

## BOOK REVIEWS

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JODY BERLAND, WILL STRAW, and DAVID THOMAS (eds.), *Theory Rules: Art as Theory/ Theory as Art*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press/YYZ Books 1996. 313pp., Appendix. £39.00/£13.00.

This collection of fifteen essays derives from a conference held at the University of Ottawa in 1991, investigating the proposition that 'Theory (with a capital T) has emerged as a privileged site of mediation between processes of market valorization and discourses of intellectual and political legitimation in the production and circulation of art' (p. 3). If much contemporary Western artistic production has become, post-pictures, a matter of finding visual metaphors for bookish high theory, the reverse may also be true: high theory has itself assumed an 'artistic' dimension through celebrity authors whose publications and intellectual personalities circulate widely outside academia. If there is a tendency to celebrate this state of affairs, it can be located in a certain residual modernist vanguardism, in which high-concept art points the way forward, reconciling an age-old split between theory and practice. As Straw suggests in his succinct opening essay, this state of affairs should perhaps be seen less as the reconciliation of a historical problem and more as 'the product of institutional and sociological alignments. 'What are needed', he continues, 'are analyses which specify the dispositional, institutional, and social economics within which theory has come to occupy new relationships to artistic practice' (p. 29).

The volume as a whole provides just this. Individual essays are variously interventionist (de Duve), reflexive (Berland), or coolly philosophical (Asselin) and cover a variety of topics, including prison literature (Harlow), virtual reality and cyberspace (Tomas, Dagenais, Marchessault), and photography (Seaton). A number of issues cluster around the main theme. All the essays are critical of Theory's institutional circuitry. A number of authors present detailed discussions of events in which Theory has attained sudden, revealing prominence. Dowler discusses the debates over the Canadian National Gallery's purchase of Newman's *Voice of Fire* in 1990 and Stobak's *Vanitas* (a meat sculpture) the following year. Tomas discusses a 'virtual seminar on the bioapparatus' in Banff in 1991, in which artists, writers, and computer specialists were brought together to discuss issues emerging from cyborg theory and feminist critiques of technology. Clark subjects the use of Foucault by Canadian artists to a thoroughly Foucauldian analysis.

Others trace Theory's institutional pathologies in a more abstract vein. A persistent theme is the way in which Theory reproduces decidedly old-fangled modes of thought and institutional practice: the 'death of the author' has produced authors as never before; multiculturalism reproduces rather than erodes a highly Eurocentric notion of 'culture'; virtual reality does much less than its proponents claim to erase the distinctions between mind-work and body-work; post-structuralism renders feminist

theory increasingly untenable; demotic art museum educational policies maintain, despite their self-conscious anti-élitism, a rift between those in the know and those not.

We cannot avoid theory, as Wolff points out in her vigorously argued chapter; since we cannot, she implies, let us just make sure we choose the right ones.

Anthropologists may find references to familiar signposts (Appadurai, Bourdieu, Clifford) thin on the ground, although they are by no means absent. On the whole the volume is located squarely within the cultural studies canon. This is, however, a book that will be read with great interest by anyone working on the key cultural institutions of Western modernity. Taken as a whole, it contributes a thought-provoking twist to a well-entrenched discussion (at least within anthropology and, latterly, art history and musicology) of the ways in which theory is invoked, manipulated, and policed in these over-familiar but critical institutions.

MARTIN STOKES

ROSANNE CECIL (ed.), *The Anthropology of Pregnancy Loss: Comparative Studies in Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Neonatal Death*, Oxford: Berg 1996. xii, 226 pp. £12.95.

Despite the medical likelihood that pregnancy loss has been experienced in all societies down through the ages, it has received little anthropological attention, as Cecil notes in her introduction. Perhaps this is because a pregnancy that ultimately fails to produce a new member of society might at first appear to have no impact on the social structure. Nevertheless, this collection of ten articles convincingly demonstrates that the study of pregnancy loss helps illuminate fundamental cultural concepts essential to much anthropological analysis, such as life, death, the person and the body, as well as the world-view of a given culture.

The book is divided into two parts. The first comprises ethnographic studies of non-Western societies. While the ethnographic aspects investigated in each differ somewhat, they generally include how people of the target culture define pregnancy and miscarriage, the attitudes and ways in which they deal with pregnancy loss, measures for recovery, and the impact of the pregnancy loss on social structure.

Cecil characterizes the articles of the second part as going beyond the 'mainstream' of anthropological enquiry. Their approaches vary widely. For instance, the studies by Deluca and Leslie apply statistical biomedical analysis to 'modern, Western populations'. Layne employs textual analysis in the manner of literary criticism to explore the 'ironies of pregnancy' she finds in the personal accounts contributed by middle-class white American women to a pregnancy-loss support-group newsletter between 1984 and 1991. Chalmers 'explores the influence of cultural expectations on the management of miscarriage among four major cultural groups in South Africa'. Cecil interviews elderly women in Northern Ireland about their recollections of pregnancy loss, and Jackson seeks to glean cultural concepts from eighteenth-century court records in England in which women sought to defend themselves from accusations of having killed their new-born children.

The essays are all quite detailed. The five ethnographic studies and Chalmers' cross-cultural study clearly work to present the natives' point of view and attitudes, laudably minimizing the influence of any Western preconceptions about pregnancy loss. These successes lead one to wish that the authors had moved beyond the feminist tendency of the 1970s to approach pregnancy loss primarily from a female perspective. With one exception, pregnancy loss is described in terms of the feelings or thoughts of women or mothers, with only an occasional oblique reference to how the other partner in the pregnancy, the father, might have felt or thought.

