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Sudanese Ethics, by Tore Nordenstam. The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1968. Pp. 1-239. Price 15 SW KR (paper bound).

This description of the normative ethics (18; 60) of three Sudanese university students is based on taped interviews, an edited version of which appears as the third part of the book (129-221). Some evidence is presented for the hypothesis that these three are "highly representative of a large moral community in the Northern Sudan, the exact borders of which remain to be investigated" (119), but it is admittedly sketchy.

The representativeness of the group does not in any case affect the analysis of the interviews which forms the second part (67-125). This is interestingly done. The author attempts to link the statements of the interviews around some key notions and concludes (116) that "the ethical system which is the subject of this book is a predominantly other-determined and outward-oriented, internally consistent, comprehensive system centering round the notions of courage, generosity, honour, dignity and self-respect". He devotes a section to each of these notions so that one may go beyond what he calls, following his teacher, Naess, pseudo-agreement (64). Some readers may incline to detect more evidence of strain between other-determination and self-determination in the interviews than the author admits in his analysis, and it is one great virtue of the interview system that such discussion is made possible.

In the section given over to a critique of methods, the author suggests that if one "wants to give a correct description of somebody's ethics, one of the things one would like to find out about it is the extent to which he uses rules in his ethical reasoning and the extent to which he proceeds by analogical reasoning from precedents" (32). Here there is a shift from ethics as content to ethics as performance, and prompts the note that a set of values is a twofold interpretation of living. On the one hand, the values explicitly indicate the kind of life that is to be chosen (18 *et al.*), and this will be true even when the stress is on rules of conduct. On the other hand, a set of values implicitly defines human life as something to be achieved, as finality. Because this second interpretation is

implicit and regards performance rather than content, it is often missed by the moral actor. Because it may be missed but may also be adverted to, it is a crucial feature in the investigation of the manner in which the moral actor is conceived in the ethical system. In other words, descriptive ethics cannot be confined to content but must likewise tackle the idea of the moral actor as source of value. Ethical systems are as likely to differ in this respect as in any other. What I am referring to is the existential dimension of action found in the philosophical tradition stemming from Aquinas and Kierkegaard. Advertance to it enables one to place more accurately the notions of interiority, exteriority, other-directedness, self-directedness etc. This aspect of the description is not totally ignored in this book, but neither is it sufficiently discussed. Yet the basic strain at the root of any ethical system has its source here, and it seems likely that university students of philosophy would have focused on the question. It is a criticism of the interviews that the questioner led the movement in the direction of content to the detriment of the recognition of performance.

It is perhaps unfair, especially in a short review, to criticize an author for what he has not done; so I conclude with the suggestion that what is done is done well and worth doing, and is rendered more valuable by the inclusion of the interviews which enable the reader both to check the analysis and to perform further analyses of slightly different kinds.

I noted one or two misprints. On page 142 the sections are wrongly numbered. The first one should be 25, not 26. The second is correctly 26 if the number 27 is inserted on page 143. Again on page 142, Ali is printed Ail; and ny for my, in one place each. On page 229 in the eighth note to Chapter 10 Professor Peristiany's name is wrongly spelled. These are very minor blemishes and the book is otherwise well made.

G. BARDEN