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On the Sulu Sea, by Singh

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and ultimately, global social inequalities. Despite the complexity of structural factors, Headland maintains that Agta can benefit from well-planned local programs. The condition for success lies in putting people ahead of development.

Overall, the compilation of articles provides a useful database for longitudinal and comparative studies on floral and faunal resources, reproductive biology and the patterning of transitional economies. The various papers point to both similarities and variations in the adaptive strategies of Agta communities. While the authors adopt an ecological focus, the absence of an overarching framework fails to give direction and continuity to the articles. This constitutes a major shortcoming of the volume as a whole. Nonetheless, the individual papers should be considered for their pioneering, substantive contributions.

A final comment must be made on an ecological perspective as "the most powerful heuristic tool available" for understanding the Agta (Griffin, p. 158). The dichotomy between "materially oriented" and "mentalist" approaches is a false one. There exists an interface of ecology, ideology and power relationships in the Sierra Madre. Cognitive processes are integral in a society's relations with the material world. Additionally, research oriented to assist the Agta improve their quality of living must come to terms with Agta participation in designing and implementing their future. That, in turn, entails an interpretation of the meaning of power among the powerless, and its ecological, social and ideological ramifications.

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ON THE SULU SEA. By Supriya Singh. Kuala Lumpur: Angsana Publications, 1984. 192 pages.

Neither novel nor study, this book partakes of the characteristics of both. It is the result of the author's eight-month stay in Kampung Bokara, a village four miles from Sandakan town, and the oldest urban village in Sabah, on the north east coast of Borneo. Sabah, which has long been the object of dispute between the Philippines and Malaysia, is multi-ethnic, with the Bajaus as the largest indigenous Muslim group, most of them tracing their origin to Simunul Island, part of the Philippine Tawi-Tawi group. Sabah is also where many refugees from the Philippines have settled, and often the people the author writes about have "Philippine cousins" coming to visit or stay.

Supriya Singh, an Indian of Malaysian citizenship, was in Kampung Bokara to do fieldwork for a sociological study of the Simunul Bajaus, and *On the*

Sulu Sea is about the experience of living there, about the people and their lifeways, and about the writer's personal reactions to the data she discovers, the people she encounters, and the life she has to live. Her personal circumstances are in the background, but high on her consciousness ("The degree itself is a way of escaping a disintegrating marriage and a means of getting to some kind of economic independence" [p. 2]), and often referred to. The narrative thus weaves between an account of Bokara life and ways, and a first-person experience.

The book is divided into three parts rather than into chapters, and each part into short accounts with titles like "The family," "Be careful of the barbel eels," "The bride does not cry," "How much does your husband make?" "Kampung history," and "The headhunter scare." The style is informal and personal, with a majority of short, simple declarative sentences, and hardly any metaphors or images — a style for factual reportage, not one for conveying atmosphere or character:

I am living in a house on the sea. I have to keep telling myself that. It is so unbelievable. A house not near the sea, not by the sea, but actually on the sea When there is a particularly strong wave, the house shakes beneath me This cannot be safe, I fear. I mention it casually to Si Malcolm . . . The house, he says, is built on *belian* splits . . . staked at least four feet deep in the seabed. And Belian is hard wood, said to last for more than fifty years. (p. 10)

The data is served up along with the circumstances of its gathering, thus adding not only human interest but the writer's perception of and reaction to it, in the way of a personal essay rather than a scholarly paper:

The biggest scoop so far is being able to talk to Sarif Abdullah. . . . He says he remembers his people, the Sulus and Simunuls moving from Trong-lit in Sandakan Bay to open the kampung. Since that according to historical record was in 1880, that makes Sarif Abdullah in 1979, at least 105 years old.

The older people came to inspect the place and found hills covered with bamboo and the shores lined with mangrove. On the hills were monkeys covered with red fur . . . hundreds of them. So they called the village Bokara, *bokara* being the Simunul word for that type of monkey.

The one thing that happened while I was trying to patch together even this little fragment of early history is that now I do not believe that an old man sits by the fire in the evening and gives the anthropologist a story complete in its details. (pp. 62-63)

Life in the kampung is shown to be a round of household chores, conversation, family problems and quarrels, feasts and celebrations, concern about livelihood and neighbors, talk about wealth and possessions — a world en-

closed within the complex of houses on the sea connected by catwalks, with very little to do with the world immediately outside, much less with the national or international scenes.

The writer reacts to this, usually with curiosity, sometimes with sympathy or delight, occasionally with dismay. The social scientist's distance is dispensed with because of the narrative style, and the researcher intrudes into the data. This method humanizes the factual, but because it stops short of analysis or comment of any depth, does not always make the reader comprehend the experience as fiction could, by using character delineation, description of atmosphere, image and symbol. Neither does it focus on or highlight salient points, as a journalistic feature story might. All are presented with almost equal emphasis, and with much interlayering, but without texture. Still, the lifeways of the Simunul Bajaus are made perceptible and interesting to the general reader, and not only to the fellow sociologist or anthropologist.

The writing style of *On the Sulu Sea* suggests itself as an alternative for the popularization of the findings of social science research. The substance of the account suggests as well the possibility of employing fictional methods to convey information that could enrich the general reader as well as the social scientist.

On the Sulu Sea should be of interest to the Filipino, who may find profit in comparing the life of the Mindanao Bajaus to that of their brothers and cousins of Malaysian citizenship, and witnessing on the micro-level and "in the flesh," so to speak, the Sabah of history and controversy.

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THE CALL OF THE MINARET. By Kenneth Cragg. Second edition, revised and enlarged. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books/Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1985. x, 358 pages.

This book is a revised edition of a work first published in the mid-fifties. The "Call" referred to in the title is the Muslim crier's brief formula of Islamic faith and an invitation to prayer proclaimed five times daily from the mosque tower. The author, Dr. Kenneth Cragg, is an Anglican bishop of long experience in the Middle East and a recognized leader in the field of Christian-Muslim relations.

After a brief introductory section, "Islam at the New Century" (the Islamic century 1400 which began in November 1979), the author takes up two main themes, "Minaret and Muslim" and "Minaret and Christian." Under these two headings he brings out the meaning of their faith for Muslims and