A telling example is Cecil's own study of the recollections of older women in Northern Ireland of their pregnancy losses. Her informants told her that generally only the father and male relations attended the funeral of the stillborn child, while a wake served as the occasion for other women to comfort the bereaved mother. One is left wondering what memories the father might have had of burying his own offspring. Cecil advocates this woman-centred approach in her introduction, arguing that 'the actual experience of pregnancy, childbirth and pregnancy loss can only be known by women!' A defence of this stance might be that men generally refuse to discuss such feelings or experiences; yet Cecil notes that some of her female informants themselves deprecated the importance of their memories. It would seem, then, that the anthropological researcher must supply a professional evaluation of the importance that should be attached to a particular informant's experience if the study is to stand the test of time. Even if the male and female partners to a given pregnancy in a Catholic (and Protestant) society such as Northern Ireland appear to never to have articulated their feelings about the loss to each other, this does not necessarily mean that no communication on any level has taken place. In any case, the nature or apparent lack of such communication between partners in such a pregnancy is itself an important aspect of social structure for the researcher to explore and analyse if the potential of this analytical tool is to be fully utilized. One study in this book that does give at least a somewhat more balanced gender perspective is Layne's textual analysis, which quotes two would-be fathers and the joint description of one couple among an otherwise all-female sample.

Perhaps another approach that could be employed in the future would be to explore pregnancy loss from a ritual perspective. Several of the studies in this book mention rituals, but none conducts any analysis. Cecil's observations of men attending a stillborn child's funeral while women attend the wake does at least point in this direction.

The greatest triumph of this path-breaking work may well be that it leads the reader to wish for more than it provides. For example, a comparative literature survey might unearth more literary works on pregnancy loss than those cited in the Introduction. The seventeenth-century anonymous Chinese novel *Jou P'u-t'uan* comes to mind for its mention of the miscarriage experienced by the neglected wife of the novel's roving hero, as she flees discovery by her father that she has been impregnated by her husband's enemy. If Cecil's thought-provoking collection leads to further efforts on this topic to fill in such gaps, the field of anthropology will have been well served.

LING-LING WONG

PENELOPE HARVEY, *Hybrids of Modernity: Anthropology, the Nation State and the Universal Exhibition*, London and New York: Routledge 1996. ix, 208 pp., References, Illustrations, Index. £40.00/£13.99.

*Hybrids of Modernity* is an ambitious attempt to bring together the major debates in contemporary cultural theory in a way that provokes new critical thinking about anthropology and its subjects. Harvey uses her fieldwork experience at the Universal Exhibition held in Spain in 1992 to draw similarities between anthropology, the nation-state, and the exhibition, arguing that they are all hybrids of modernity. As such, these institutions are highly aware of their modernist tendency to represent and 'produce' culture, while they simultaneously question this process through postmodern deconstruction. The problem for anthropology, then, is how to analyze such cultural forms which use the 'same conceptual tools' and therefore challenge the monopoly on cultural knowledge, interpretation, and representation (p. 24). The global, technological nature of these forms further complicates this anthropological endeavour, as the field has yet to generate a sustainable methodology for the study of transnationalism.

The book offers both theoretical and methodological interventions into this problem. In the first two chapters and the conclusion, Harvey makes a number of programmatic arguments. First, she contends that anthropology can no longer afford to ignore the insights of cultural-studies theorists, who have often worked more successfully with postmodern theory to understand the global, the technological, and consumption. Anthropological hesitancy with the constructivist approach that analyzes layers of semiotic representation stems from the concern that representational knowledge 'misrepresents how people live in the world' by falsely positing a reality on which meaning is laid (p. 171). Anthropologists, Harvey argues, prefer to see culture as emerging from practice—a valuable theory in its own right, but dangerously incapable of analyzing just those practices which self-consciously represent and construct. Harvey asserts that the traditional anthropology/cultural-studies dichotomies between the study of people and of texts, embodied practice and representation, the local and the global, and the other and the self, must be bridged if anthropologists are to study what have become fundamental features of contemporary life. Similarly, cultural studies should look to anthropology's 'sensitivity to the culturally specific' if it is to avoid gross generalization (p. 178).

Harvey's second argument is in favour of 'auto-anthropology', or anthropology at home, which affords a chance to question more deeply the bases and claims of the discipline. She suggests that auto-anthropology has proved difficult for the same reasons that anthropologists have looked at cultural studies with suspicion—we are uncomfortable with challenges to our interpretative knowledge, particularly those that call attention to our own (often unwitting) tendency to reify a distinction between reality and representation. It is through auto-anthropology, Harvey argues, that the discipline can overcome its 'problematic dichotomy' between representational and practice approaches, and gain the tools to understand the self-conscious production of culture in other realms (p. 19).

The Expo'92 case-study forms the basis for the middle chapters of the book. The chapter on the nation-state is particularly useful for its consideration of the hybrid nature of nationalism. For example, Harvey shows how the exhibits simultaneously

invoked tradition and innovation as core elements of national identity. She links this with the modern self-awareness on the part of the presenters that the reality of the nation-state is unrepresentable in its totality; this awareness occurs simultaneously with the postmodern idea that the nation-state is unrepresentable because, ultimately, it was never real and is only imagined.

Chapter 4 continues to explore this hybridity in the exhibition itself. Harvey explains that the exhibition embodies traces of its origins (as an event that highlights the technological progress and uniqueness of nations), while using technology to question, and even undermine, those origins and the integrity of the nation that they imply. The overarching interest of the chapter is to analyze these changing relationships between technology and culture, and to suggest how culture and nation have become commodified to the point that technology is not merely used to represent the world but to simulate the world as well.

Chapter 5 looks at the hybrid subject of the consumer. Visitors' enjoyment of the simulation speaks to the importance of paying attention to experiential knowledge and various interpretative possibilities. One of Harvey's interesting suggestions in this chapter is that knowledge, for the consumer, no longer depends on the realist aesthetic which requires observation of the original for 'true' understanding. Commodified experiences of simulacra can be more engaging than 'the real'. As Harvey suggests, 'this presents a problem for the way in which experience is integrated into our theories of knowledge'—theories which tend to distinguish 'between the active and passive, the embodied and the contemplative, the tactile and the visual' (p. 169).

