that were never present in the U.S.-USSR model. Within postwar Europe it symbolized the moral courage to face responsibility for Nazi transgressions. Acceptance of that responsibility eased Germany's reentrance into European affairs, and the relinquishment of Germany's unrealistic demands for reunification eased the plight of families and friends separated by the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain. Brandt's past made him uniquely qualified to provide Germany with the moral leadership it needed to acknowledge its Nazi past.

In the end, however, he failed to produce the practical achievements expected by the German public. The financial and territorial costs of *Ostpolitik* had soared, and the public began to wonder whether its negotiators were getting the best bargain possible. *Ostpolitik* had proceeded beyond its initially imposing moral dimensions and had entered the realm of the pragmatic. Brandt was no longer uniquely qualified. In fact, because of his radical past and his inability as chancellor to control the SPD's radical Young Socialists, he was particularly vulnerable to charges that the East was beating him at the negotiating table. When an East German spy was found employed in Willy Brandt's own office, his fate was sealed. Drath frowns on such "political" explanations, but I find them more convincing than her psychological approach.

In the final analysis Drath's insight is valuable. Her verdict on Brandt:

"Contrary to his detractors, there is nothing reprehensible about Brandt's —by any voter's standard—untidy past. Quite the contrary, the politician's long and thorny, meandering road to the top, replete with detours into political radicalism and human blunders, suggests an unchallengeable Socialist constancy and an admirable commitment to social justice."

She feels he has a future in European politics, and, in view of Brandt's recently announced candidacy for a seat in the first European Parliament, her views are timely. Marred as it is by traces of sensationalism, poor organization, and awkward writing, Drath's "close look at the magic Brandt personality" is nonetheless a welcome contribution.

African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community by Benjamin C. Ray

(Prentice-Hall; xii + 239 pp.; $8.95/$4.95)

John S. Mbiti

Much of the growing literature on African religion continues to be produced by foreign scholars, who, whatever their other merits, see it from the outside. In 1972 Benjamin Ray, Assistant Professor of Religion at Princeton, spent a few months in Uganda (visiting Nigeria en route home), and while there did field study in some aspects of African religious life. Drawing largely from that short stay, he has written *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community*, beautifully produced in the "Prentice-Hall Studies in Religion Series."

Professor Ray claims that his book "is thematically organized to show the structural unity of African religions in terms of symbols, ritual, and community." In reality it is basically a compilation of "case studies," which gives the reader the feeling of going on a religious tour, hopping from one airport to another, from east to west, from south to north.

In his introductory chapter the author gives a sketchy account of studies of African religions (he prefers to use the plural). The sketch is too brief to be of any serious academic help. Among other things, he digs up old prejudices about Africans as written by Europeans and Americans, but leaves them at that without indicating where he himself stands in the matter. He is particularly critical of scholars who have attempted to present a systematic study of African religion, charging them with overgeneralizing, drawing up catalogues of

examples, and/or reducing African religion to a set of doctrines. But, alas, Ray indulges in precisely the procedure for which he criticizes others. He fills out his book with generalizations, to which he adds elaborate illustrations, mainly from the works of other scholars. This is akin to methodological suicide.

The rest of the book deals with such topics as Myth and History, Divinity and Man, Religious Authorities, Man and Ethics, "Religion and Rebellion," Islam and Christianity. These are in fact the same themes found in the systematic treatments of African religion of which Professor Ray is otherwise so critical. He introduces each chapter or subsection with a number of brief generalities, following up with case studies to supply depth and variety. But his claim that he tries to "provide an obvious structure and some sense of historical whole" is not convincing. The historical aspect especially is very limited. It is regrettable that in some cases the illustrations are "retold" instead of quoted directly from their original sources. The illustrations make it more or less a book of "readings in African religion"—but they are selected with an anthropological bias.

Nowhere does Professor Ray give even a working definition of the term "African religions." He uses it largely to refer to the traditional religious life of African peoples. But in the final two chapters he speaks about "African Islam" and "Independent Christianity." There is no transition from one usage to the other.

The book attempts to cover much more than it can handle. Consequently, many serious issues are either left out altogether or treated very superficially. This is perhaps characteristic of religious tourism. For example, the notion of God is more or less dismissed with a few references to the question of "monotheism, polytheism, and pantheism." The author assumes the age-old (and incorrect) statement that "there are two fundamentally different types of divinity in African religions: the one creator god [*sic*], who is usually remote from daily religious life, and the many lesser gods and spirits which are constantly involved in everyday religious experience." He produces not one fragment of evidence to support this assumption. As a matter of fact, God is not removed from daily life, as evidenced by, inter alia, the very large proportion of prayers addressed to Him concerning all matters of daily life. Professor Ray does not say one word about marriage; he devotes only two pages to the question of "evil"; he mentions and cites a few prayers in passing, and yet they are the most central point of contact between the people and the spiritual realities. The book claims to speak about "community" in its title, but hardly anything is said directly about African community.

It is extremely disappointing to see the treatment of Islam only in terms of "reformation" and "brotherhoods," and of Christianity only in terms of "Independent Christianity." These are distorted presentations of two highly important religious systems in Africa, whose adherents account for more than 80 per cent of the continent's population. There is surely much more to Islam and Christianity in Africa than what Professor Ray gives in two brief chapters of his book, and he makes only superficial links between them and African religion.

African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community is a very readable book. It is a "popular" recasting of familiar ground, with patches of interpretative comment. Its frequent comparison of African religious life with that of the West is boring and monotonous. Surely African religion should be described and interpreted without this constant recourse to comparison with the West, as if the West were the canon by which to measure and judge the affairs of other parts of the world. The book will no doubt be read with interest in American circles, and one hopes it will at least whet the appetite of the potentially serious student.

The Social History of the Machine Gun by John Ellis

(Pantheon; 186 pp.; $12.95/$4.95)

Martin Green

We need more books like this. One notable imaginative weakness in our men of conscience—part of the general weakness Trilling ascribed to the liberal imagination—is that we make so little contact with armies and with war. Such contact as we do make is partial and rhetorical, organized in the name of indignation, which is not the way to learn to understand. War, as Tolstoy tried to teach us, is as habitual a fact as peace. For us to relegate it to the status of a nightmare interlude is to blind ourselves.

Not that armies and war are the same thing. From Mr. Ellis's point of view they are near-opposites. The machine gun completely changed the character of war, and yet, because the armies of Europe did not want it, the gun did not effectively reach the battlefield till 1914, fifty years after its invention. The Gatling was used, its powers demonstrated, in the American Civil War and the Russo-Japanese War, but the officers of Europe, most strikingly the English officers, still put their faith in the horse and the sabre and the cavalry charge. Even after the endless trench stalemate of 1914-18, which happened because no bravery or numbers, in infantry or cavalry, could advance across an open space commanded by machine guns, Field Marshal Lord Haig could say, "Aeroplanes and tanks are only accessories to the man and the horse—the well-bred horse." The armies were of course the preserve of the European aristocracies, and dominated by a feudal romanticism elsewhere laughed to scorn—a romanticism in which horse-worship played a considerable part. It is significant that America, where neither aristocracy nor guild craftsmen counted for much, should be the country to develop the machine gun. (Give both words equal emphasis.)

Before 1914 such guns were used in America against industrial unrest, in Africa against restive tribes. The British first sent Gatlings into action against the Ashanti, in 1874, under Sir Garnet Wolseley. The *Times* wrote: "...if by any lucky chance Sir Garnet Wolseley manages to catch a good mob of savages in the open, and at a moderate distance,