

Book Reviews

central, the author, an internationally-known ethnologist resident in Colombia, has collected his data from three sources: conversation with natives, their accounts being reproduced in translation, and in particular the services of a remarkable Indian who was able to analyse acutely his own people; the author's personal experience when participating in drug-taking ceremonies; from a secondary source, the Spanish chronicles. The uniqueness of the book lies in Reichel-Dolmatoff's intimate knowledge of these primitive peoples, and together with a thorough mastery of their language and customs he has been able to make close rapport with them, thus permitting him to penetrate their culture more effectively than anyone before him.

A number of books of this kind have appeared recently, most of them attempting to understand the drug dependency of primitive peoples, and so, it is hoped, to assist in the comprehension and thus the handling of addiction in Western nations. Dr. Reichel-Dolmatoff, however, is interested primarily in the former and by studying it closely he is able to understand many basic cultural processes. His excellent book is, therefore, an outstanding contribution to social anthropology.

FRED W. VOGET, *A history of ethnology*, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975, 8vo, pp. ix, 879, [no price stated].

The author's plan is to trace ". . . the intellectual history of cultural anthropology, with special emphasis on ethnology. . . ." The main strands of this vast subject are followed, and the subject-matter is divided into four historical periods: classical, Renaissance and Arabic; the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during which the idea of human development towards a perfect social state became prominent, first in the phase 1725 to 1840 when a humanistic view of human progress predominated, followed by evolutionary theory in the second, 1840 to 1890, with breakthroughs in geology, palaeontology, prehistory and anthropology; 1890 to 1940 with a linking of culture and society, attempts to produce a general theory of each, and with the development of scientific approaches and professionalization; 1940 to the present, characterized by increasing specialization whereby links with economics, political science and psychology have been made so that a more integrated perspective and methodology have resulted. There is a lengthy list of references and a useful glossary. Despite the latter, parts are not easy to read, and although aimed at students the book may be of greater interest to scholars. It certainly should be known to the medical historian, who may benefit considerably from a perusal of parts of it.

PAMELA DIXON, *Ginseng*, London, Duckworth, 1976, 8vo, pp. 101, illus., £3.95 (95p paperback).

For millennia in the East ginseng has maintained the reputation of a universal cure-all, aphrodisiac and prolonger of life. More recently it has become popular in the West. This book describes its history from the earliest use of it to the present day, including an account of modern research. No one seems to know how it acts pharmacologically, but it is now being used widely as a natural tonic and antistress agent, as in fact has been the case in China for centuries.

The root of the plant is used and it often grows into the shape of a man, thus resembling the mandragora of the West both in shape, symbolism and therapeutic use;