*Hybrids of Modernity* draws heavily on the work of Baudrillard, de Certeau, Eco, Harvey, and Lyotard, as well as Timothy Mitchell and Marilyn Strathern. The theoretical power of the book indeed stems from Harvey's creative interweaving of various thinkers, but at times this leads to a lack of clarity and shifting definitions of key concepts. Also, the middle chapters appear to stand apart. More tacking back and forth between their main points and the general theoretical interests of the book would have been helpful. For example, the author could have elaborated on the specific ways in which anthropology is like the nation-state or the exhibition (i.e., how is anthropology affected by technology, and how might it, like the nation, project itself through tradition and innovation?). Finally, attention could be paid to major changes in cultural studies itself, from the earlier focus on social action to the increased interest in social texts.

None the less, Harvey provides insight into the struggle between cultural studies and anthropology. In the process, she highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of anthropological theory and proposes future avenues for thinking about the contemporary world. Finally, the book suggests a methodology for dealing with the global in a local context, something that many anthropologists are still struggling to formulate.

JESSICA WINEGAR

DONALD S. LOPEZ (ed.), *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1995. 304 pp. £36.75/£13.50.

When Edward Said wrote *Orientalism* (Routledge 1978) and based his case mainly on Islamic examples from the Middle East (an Orientalist geographical term he surprisingly did not object to), he opened up a hitherto unsuspected valley of fertile fields for other scholars to till. Ronald Inden took up the challenge with gusto for Hinduism and British India in *Imagining India* (Blackwell 1990), but as Lopez points out, it has taken somewhat longer for a similar reflexivity to be practised within Buddhist studies. Following his editor's introduction, *Curators of the Buddha* brings together six studies: Charles Hallisey on the early study of Theravada Buddhism; Stanley K. Abe on the Western reception of Gandhara Buddhist art; Robert H. Sharf on 'The Zen of Japanese Nationalism'; Gustavo Benevides on Giuseppe Tucci and the connection between his views on Buddhism and Asia and his fascism; Luis O. Gómez on Jung; and Donald S. Lopez himself on selected Western encounters (including his own) with Tibetan lamas. This interesting combination of topics should upset a few preconceptions about both Buddhism and the people who study it. I found it fascinating; believers may be infuriated. Either way, this is a book that all students of Buddhism should read, questioning, as it does, the conditions of their existence.

Surprisingly, the editor does not explicitly discuss the fact that a large number of Buddhist societies were never colonized (Japan, China, Korea, Tibet, Nepal, Thailand). Thus, what the book is really concerned with is not the study of Buddhism *under* colonialism, but the study of Buddhism *in* the colonial period. Any crude anti-orientalist thesis to the effect that orientalist scholarship was carried on to advance the colonial project falls to too many counter-examples (when Tucci started to work on Tibet and India, Italy had no immediate strategic interests there).

Not all the contributors accept a Saidian framework to the same degree, and some do not mention him at all. However, all agree that the way in which Buddhism has been studied in the past has involved at least as much the prejudices of those who studied it as the discovery of a new religion or way of life. At the most extreme end of the spectrum is Abe's chapter about the art of Gandhara. He tells the story of its appeal to the British in India because of its Greek antecedents and includes an extended set piece on the confrontation of the lama and the museum curator in Kipling's *Kim*. The whole category of 'Greco-Buddhist art' is considered to be so subjective, simply a projection of the predilections of the British of the day, that the present scholarly consensus on Gandharan art is not even mentioned. In a similar way, Jung had so little real interaction with Hindu or Buddhist mysticism, other than reading the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and the *Meditation Sutra (on Amitayus)*, that Gómez can analyse his thought simply by looking at his writings and those of some of his followers.

Given the current popularity of Buddhism in Hollywood, it would probably come as no surprise there that one of the greatest scholars of Tibetan Buddhism, Giuseppe Tucci, was a strong supporter of fascism and used Buddhist arguments to support it. Tucci, in contrast to Jung, was a great scholar of Buddhism, with enormous textual and historical work to his credit. However, his generalizations about 'Oriental culture', Tibet, India, and the Japanese seem to have borne little relation to his detailed scholarly

work. Indeed, for me Benevides's paper clarified something that had always puzzled me about Tucci's *Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, which went through so many printings as a Rider paperback and must have sat on the shelf of so many spiritual seekers: it combines his rather mechanical generalizations about spirituality with highly detailed translations from original texts, with no real relationship between the two. For Tucci there is true spirituality, which is timeless and beyond words and explanation, and there is the meaningless materialism of Western civilization and its outposts in India. At the same time he despised the actual practice of Buddhism in Tibet and called the monasticism he saw there 'a kind of elephantiasis of asceticism' (p. 165). Benevides shows how Tucci's views evolved, under the influence of Gentili, 'the official philosopher of fascism', so that he could interpret the Bodhisattva as someone who sacrifices and fights for others, a move he reversed after the war. Unfortunately Benevides gives few details about Tucci's personal and professional history which might help put his Hegelo-Buddhism (my term) into context. He does demonstrate well, however, that 'silent, incommunicable experiences could be used in the service of a state that could not otherwise provide a rationale to those who would be required to kill and be killed' (p. 181).

A similar conclusion underlies Scharf's account of the rise of modernist Zen (again, my term). This is the fascinating history of how D. T. Suzuki, Paul Carus (a German religious philosopher based in the USA), and, following them, two Japanese philosophers, Nishida Kitaro and Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, created the modern idea of Zen as a humanist, experience-based technique that lay behind the whole of Japanese civilization. Ironically, 'the key Japanese terms for experience...were adopted [in the early Meiji period] to render Western terms for which there was no ready Japanese equivalent' (pp. 124-5). So-called Zen gardens were first associated with Zen doctrine in an English-language guidebook of 1935. 'Those aspects of Zen most attractive to the Occident...were derived in large part from Occidental sources. Like Narcissus, Western enthusiasts failed to recognize their own reflection in the mirror being held out to them' (p. 140). Scharf's narrative has great force, perhaps because, for once, interpretation is not something done to them by us, but something they are doing for themselves in response to us.

