attention, all are treated as special cases. At the same time a general message is clear. Environmental conditions are deteriorating over ever more extensive areas, yet priority has not yet been given to this issue. Except with respect to emergency famine relief those outside Africa regard this as essentially Africa's problem, while those in power within the continent are often far more preoccupied with political survival. While this book points more effectively to 'causes' than to 'cures', it does suggest that with new forms of partnership between outside agencies, African governments and the people on the ground the downward spiral can be reversed.

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This monograph arises from anthropological fieldwork carried out during 1970–72 in Labadi, a suburb of Ghana's capital, Accra. The core of the book, approximately half the text, reports intensive ethnographic observations of traditional and spiritual healers drawn from the indigenous Ga population. The rest is divided equally between a section introducing the problem, the setting and the actors and a comparative section on cross-cultural mental therapy. A brief assortment of appendices provides additional material from fieldnotes.

The tone of the book is markedly dualistic. The ethnography is selective and detailed. He follows case histories of mentally sick individuals as they are treated by two healers. The organization is orderly, but little effort is made to present the materials systematically. The style is accessible and lively. In contrast, the theoretical discussions are heavily shored up by scholarly allusion. This makes the study a useful compendium of recent references, but the argument is correspondingly dense and turgid.

There are three competing systems of mental healing available to modern Ghanians—a traditional approach favouring involvement of the patient's kin group; individual salvation offered by spiritualist churches; and 'biomedical' therapy of the sort associated with mental hospitals. Mullings disparages conventional dichotomies such as traditional/modern and western/non-western; but it is easy enough to locate this trip along some such semantic axis. An excellent comparative table (p. 184) summarizes her findings according to a scheme which identifies the aetiology, treatment, techniques and goals of therapy.

It has been claimed that indigenous medicine is most successful as a form of psychotherapy. The present discussion offers innumerable insights into this question, but Mullings resists researching firm conclusions on relative effectiveness. She appears to favour an eclectic approach which neither accepts westernization as inevitable nor patronizes indigenous methods that are themselves subject to forces of social change. Instead she tries to establish an ambitious framework for understanding medicine as a historical process conditioned by trends in social production. Unfortunately she lacks the scope in a specialist study to provide an adequate description of Ghana's postcolonial history, so that the ethnographic findings are never contextualised in the manner she herself advocates.

This monograph is an informative addition to the literature on West African psychotherapy. In particular, it is a valuable update of Margaret Field's important studies of the Ga during the late colonial period. Specialists will undoubtedly benefit from the careful sifting through of relevant analytical sources. Mullings explicitly recommends that non-anthropologists should skip the ethnographic

Dar al-Kuti was the last, and probably the southernmost, of the Muslim states which provided slaves for the Saharan slave trade. Unlike the trading states further north, it was actively engaged in the business of slave-capture, both for sale and for settlement on the land.

Dar al-Kuti was largely the creation of one man, the Sultan al-Sanusi. If it was plagued with the dissensions which threatened other Muslim states of the sahel and savanna, these have been forgotten. But when the French Resident drew his pistol on al-Sanusi and his heir, the state disintegrated and its capital, Ndele, was abandoned. This took place in 1911, so that Cordell in 1974 was able to interview people who had actually lived in the state of Dar al-Kuti, and the sons of many others. He was also able to survey the remains of its capital on a plateau site which was never reoccupied.

The political economy of Dar al-Kuti was based on violence—organised raiding for slaves by military units carrying banners with Koranic texts. Cordell gives a fascinating insight into the way such a state functioned, stressing the fact that a considerable proportion of the slaves were retained in the vicinity of Ndele to grow its food supplies. It does not seem that the slaving units offered their victims the alternative of accepting Islam (as, for example, the Zaberima of north-western Ghana and Bukina Faso are known to have done)—unless, indeed, removal to the neighbourhood of the capital was taken to imply conversion. Accounts recorded by him of the festivals which accompanied forced communal work on the land, which included beer-drinking, dancing, and the provision of grain and slaughter animals for traditional ceremonies, suggest that little attempt was made to enforce anything approaching orthodox Islam on the participants.

The populations raided, transplanted or sold by the state are shown by Cordell to have been, for the most part, refugees from the activities of slave traders to north-east and north-west. Evidently to his surprise, he found that people looked back with some regret to the great days of Dar al-Kuti and its Sultan; he suggests that those settled near the capital appreciated the security provided by the state after long periods of flight from slave raiding.

Cordell has placed the story of Dar al-Kuti in the context of neighbouring parts of north-central Africa, thus throwing some light on a little-known area. He has also included valuable economic information on cloth and ivory as well as on the slave trade in this very late pre-colonial group of states.

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For several years unpublished theses accumulated in the basement of the Graduate