a work of almost 600 are given to social organisation (the second part of Chapter 7) is no less paradoxical in a period where the opposite ratio is usual and where, in most monographs, only superficial information is brought to bear on technics and material life. However, throughout the 476 preceding pages dealing with the geographical framework, history, demography, land tenure, system of production and distribution, for the society as a whole as well as for the parish of Kinvarra, the question is always one of social organisation, in conformity with the author's working hypothesis that "in general, the techno-economic structure determines the forms assumed by the other social structures" (p. 15, translation mine).<sup>5</sup> From this there results an approach that gives all importance to the temporal dimension of phenomena and that owes a great deal to human geography, rendering this work an interdisciplinary study written by a single author. Not all the data presented contribute equally to support this undertaking, and one too often has the impression that certain elements of the documentation only appear for their own sake, out of concern for completeness. In addition, one would often wish for a more explicit use of conceptual apparatus and that the theoretical implications were the object of more systematic development, but doubtless we must await

the triptych announced on p. 15.

But one now perceives clearly the new and essential contributions of this work. If this monograph is not the first in the field of "complex societies"—in the European sphere, I think in particular of the admirable *Nouville* (Bernot and Blancard 1953)—it seems to me that it is the first to take full advantage of the exceptional documentary wealth offered by this field as opposed to that of preliterate societies. It is also the first time that a faithful attempt has been made to maintain a constant confrontation of the community under study and the society as a whole. Finally, the possibility of fully accounting, in this type of society, for the historical dimension allows the restoration to social reality of its dynamic aspects. Social reality appears in this work as a flux in perpetual transformation, bearing the marks of a distant past and already rich with the shape of things to come.

Thus we may measure all that Cresswell's work, by a sort of rebound-effect, can contribute to the analysis of exotic societies—the ethnographer's preserve. If the absence of documentation has rendered legitimate the static image produced by the ethnographer of these societies whose historicity he is too readily resigned to neglecting, this position becomes more and more untenable. Rare today are societies which have not come into contact with complex societies, whether it be, as in Ireland's case, in a "colonial situation" or otherwise. Furthermore, it seems to me that, from now on, there will only be a place for studies in ethnohistory on the one hand or monographs based on the lessons found in Cresswell's book.

I regret that circumstances have prevented me from doing greater justice to Fél and Hofer's fine book. Like Cresswell's work, but in a completely different way, it provides a bridge between the ethnography of preliterate societies and the ethnography of Euro-American societies. Sexual division of labour, age groups, lineage control over the individual, sense of community—the ethnographer specialising in the study of exotic societies finds himself on familiar ground amongst the "proper peasants" of Átány. He is conscious of a certain profound unity in mode of social organisation and system of values that allows him to compare his societies with Europe's fast disappearing peasant subcultures.

Through Fél and Hofer's work, ethnographic research, too often considered of minor importance by today's theorists, regains all its dignity. Here a particular European ethno-

graphic tradition attains a pinnacle of classicism, and this in the best sense of the term: reserve, discretion on the part of the authors, who renounce all vain and ostentatious display of erudition that they might better achieve their purpose of communicating as directly as possible the data provided by their informants—to whom they hand the pen on every possible occasion. Certainly, there are areas in which more extensive theoretical reflection would have led to fuller information (e.g., the kinship system), but the book's invaluable ethnographic wealth will long be drawn upon by future theorists, especially for the study of value systems. It goes without saying that this work on Hungarian peasants could only have been written by Hungarian ethnographers. Their perfect tact has permitted them to escape the perils of hagiography, with the result that no one can remain insensitive to the resounding homage they render to the cultural heritage of their country. Thus they have proved that an ethnographer working in his own country can fulfil a social function without renouncing scientific objectivity. Let us hope that in exotic societies as well ethnographers will appear who are capable of bringing as much rigour, talent, and generosity to the understanding of the values of their own culture.

by MARVIN K. OPLER

*Buffalo, N.Y., U.S.A. 6 XI 70*

Various writers on peasant societies such as Diaz (1967) have pointed out that economic survival is possible only if the farm is kept intact. This is particularly true in countries or regions which have been mainly rural and preindustrial as a whole. Thus Scandinavia would not furnish a good example, nor would Japan, but both Ireland and Hungary do, respectively, as colonial and rural feudalistic areas.

These two studies are richly descriptive of the conditions of existence in two types of peasant society, the Hungarian and the Irish. The fact that the Irish Southwest Counties had colonial status under England meant that landholdings easily underwent attrition and fragmentation through inheritance, while in the feudalistic Hungarian case there were efforts to preserve productivity of landed peasants by placing a lower limit on the extent of land inherited. It is true that families undergoing adversity might slip below this limit into landless serfdom status. But the chief contrast between the colonized peasantry of Ireland and the feudally controlled peasantry

<sup>5</sup> "en général, la structure techno-économique détermine les formes que prendront les autres structures sociales."