By contrast, Hallisey follows Said quite closely, except that he evidently has considerable sympathy for the early Pali scholars he describes. He shows how, as the Pali texts became better known, the more modern vernacular sources were gradually marginalized, until we have the situation today, when the latter are barely studied at all. This has led to an unbalanced view of the Theravada tradition, further exacerbated by the rationalist and anti-ritualist assumptions of influential early interpreters such as Rhys Davids. But unlike in Scharf's account, Theravada Buddhists themselves seem to have played little role in determining how their texts were read. Perhaps it is true to say that, conceptually speaking, Dharmapala, unlike his Japanese counterparts, followed where the traditional Buddhologists led. Hallisey is at pains to point out that 'we should avoid attributing too much force to the "West" (or Christianity, or Protestant assumptions, or Orientalism)' (p. 48), since very similar changes happened in Thailand without colonialism or missionaries. But the fact remains that his story is about Westerners and how they interpreted Buddhism.

The same is true of Lopez's chapter about Tibet. He looks briefly at the remarkable Jesuit Desideri, who lived in Lhasa for five years from 1716; the first Tibetologist, Csoma da Körös, a Hungarian nationalist looking for the origin of his people; and the arch-Orientalist L. Austine Waddell, who spent ten years in Sikkim and wrote the highly influential *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism* (1895). Waddell's purple passages denouncing Lamaist ritualism, as well as his obsession with penetrating the interior, which he accomplished when he accompanied Younghusband's expeditionary force to Lhasa in 1905, make him the perfect illustration of the Saidian thesis. Any of these three emblematic figures could have been treated in a separate chapter devoted to themselves (and perhaps they receive their just deserts in Lopez's forthcoming *Prisoners of Shangri-la*). But Lopez concludes with an evocative account of his own personal search for Tibetan authenticity at the feet of a lama in a reconstituted Gelukpa monastery in south India. He ends by explaining how the ritual of leave-taking from a lama simulates an interrupted lesson, so that there is always the possibility of return and continuation. This is a rather more open-ended and morally neutral conclusion than he provides at the end of the introduction. There he denies that the aim is to assign blame or to suggest alternative ways of doing Buddhist studies: rather it is to historicize, to put forward genealogies, and, quoting Robert Young's *White Mythologies* (Routledge 1990), to suggest that somehow theory and historical material can be presented so as to invert 'dominant structures of knowledge and power'.

DAVID N. GELLNER

EDWIN ARDENER, *Kingdom on Mount Cameroon: Studies in the History of the Cameroon Coast, 1500–1970* (ed. Shirley Ardener), Oxford: Berghahn Books 1996. xx, 380 pp., Appendixes, Bibliography, Index, Maps, Plates, Line Drawings. £40.00.

This volume, the first in a series on Cameroon Studies published by Berghahn Books, brings together a number of papers by the late Edwin Ardener. As the title, *Kingdom on Mount Cameroon*, suggests, the papers emanate from Ardener's time among the Bakweri, who inhabit the slopes of this dormant volcano in south-west Cameroon. There are seven chapters, three of which have been published before and appear here in more or less identical form as the original. A fourth chapter has also been published previously but has a note written by Ardener subsequent to its original publication prefaced to it. The other items consist of a chapter extracted from an earlier book and two previously unpublished papers, one from a conference. There is also an introduction by Shirley Ardener.

The sub-title of the book, *Studies in the History of the Cameroon Coast, 1500–1970*, suggests a focus on historical work, something which in a narrow sense is only true of some of the papers. The opening chapter, 'Documentary and Linguistic Evidence for the Rise of the Trading Polities between Rio del Rey and Cameroons 1500–1650' (originally published in 1968), is an ultimately successful attempt to bring some order to the contradictions found in the early historical records of the coastal area west



of Mount Cameroon up to what is now the border with Nigeria. Part of the problem arises in the contradictory or confused use of toponyms and ethnonyms, and the inaccurate or vague mappings of the area found in the records of early European traders. These early sources, together with what appears to be the first recorded word-list of local languages, are carefully considered by Ardener in clearing the way for more detailed historical investigation of the area and issues examined here.

'Kingdom on Mount Cameroon: The Bakweri and the Europeans', written in 1969, continues the historical view. The longest single contribution to the volume, it examines the period from the mid- to late nineteenth century and is based partly on the writings of the missionary Merrick (including a long extract from the original), and partly on German records never published in English, as well as on Ardener's own original research among the Bakweri. One of its key aspects is the previously little-known story of how the Bakweri denied the Germans access to the mountain for over a decade.

The third chapter, 'The Plantations and the People of Victoria Division', was originally published in 1960 and has long been out of print. It deals mainly with the establishment of the plantations which continue to play a large role in the area, though less from historical than from the social, demographic, and economic perspectives, in particular the effects of immigration and movement on marriage and the growth of prostitution. The themes of marriage, divorce, and fertility are also investigated in some detail in the following chapter, 'Bakweri Fertility and Marriage', originally a 1958 conference paper. This work is based on a survey of a substantial sample of Bakweri women and provides statistical evidence for the instability of marriage and for the correlation between promiscuity and low fertility among the Bakweri.

The next two chapters, 'Witchcraft, Economics and the Continuity of Belief' (originally published in 1970) and 'The Bakweri Elephant Dance' (published in 1959), document different aspects of Bakweri culture and how these have been maintained or adapted in the face of changes in the surrounding world and—in the case of the former—used to understand these changes. The final chapter of the book, 'The Boundaries of Kamerun and Cameroon', is a composite piece. The main paper was published in 1967 under the title 'The Nature of the Reunification of Cameroon'. In its present form, a note originally given as seminar presentation in 1968 is included as a foundation for the main paper. Together the two constitute a short political and economic history of West Cameroon, the first section looking at the period from the mid-1800s to the end of the German period, the second looking at the immediate post-independence period.

The first of the four appendixes is a short piece jointly written by Edwin and Shirley Ardener on 'The Wovea Islanders of Ambas Bay', first published in 1958. At that time, the Wovea people numbered about 550; it is not known whether this number has increased or decreased in the interval, though Shirley Ardener reports in a post-script that they have now all moved to the mainland. The second appendix, compiled again by both Ardeners, is an annotated chronology of historical events on the Cameroon coast, covering the period 1474–1887. The third and fourth appendixes consist of the second and third collections of bibliographical material (the first being references to citations in the text), which list respectively Edwin Ardener's writings on

Africa and suggested further readings to cover the period since Ardener's work (i.e. from 1970 to the present).

