

1970", and ditto "... of Kuantan since 1970" (pp. 239-263), both being transparent and readily compatible. Though, all in all, more field experience, more clarity and conciseness would have done so much nicer.

Obviously in order to counteract possible criticism, the author in his "Summary and Conclusions" points to the inevitableness of scientific value judgements in general (p. 264). This is correct. But nonetheless, regardless of what is meant here in particular, well-read socio-economists can be considered sufficiently firm in this field since Max Weber's great essays on the theory of knowledge so that, provided with those unflinching tools, the author could have avoided many reefs.

To end this review in a mellow tone: No critic can claim perfection for himself, and he is far from any absolute "objectivism". The author for his part, especially when he is a beginner, would derive no benefit from merely being patted on the shoulders - "beginner's luck", when needed in stormy weather, can also be the chance to learn and do better in the future.

*Dietrich Kühne*

WILFRIED WAGNER (Hrsg.), *Mentawai, Identität im Wandel auf indonesischen Außeninseln*. (Veröffentlichungen aus dem Übersee-Museum Bremen, Reihe C, Band 5). Bremen: Übersee-Museum Bremen, 1989. 230 pages.

The book contains seven articles on various aspects of the Mentawai Islands (Siberut, Sipora, North and South Pagai) which are located about 100 km west of Padang (West Sumatra). In early 1988 the editor organized a symposium on this archipelago at which most of the material of this book was presented as papers.

Reimar Schefold (University of Leiden) contributes two articles, one in German and one in English. The German article ("Religiöse Involution auf den Mentawai-Inseln: Veränderungen in den Tabubestimmungen und ihre Folgen") contains the most important arguments of an article published in 1976 (Reimar Schefold, Religious Involution: Internal Change and its Consequences in the Taboo-System of the Mentawaians. In: *Tropical Man* 5, pp. 46-81, 1976). The English article ("The Origins of the Woman on the Raft: on the Prehistory of the Mentawaians"), which is said to represent an extension and complement to the remarks on the prehistoric foundations of the culture of the Mentawaians in Schefold's book on ritual (Reimar Schefold, *Lia: das große Ritual auf den Mentawai-Inseln (Indonesien)*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer,

1988), touches briefly on the origins of the Mentawaians and discusses *in extenso* the phaseological age of Mentawaiian culture, trying to answer the old question of whether Mentawai represents a recessive culture or a local elaboration of a tradition which is basically pre-Metal Age. According to Schefold the question of the place of origin can not yet be answered, since the linguistic evidence, which is treated as decisive in this respect, is lacking. It should be pointed out that there exists an article written by the author of this review which presents ample evidence of a closer relationship between the so-called Barrier Island languages (e.g. Mentawai, Nias) and the Batak languages (Bernd Nothofer, *The Barrier Island Languages in the Austronesian Language Family*. In: Paul Geraghty/Lois Carrington/S.A. Wurm (eds.), *Papers from the Fourth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics*, vol. 2: pp. 87-109. *Pacific Linguistics* C-94. Canberra: Australian National University, 1986).

Regarding the second question, Schefold concludes that no decision can be reached without evidence from excavations.

Wagner's (University of Bremen) article, entitled "Das Pagai-Abenteuer der East India Company", describes in detail the various attempts of the East India Company to set up plantations on the Mentawai Islands and the reasons for its failure to establish itself on Pagai.

In his essay on the dialects of Mentawai ("Zur dialektgeographischen Gliederung des Mentawai-Archipels"), Pampus (University of Frankfurt) demonstrates the linguistic heterogeneity of Siberut as opposed to the more homogeneous dialect situation on the other islands. Furthermore, he succeeds in showing that Siberut consists of two major dialect areas whose boundary runs east-west and splits the island into two almost equally large areas. The linguistic evidence supports the hypothesis that the dialects of northern Siberut represent an older linguistic stratum.

Pampus' second paper (*Überlegungen zur Orthographie des Mentawaiischen*) proposes a writing system for Mentawai based on its phonology and dialectal variation.

Henning Eichberg's (College for Physical Education, Copenhagen) contribution is entitled "Eine andere Sinnlichkeit. Körper und Gesellschaft in Mentawai". It consists of a number of observations regarding Mentawaiian culture (e.g. games, dances, egalitarian society). Particular emphasis is put on the study of sports. The main conclusion of the paper points to the fact that there is no competitive and/or duelling sport on the islands.

Gerard Persoon (University of Leiden) describes the failure of various efforts towards avoiding environmental degradation on Siberut ("*Beyond Dreaming: Environmental Planning for Man and Nature on Siberut*"). He

analyses the reasons for this failure and suggests several factors which have to be taken into account, if environmental planning is to be successful: 1) a learning process approach, 2) putting local people's priorities first, 3) secure rights and benefits for the poor, 4) sustainability through self-help, 5) high calibre, commitment and continuity of staff.

Wagner's book represents a major contribution to the study of cultures located in peripheral areas of Indonesia. It is to be hoped that works of this kind will also appear for other areas of the Barrier Islands, such as Nias or Enggano.

*Bernd Nothofer*

VO NHAN TRI, *Vietnam's Economic Policy since 1975*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990. 253 pages.

With his latest book the well known Vietnamese economist Vo Nhan Tri continues the studies published in 1967 in Hanoi: *Croissance Economique de la Republique du Vietnam*. By doing so he fills a gap in research work about the economic development of Vietnam after 1975. Being written in English the book will certainly find a wide range of readers. The subject is of interest not only to scientific experts.

Five chapters follow a short preface: 1. Legacy of the Development Model of North Vietnam, 1955-75; 2. Reunification and "Socialist Transformation", 1975-80; 3. The Third Five-Year Plan, 1981-85; 4. Economic "Renovation", 1986-90 and 5. Conclusion.

The first chapter is a summary of the material from the sixties up to the year 1975. But there is one important qualification: The author distances himself from his own works published in Vietnam and abroad before 1980. They were all subjected to a censorship imposed by the government or by the author himself (p. XI). The author does not really bring any new statistical data. However, his evaluation of the figures is much more critical. This is especially true of the development of agriculture after 1965. Regarding the situation in Vietnam, Vo Nhan Tri has adopted unreservedly the popular formula of "Stalinist-Maoist economic development strategy".

In the following chronologically structured chapters the author paints a picture of economic development in Vietnam. He refers to basic data in the fields of agriculture, industry and handicrafts, foreign trade and the standard of living of the population. Extensive statistics - including internal reports -