Although ethnologists might rely on their own field work, others must learn about the other’s work. This book is an excellent place to start.

Ellen M. Smith
Department of Psychiatry
Yale University School of Medicine

Oedipus in the Stone Age: A Psychoanalytic Study of Masculinization in Papua New Guinea. By Theodore Lidz and Ruth Wilmanns Lidz. Madison, CT, International Universities Press, Inc., 1989. 228 pp. $25.00.

Oedipus in the Stone Age is an attempt by psychoanalysts Theodore Lidz and Ruth Wilmanns Lidz to use their psychoanalytic training to understand masculinization rituals among the indigenes in Papua New Guinea, and in this way to “increase [their] psychoanalytic insights.” Recognizing that Freudian psychoanalytic concepts arose from a patriarchal European culture, they question whether psychoanalytic views of child development, and in particular the Oedipal conflict, are culturally limited. Conversely, by evaluating the process of a child’s separation-individuation from the mother in a culture that is completely different from ours, they hope to expand Western psychoanalytic thinking to include more general perspectives on human behavior.

The focus of the book is on the strong division between men and women in Papua New Guinea, and on the ceremonies which separate boys from their mothers and allow “rebirth” of the boys from men, free of the contamination of women. Men dominate women but at the same time fear them. They believe that menstrual blood and other vaginal emanations are harmful and even lethal to them. They view heterosexual intercourse as a process that can gravely weaken them by diminishing their limited supply of semen. The family unit is radically different from that in Western cultures. While marriage and procreation are highly valued, husbands do not live with their wives, and consequently fathers rarely interact with their children. The authors describe violent rituals, including ones in which prepubertal boys are made to bleed and to vomit, in an effort to rid themselves of female contamination. The ritual bleeding is viewed as male menstruation—a purification process. In contrast to Freud’s insistence on the concept of “penis envy” in girls, Lidz and Lidz focus on the concept of “womb envy,” the envy of the procreative and nurturing functions of women in these New Guinea societies. They also raise questions about how “womb envy” is manifest in our own society, and why psychoanalysts have often failed to consider this.

Although the authors spent a few weeks in the region they describe, the book does not rely on their own field work, but rather reviews the work of anthropologists and ethnologists who lived among the indigenes and wrote in depth about their rituals. Some fascinating accounts of rituals and tribal myths make this an intriguing book. Although it seems presumptuous at first to assume that Western-trained psychoanalysts can apply their own ideas to a culture they may not fully understand, the book backs up its claim that all male children in the world undergo first a symbiotic relationship with the mother, and then a disidentification from her and a defeminization in order to assume a role as a male member of society. Because this process often occurs so subtly in our own society, the choice of studying a society where the process of masculinization is clearly overt is a wise one.
The book is well written and entertaining, providing both new interpretations of developmental stages for psychoanalysts and a good basic review of the fundamental psychoanalytic principles for those of us who are less familiar with these principles. The main body of the book describes in great detail rituals in several different Papua New Guinea tribes. These rituals are basically the same, with slight variation from tribe to tribe. These sections become repetitive, but the final chapter provides relief. The chapter, “Masculinization in Papua New Guinea and its Impact on Psychoanalytic Theory,” is the most interesting one in the book; it summarizes the key differences between masculine identity formation in different cultures and adds to Freud’s formulation of the Oedipal conflict.

This exceedingly interesting book raises fundamental questions about the differences between males and females and strives to address why it is that all societies have a need for clear distinction between the sexes. Anyone interested in psychiatry, psychodynamically oriented anthropology, or simply cultures that differ greatly from our own, will find this a fascinating book.

DORIS IAROVICI
Medical Student
Yale University School of Medicine

ESSENTIALS OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY. By Carl H. Gunderson. New York, Raven Press, 1990. 550 pp. $50.00.

Essentials of Clinical Neurology is an intermediate-sized tome on neurological diagnosis and treatment. From the start, the author states that his goal is not to follow the examples of other “encyclopedic” volumes such as Merritt or Adams and Victor, but rather to provide a distilled body of facts.

The book is organized into four parts. Part one, “Introduction to Neurological Evaluation,” provides brief introductions to the currently available neurodiagnostic modalities, including the electroencephalogram (EEG), electromyogram (EMG), computerized axial tomogram (CAT), and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). As is true of the remainder of the book, this part is well organized and quite easy to follow. In general, the reproductions of MRI and CT scans are of good quality. Part two, “Analysis of Common Neurological Complaints,” contains chapters on movement disorders, sensory disorders, neurology of vision, headache, dementia, and aphasia. Each chapter initially provides a review of the basic neuroanatomy and neurophysiology; these reviews are particularly well done in the chapters on movement disorders and the neurology of vision. Much of the emphasis is on diagnosis, and each chapter provides pertinent aspects of patient history, the neurological exam as well as a condensed differential diagnosis. Parts three and four discuss differential diagnoses and selected neurological diseases.

A strength of this book is its organization. First, it is written in outline format. In addition, the basic terminology is not assumed, and all terms (e.g., hypotonia, akathisia) are well defined; however, I did not really find the distinction between the major subheadings (parts two through four) to be very helpful. Another criticism is that certain areas, such as child neurology, are entirely lacking, although the author does mention this as a shortcoming in the introduction.

Despite these criticisms, this work is an exceptionally well-assembled volume. What