One can always find things to complain about, however minor, in reviewing any book. (I refrain here from critical comment on Ardener's work, as much of this debate will already be familiar to *JASO* readers.) Here, for example, the 'History' of the subtitle accurately reflects the book's contents only if one applies a very broad interpretation to that word—or if we construe the entire book as a historical document, for its gathering together of a set of Ardener's writings. Nevertheless, *Kingdom on Mount Cameroon* is an interesting and highly readable collection of papers. It is of obvious interest to those who follow Ardener's work in its presentation of previously unpublished work, as well as to those concerned with the coastal region of Cameroon. It should also attract those with a more general view of developments in Africa. Individual papers will, of course, have broader appeal, according to the interests of respective readers.

BRUCE CONNELL

IAN FOWLER and DAVID ZEITLYN (eds.), *African Crossroads: Intersections between History and Anthropology in Cameroon*, Providence and Oxford: Berghahn Books 1996. xxvii, 213 pp., Bibliography, Index. £30.00/£11.95.

*African Crossroads: Intersections between History and Anthropology in Cameroon* is the second volume published by Berghahn in their Cameroon Studies series. It is one of three collections of papers edited by Ian Fowler and David Zeitlyn commemorating the contribution E. M. Chilver has made to the study of Cameroon, the other two being special issues of *Paideuma* (Vol. XLI) and *JASO* (Vol. XXVI no. 1). Readers of *JASO* will therefore already be familiar with biographical and bibliographical aspects of Sally Chilver's career as a Cameroonist, so we can pass here directly to the contributions others have made in her honour in this volume.

Apart from Shirley Ardener's Foreword and the Preface and Introduction, both by Ian Fowler and David Zeitlyn, there are nine papers. These focus either on aspects of the political and cultural history and anthropology of the geographical region of Cameroon (i.e., the Grassfields, in western Cameroon) or on the historical era (the early twentieth-century German colonial period) to which Chilver devoted most of her attention. With respect to content, they can be loosely divided into three themes: German contact, ethnicity and identity, and religion.

The theme of ethnic identity and its development is taken up first by Fowler and Zeitlyn, in their introductory essay 'The Grassfields and the Tikar', which presents the 'Tikar problem' as an illustration of the complex issue of the emergence of ethnicity. The Tikar problem is identified here as the manner in which the Tikar connection with the Grassfields came about—i.e., the fact that several Grassfields groups claim a Tikar origin, despite their language and culture being only remotely related to those of the Tikar. But, as is clear from Zeitlyn's contribution to the *JASO* collection (an epitome

of Mohammadou's work on Tikar origins), the Tikar question goes well beyond the Grassfields claims. In fact, Tikar identity appears to be relatively recent, an amalgam of different groups originating in the region to the north and east of the Grassfields. The issue is complicated further by the fact that more recently a number of Tikar sub-groups have merged with the Kwanja, as the latter moved into what was formerly Tikar territory and now see themselves to some extent as Kwanja. The 'Tikar problem', then, is indeed still a topic with many unresolved issues, one whose investigation will shed considerable light on questions of merging and emerging ethnicities, as well as answering questions of a historical nature. It illustrates well the fluid nature of ethnicity in this part of Africa, and the various discussions of the Tikar and their identity found in these tributes to Chilver serve as excellent case-studies of this more general question.

The question of ethnicity and identity is further explored in Richard Fardon's contribution 'The Person, Ethnicity and the Problem of Identity in West Africa', a chapter which examines the Bali-Nyonga, who are geographically of the Grassfields but ethnically of Chamba origin, or at least from a more northern, Adamawa region. Part of Fardon's purpose is to explore how and why they came to be identified as Chamba.

Four papers have a common theme in their treatment of the German colonial period: Ralph Austen's 'Mythic Transformation and Historical Continuity: The Duala of Cameroon and German Colonialism' (Chapter 3); Robert O'Neil's 'Imperialisms at the Century's End: Moghamo Relations with Bali-Nyonga and Germany' (Chapter 4); Jean-Pierre Warnier's 'Rebellion, Defection and the Position of the Male Cadets' (Chapter 6); and Christaud Geary's contribution, 'Political Dress: German-style Military Attire and Colonial Politics in Bamum' (Chapter 9). These four 'German' chapters are, of course, not isolated thematically from the rest of the book. O'Neil's contribution, for example, complements Fardon's examination of the Bali-Nyonga, while Fardon himself makes reference to the position of the Bali-Nyonga as agents for German interests.

Verkijika Fanso and Bongfen Chem-Langhêê's chapter, 'Nso' Military Organization and Warfare in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', gives a good sense of the militaristic aspect of Grassfields history. This is a theme also treated by O'Neil, but he concentrates not so much on the German campaigns as the previous period, providing insight into how the military strength of the Nso' evolved and operated.

As its title indicates, Philip Burnham's contribution, 'Political Relations on the Eastern Marches of Adamawa in the Late Nineteenth Century', fits neither the temporal nor the spatial aspects mentioned above, but in a sense is all the more interesting for this, as it helps form a frame for the other papers.

Two other contributions, both dealing with religion, round out the collection. Like other contributions to the book, Joseph Bandzem on 'Catholicism and Nso' Traditional Beliefs' and Claude Tardits' 'Pursue to Attain: A Royal Religion', both rely on documentary evidence from the period. Both also concentrate on individuals and their experiences, though Tardits' primary focus is on Njoya, the paramount ruler of the Bamoun, and his dominant influence in attempting to create a particularly Bamoun form of Islam. Put side by side the two papers make interesting comparative reading, for while the Nso' leaned towards Christianity, the religion of the incoming colonizers,

Njoya favoured a form of Islam which, despite its ultimate foreignness and colonizing status, was seen as African.

