



Review

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Herausschälung des *kaya*-Ungeheuers¹⁷ grundsätzliche Bedeutung, deren Richtigkeit sich in Zukunft durch weitere Vergleiche aus anderen Gebieten Neuguineas und darüber hinaus noch klarer erweisen wird. Wenn das Dunkel über Neuguinea jetzt immer mehr verschwindet, dann gebührt auch WIRZ das Verdienst, grundlegend dabei mitgetan zu haben. Auch bei der endgültigen Klärung der Frage über das Wie und Woher der Völkerwanderungen in Neuguinea wird dieses Buch des Verfassers seine Geltung erweisen. Selbst wenn man auch nicht alle Aufstellungen des Autors unterschreiben will, so wird doch dadurch dem Wert des Buches kein Eintrag getan. Kurz gesagt: es ist ein gutes Buch, wichtig für jeden, den die kulturellen Probleme Neuguineas interessieren.

FRANZ J. KIRSCHBAUM.

Ross Colin. *Mit Kind und Kegel in die Arktis.* 218 SS. in 8°. Mit 50 Abb. und einer Karte. Leipzig 1934. Verlag: F. A. BROCKHAUS.

Der bekannte Weltreisende schildert hier seine Fahrt zum hohen Norden „mit Kind und Kegel“, d. h. mit seiner Frau und seinem zehnjährigen Sohn RALPH. Es ist ein Reisetagebuch, keine wissenschaftliche Abhandlung, aber reich an guten Beobachtungen und trefflichen Bemerkungen, wenn man auch über manche seiner Reflexionen und Werturteile geteilter Meinung sein kann. Die Darstellung ist frisch und lebendig, unterstützt durch eine Reihe vorzüglicher Aufnahmen. Ob COLIN ROSS die geradezu romanhafte Geschichte der „Hudson's Bay Company“, die kühnen Vorstöße der Forscher gegen den Nordpol oder die fortschreitende Okkupation der Arktis durch Kanada erzählt, ob er märchenhaft schöne Eislandschaften schildert, aus kleinen, charakteristischen Szenen ein anschauliches Bild vom Leben der Eskimo erstehen läßt oder die wirtschaftliche Lage und ihre Zukunftsmöglichkeiten erörtert — immer führt er die Feder mit gleicher Gewandtheit, und das Buch bleibt eine fesselnde und anregende Lektüre bis zum Schluß.

JOSEF HENNINGER.

Frazer James George. *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion.* Vol. II. X + 151 pp. in 8°. London (W. C. 2) 1934. Macmillan & Co. Ltd., St. Martin's Street. Price: 10/6-net.

The aged scholar, Sir JAMES FRAZER, in spite of his fear to the contrary has been able to give sooner than he expected at least part of the book, which he planned in the first volume of this work, by the publication of six lectures, which offer valuable new material on the fear of the dead among primitive peoples. The first deals with the driving away of the spirit of the dead person by means of physical force; the remaining five are occupied mainly with the resources of nature which are used to prevent the return of the dead. Among these are thorns, water, fire, mutilation of the corpse (or even the killing of the ghost), partial or complete destruction of the property of the deceased. This brief summary of the contents gives only a superficial idea of the relatively vast amount of material which fills a book of nearly 140 pages.

But a few points from this wealth of material must be considered separately, because it is difficult to see in them the evidence of the actual existence of the fear of the dead.

FRAZER assumes that the customary ablutions which are performed after a burial among many peoples arise from a fear of the dead and a wish "to interpose a barrier of water between the living and the dead" (p. 42). But it is difficult to see how water, in which one bathes and with which one washes oneself, should be a "barrier". The case is obviously different when the mourners return by way of a diver in order to

¹⁷ Man vergleiche dazu noch z. B. „A Kaja, Schlangenaberglauben in der Blanche Bucht“ von P. JOS. MEIER, M. S. C., in „Anthropos“ III, 1908, S. 1005—1029.

make it impossible for the spirit of the deceased to follow them. In the instance the water is really an obstacle. But in ablutions the normal conception of water as a purifying agent seems to remain, according to which conception these rites have for their purpose the removal of pollution caused by contact with the deceased. It may be suggested that the object feared is the dead body and ultimately death itself and that by washing with water, which is an element of life, the desire is to renew and strengthen one's own life-force after it has been endangered by coming in contact with death. Fear of death, therefore, must not be confused with fear of the deceased, however closely allied they may be.

In another instance FRAZER'S choice of evidence may be questioned. According to W. L. PRIKLONSKI the Yakuts after a burial, try to protect themselves from the demon of death by fire ritual. FRAZER interpretes this by saying that PRIKLONSKI probably regarded the spirit of the deceased as the demon of death, for "the conception of a demon of death is by no means primitive". It may be taken as certain that the conception of a demon of death is not primitive. But from this it does not follow that this demon cannot be present among the Yakuts. On the contrary its presence harmonises perfectly with the fact that the cult of the spirits and of the dead by the Yakuts originated in a foreign matrilineal culture and is therefore among them, a secondary and relatively recent phenomenon, whilst the worship of the sky was originally native to them¹⁸. A similar report by J. S. H. LOUIS on the Khambu caste of Sikkim (The Gates of Thibet, p. 116) is interpreted by FRAZER in the same way. In refutation of this H. H. RISLEY may be quoted who detailedly described in his "Gazetteer of Sikkim" (Calcutta 1894) an exorcism of the death demon (p. 383 ff.). He calls it "one of the most common lamaic ceremonies".

In reference to this point what has already been said with regard to the first volume ("Anthropos" XXIX, p. 245) may be repeated: without a classification according to age and type of cultures ethnological problems cannot be satisfactorily settled. FRAZER admits for example that in Ancient Egypt only very scanty traces of the fear of the dead are to be found (p. 5). But we are here dealing with a totemic ideology in which the thought of life, in association with the sun-mythology, is in the foreground and in which corporeal immortality is aimed at in the drying of the corpse on a platform and in the process of mummification. It is clear that such concepts are not good soil for the fear of the dead. It is a very different matter in mother-right, where, as a result of the occupation of the women with the rapidly disintegrating plant-world and on the basis of a definite moon-mythology, the thought of death and disintegration is much more alive and where therefore conditions for fear of the dead are much more favourable.

A further comment may be made on Lecture VI. There FRAZER expresses the opinion that the "true original motive" of the destruction of the property of the deceased is to be found in the desire to prevent his spirit from returning in order to make use of it (p. 124). But without doubt there is the belief among primitives, which is much more widely spread and, what is more important, older, that by burning or destroying the possessions of the deceased, that is, by reducing them into a "spirit" state, the needs of the dead person are provided for (cf. W. SCHMIDT, Handbuch der vergleichenden Religionsgeschichte. Münster 1930, p. 66). The "true original motive" therefore of this custom is not fear of the dead but exactly the contrary, the loving care of the dead, or as SCHMIDT says (*loc. cit.*) "the continuation of the duties and habits of the social life beyond the grave".

There is no doubt as to the great value of the mass of material which FRAZER has collected; but the real goal of ethnology must in the end be to represent the details of the life of peoples in their relationship to the whole and in their cultural setting.

RUDOLF RAHMANN.

¹⁸ A. GAHS, Blutige und unblutige Opfer bei den altaiischen Hirtenvölkern. Internat. Woche für Religionsethnologie IV. Paris 1926, p. 217 ff.