In short, for those who are new or relatively new to Cameroon studies, this collection presents a gateway into an enticing world. For Cameroonists, the papers offered here will contribute to debate and discussion that is no doubt already familiar, but not settled. Many of the contributions in the present collection are more theoretical in nature than those in the other two commemorative volumes, and as such this book may appeal more to the involved social anthropologist than to the 'academic tourist'. None the less, there is much here for those less theoretically inclined, and the volume should interest a wide range of readers.

BRUCE CONNELL

MARCIA C. INHORN, *Infertility and Patriarchy: The Cultural Politics of Gender and Family Life in Egypt*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1996. x, 296 pp., References, Illustrations, Index. No price given.

*Infertility and Patriarchy* is a companion volume to Inhorn's *Quest for Conception: Gender, Infertility, and Egyptian Medical Traditions* (1994). Together these books explore the broad socio-political contours of reproduction and family life in Egypt. Readers learn how long-standing conditions like the ease with which Egyptian men may marry other women (either after divorce or via polygyny), as well as more recent phenomena, such as the large number of peasants migrating to the cities and the domestification of migrant women's lives, work together to render the situation of infertile women particularly difficult. Inhorn describes the many psychosocial, social-structural, and political-economic factors which make children so much desired by Egyptian women and their families. As in *Quest*, she begins each chapter with an extended account of an individual woman's experience of infertility, these vignettes portraying vividly the profound disappointment and often marked stigmatization of women who do not bear children.

While in *Quest* Inhorn focused on the ethnogynaecological and biogynaecological treatments these women seek, in this volume she provides a nuanced analysis of infertile women's relationships with their husbands, extended families, and neighbours. The most interesting findings of her semi-structured interviews with eighty-nine infertile and ninety fertile women are found in her chapter on 'Conjugal Connectivity'. Inhorn describes the ideal 'arranged marriage', and the expectations that 'love marriages' do not last and that all marriages require children 'to tie' husbands to their wives. She then describes 'marital realities' which challenge these assumptions. 'Despite women's conviction that children are the key ingredient in securing the future of a marriage', Inhorn argues that 'having children in many cases may be more problematic and stressful to the marital relationship than having none at all' (p. 126). This is particularly true for the urban poor, who often lack adequate resources to support large families. Inhorn found that the infertile marriages in her sample were among the

most stable. 'The emotional enmeshment of these men and women, the friendships that they forge with one another, and their ability to withstand familial and other external pressure all speak to the strength of their marital bonds' (*ibid.*). Despite the fact that 'infertile marriages are viewed by Egyptians as diverging so considerably from marital ideals that they are assumed to be almost inherently unsuccessful', 46 per cent of the infertile women Inhorn surveyed had marriages with what she terms 'minimum replacement potential' (p. 127). A number of factors that seem to increase the likelihood of success include marriage to a cousin or a Coptic Christian (Copts do not allow divorce or polygyny), or if the couple knew each other before the wedding and had married for love. Success was also greater if the husband was particularly religious and therefore more likely to view infertility as 'from God', or if, as in 40 per cent of her cases, the man had been diagnosed with an infertility problem. In the latter cases, women often protect their husbands by taking the blame. The book is illustrated with wonderful photographs of the people Inhorn describes. Of particular note—given the rarity of such images of Arabs—are the captivating portraits of loving, companionate marriages.

In a chapter on 'Relatives' Response' Inhorn describes the diametrically opposed positions of men's and women's families with regard to 'stigma management'. Members of the man's family, particularly his mother and sisters, are likely actively to stigmatize the infertile wife living in their midst and urge the husband to try a different wife in order to contribute to the patrilineage. In contrast, the woman's family is likely to be supportive and to help her try to 'manage' the stigma through control of information.

Inhorn also discusses alternatives to raising a child of one's own. Adoption is forbidden in Islam and culturally unacceptable. Instead, infertile women are often offered a child of their fertile siblings to raise, or are presented with abandoned newborns to foster. Despite these apparent opportunities, Inhorn reports that long-term fostering arrangements, although practised among the middle and upper classes, are rare among the urban poor. In the cases of nieces and nephews, infertile couples know that the parents will probably eventually renege, and that in the cases of abandoned babies, it is assumed that such children were born illegitimately and are therefore tainted with the bad blood of their immoral parents. As a result, poor infertile couples usually decline such offers. Nevertheless, some infertile women enjoy close, nurturing relationships with their siblings' children. This is sometimes true for neighbours' children too, despite the widespread fear that infertile women cannot help but covet the progeny of others and therefore cast the evil eye upon them.

For the most part, Inhorn's discussion of relationships among neighbours portrays a situation of extreme alienation and isolation. As in the case of relationships with in-laws, she focuses on how neighbourhood women 'use their social networks in ways that serve to oppress other women' (p. 206). Infertile women are often subjected to 'malicious comments, criticism, and "dirty looks"' as well as 'actual physical avoidance' (pp. 213–14). One positive effect of gossip is that most infertile women learn of other women with the condition, which can help alleviate their sense of aloneness and provide them with 'therapeutic companions' as they seek treatment for their problem (p. 209).

Despite its ethnographic richness, Inhorn's discussion of infertile women's responses to community ostracism is somewhat wide of the mark. In this section she

continues to apply Goffman's model of stigma, asserting that 'women may choose two contrasting stigma management styles'—'assimilation' (which she uses interchangeably with 'passing') or 'resistance' (p. 219). Although some infertile women may 'work diligently at gaining acceptance' by 'ingratiating themselves with their "normal" neighbours', this cannot be considered 'passing', since their childlessness cannot be hidden or disguised. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how the more common strategy of 'self-isolation from the community of "normal" women' constitutes 'resistance'. Inhorn reports that most infertile women 'tend to shy away from children as much as possible—and even avoid looking at children as they pass by' so as not to be blamed for any ill-fortune that may beset them. Such behaviour seems less a form of 'resistance' to the community's 'attempts to dehumanize them' (p. 221) than chilling evidence of the success of such attempts.

As in Inhorn's earlier work, the clear prose and well-defined organization of *Infertility and Patriarchy* makes this an ideal text for undergraduate teaching in anthropology, Middle Eastern studies, and women's studies. Although Inhorn does not make explicit comparisons with family life and the experience of infertility elsewhere, the material lends itself to such an exercise. One is bound to be enriched by this compelling account of women as they cope with the barrenness and poverty in their lives.

LINDA L. LAYNE

CAROL LADERMAN and MARINA ROSEMAN (eds.), *The Performance of Healing*, London and New York: Routledge 1996. v, 330 pp., References, Illustrations, Index. £40.00/£13.99.

This collection of articles brings together an impressive array of north American cultural anthropologists, most of whom are already well known for substantial monographs related to rituals of healing. Some of the papers stick close to the ground and eschew global comparisons, but nearly all of them demonstrate a high level of linguistic and ethnographic competence in their detailed analyses of particular healing rites or performances.

Chapters 1 and 2, 'Initiating Performance: The Story of Chini, a Korean Shaman', by Laurel Kendall, and 'On Failure and Performance: Throwing the Medium out of the Seance', by Edward Schieffelin, give detailed accounts of an attempt to initiate a new shaman and of an agonistic mediumistic display respectively. Both show a very high level of ethnographic reporting (helped by the presence of a film crew in Kendall's case), and both, interestingly, concentrate on cases where the performance fails. Schieffelin draws more out of this, perhaps, since in the case of Kendall's shaman the possibility remains open that further initiatory sessions will succeed in transforming the candidate into a shaman. Schieffelin also draws out very sensitively the way in which, for the Kalula, what is essential is that the medium is *not* putting on a performance: if they judge that he is, rather than acting as an authentic medium for the spirits' voices, by that token he is not successful.

Thomas J. Csordas argues, as he has elsewhere, for embodiment as a paradigm for grasping the transformations that ritual performances bring about: 'the moods and motivations evoked [through embodiment] in ritual performances', he concludes with an echo of Geertz, 'are indeed uniquely realistic' (p. 108). His ethnographic material comes from American Charismatic Catholics, who, by the late 1960s, evidently began to feel that they too could have a transforming personal relationship with Jesus.

Paul Stoller gives a personal account of his own fieldwork odyssey and how it took him five trips and eight years to begin to concentrate on the sounds rather than sights of Songhay society. Of all the healing 'texts' described in the volume, Charles L. Briggs' analysis of a Warao (Venezuela) ritual mobilizes the most sophisticated battery of linguistic concepts to try and explain its effectiveness. Janet Hoskins' paper on the Kodi of eastern Indonesia is the only one (apart from the last chapter) to focus on the tensions between biomedical and 'folk' views of the same afflictions, with three contrasting case-studies to bring out how differently defined maladies receive different public or private treatment. The two editors, Laderman and Roseman, both write detailed ethnographic accounts of specific healing performances in Malaysia, each alike convincing in its accumulation of observation. There is also a piece by Robert Desjarlais on the shaman he worked with in Helambu, Nepal (see his *Body and Emotion*, University of Philadelphia Press 1992). Desjarlais describes the shaman's attempts to use ritual and performance to mobilize the senses of the patient and bring back his or her lost soul. He is the only contributing author who is content to record of his own performance as an anthropologist observing a healer: 'As Meme mumbles his chant...one catches snippets of meaning' (p. 158).

The final chapter is very different from those that precede it. 'Dying as a Medical Performance: The Oncologist as Charon', by Megan Biesele and Robbie Davis-Floyd, describes the last months of an American woman they call Margaret Bell, her feelings about cancer, death, and being a burden, as well as those of her doctor and family members. The key moment is when the oncologist decides that there is no more to be done and uses the full authority of biomedicine to bring home the message that now she should prepare for death. Since Biesele also works with the !Kung of the Kalahari, the article ends with a comparison of holistic Western attitudes and those of the !Kung healer: the latter, when told Margaret Bell's story, insists that he would have tried to cure her to the last and that he would have cured her, rather than telling her to prepare for the end.

Despite a common concern with performance and healing, these papers go off in surprisingly different directions. This is surely a tribute to the richness of the ethnography presented and the variety of questions that the contributors pose it. Briggs notes that anthropologists have tended to explain the effectiveness of healing rituals either in terms of the manner of their presentation or through the wider social and political context, and he proposes that the best kind of analysis would transcend this dichotomy (p. 225). It is no criticism of this interesting and thought-provoking volume that the papers here do not do this, and it surely would have been pointless for the editors to insist that the contributors try to do so.

DAVID N. GELLNER

JAMES FENTRESS and CHRIS WICKHAM, *Social Memory*, Oxford: Blackwell 1992. xii, 229 pp., Index. £35.00/£11.95.

This is an accessible and attractive introduction to the study of the social production of historical memories. It deserves a prominent place on all reading-lists on 'anthropology and history'. The collaboration of a historian and an anthropologist, it usefully summarizes the main issues and main theorists, avoiding the idiosyncrasies of works such as Connerton's *How Societies Remember* (CUP 1989). It uses a good number of ethnographic and historical examples to illustrate its theme that social memory is above all an activity which must be worked at hard, and the authors show that, equally often, societies put as much effort into forgetting the past. The examples, which run from 'The Song of Roland' to the Mafia, and Sicilian national identity to the working class in Turin, are presented in sufficient detail for the student to see and follow how collective memory should be understood in practical terms. The only drawback of the book is its very Christocentric and Eurocentric focus (betrayed by the authors' reference to Judaism as a 'special case' in their guide to further reading). Nothing is said about historical memory in other literate traditions, and the few references to anthropological work on non-literate societies are fairly perfunctory, adding little to the general argument. Despite this over-restricted comparative range, the book manages successfully to straddle the divide between, on the one hand, providing an introduction to the subject for students, and on the other, giving a stimulus to anthropologists interested in the past—and who, these days, is not?

DAVID N. GELLNER

LUKAS WERTH, *Von Göttinnen und ihren Menschen: die Vagri, Vaganten Südindiens*, Berlin: Das Arabische Buch 1996. xvi, 435pp., Plates, Bibliography, Index. No price given.

The Vagri are a low-status group of south and west India, found in an area stretching from Gujarat to Tamil Nadu. The present book is a very comprehensive and largely ethnographic account of the Tamil Nadu group, based on the author's doctoral fieldwork. Following a mainly theoretical introduction, successive chapters deal with the Vagri's status and relations with the outside world, their occupations and livelihoods, social organization from moieties, clans and lineages down to the family, birth, marriage and death ritual, and the sacrifices made to the gods and the myths associated with them.

One of the strengths of this book is the way in which the author consistently seeks to place the Vagri in the wider social context in Tamil Nadu, to which are added comparisons with Vagri in other parts of southern India, many of which the author has also visited. Thus although the Vagri are low in status like many other groups throughout India, unlike the Untouchables they are marginal to the caste system, in the sense that they have no occupation necessary to it. Rather, they live as hunters, beggars, and



scavengers, and by selling religious amulets and medicines. They do not perform any ritual services for other castes, nor will other castes ordinarily serve them. The roles of men and women are somewhat atypical for a caste, and widows are not at all inauspicious. None the less, their independence is not of such a quality that they are likely to be classed with the tribes, living as they do mostly on the fringes of caste settlements, and Werth points out that there is no evidence of any connections with the Gypsies, who in many ways have a similar life-style. Their position is perhaps best summed up by saying that 'we are concerned here...not with a fundamentally different ideology from that of the surrounding society but rather with a different emphasis, a stress on other aspects of the same preconceptions' (p. 300, my translation).

In general, however, it is true to say (p. 398) that kinship is more important than caste to the Vagri. The Vagri are unusual in south India in having, in Louis Dumont's terms, a global model of affinal exchange, with moieties associated with those who sacrifice buffaloes and goats respectively being the overarching units in affinal alliance. However, there are also clans and lineages, which locally may be more important, such that three clans may intermarry freely without regard to the moiety system. Marriage preferences envisage the direct exchange of cross cousins and also provide for elder sister's daughter's marriage, as in south India generally. The kinship terminology is conventionally south Indian (though, like the Vagri language, linguistically Indo-Aryan), and there are none of the alternating generation equations one finds with the tribes of central India.

Theoretically, the treatment is, in the broad sense, structuralist, and it makes absolutely no concessions to postmodernist developments—in that sense, it is refreshingly free from any sense of theoretical crisis. Werth supports Dumont against his critics, though he expresses some reservations regarding Michael Moffat, one of Dumont's supporters, who also worked among low-status groups in Tamil Nadu and purported to show that they shared the Brahmanical model of caste without being satisfied with their own place within it (*An Untouchable Community in South India*, Princeton University Press 1979). On kinship, Werth is also critical of Thomas Trautmann (*Dravidian Kinship*, Cambridge University Press 1980), though he makes extensive use of the writings of both Rodney Needham and Anthony Good (the latter applied Needham's key ideas to Tamil Nadu material—*The Female Bridegroom*, Clarendon Press 1991). Needham's ideas reappear at the end in the context of dual symbolic classification, although Werth also shows that the opposition between buffalo- and goat-sacrificers is a hierarchical one (in the manner of Dumont's ideas), since sacrificial occasions held by the former offer both animals, those of the latter only the one. There is also a distinction between the creator god Dadaji, who stands for unity, and the goddesses who are linked to the respective groups of the sacrificers, who stand for the latter's particularity.

All in all, this is a very full account of an interesting, because rather marginal, group, which repays repeated study for both its ethnographic details and theoretical implications.

ROBERT PARKIN

LINDA STONE, *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*, Boulder: Westview Press 1997. xii, 292pp., Plates, Figures, Index, References, Glossary. No price given.

While the study of kinship persists in anthropology, perspectives change: currently, personhood, gender, and even identity are more important than formal analyses, and a Schneiderian emphasis on indigenous representations of relationships is very much to the fore. None the less, there is a case for giving students the basics at an early stage, if only so that they can learn to deconstruct them, where appropriate, later. Linda Stone's book is clearly intended to fall into the category of an introductory book, though it does not really achieve what its title suggests—a thoroughgoing account of the significance of gender to kinship and vice versa. This is not to say it is in any way unworthy or unhelpful. There are goodish chapters on descent (successively patrilineal, matrilineal, and double plus cognatic) and marriage, and the chapters on non-human primate societies and the new reproductive technologies are particularly useful. The pattern in most chapters tends to be one of giving basic information on the anthropology of kinship followed by an attempt to show the importance of gender to it. Unfortunately, the two segments tend to lack either depth or breadth, and the accounts given are often rather perfunctory. More significantly, perhaps, no really convincing attempt is made to write about kinship from the perspective of gender studies in a unifying way. As a result, we end up too often with a halfway house that is not totally satisfying from either point of view. A lot of the book is also taken up with nine case-studies, which read well on the whole but are often drawn out far too much for what are clearly intended to be illustrative materials in an introductory book—is the twenty-page account of the Julio-Claudian emperors in ancient Rome really justified, especially given that their peccadilloes can hardly be said to typify Roman society generally?

Descent is seen mainly as a matter of groups, and although the notion of category is mentioned, it is not developed: this is one area where the reader must call on prior knowledge. One unusual feature is that the author distinguishes cognatic from bilateral descent with reference to the notion of groups, which are defined as being present in the former case but not the latter. Kinship terminology is expressly left aside. The weakest passage is probably that dealing with exogamy on pp. 51–2, where a hypothetical example involving exogamous affinal relations between the Serbs and Muslims of the former Yugoslavia is introduced as a way of resolving conflict between them. Not only is exogamy between (rather than within) ethnic groups unusual to the point of rarity, this approach also ignores the fact that affinal alliance through exogamy often goes along with hostility in other contexts (however, this point is made later, p. 210).

These imperfections aside, there is little here that would mislead the student, who would undoubtedly benefit from reading the book overall. It is just that it is in perpetual danger of falling between two the stools of kinship and gender, dealing with neither totally adequately. One is left with the impression that the definitive book on the merging of these two areas of anthropology still has to be written.

ROBERT PARKIN

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