

kam kein Mensch zu Tode, und das können wenige andere Länder sagen, in denen es zu politischen Umstürzen gekommen war. Auch hier steht außer Diskussion, dass das Militär den Weg zu demokratischen Wahlen jedoch wieder freigeben muss. Dafür ist Feyerabend auffällig zurückhaltend, wenn es darum geht, das neokolonialistische australische Engagement auf den Salomonen-Inseln (180) zu beschreiben. Dass Australien nun schon seit fast zehn Jahren mit einer großen Zahl an Soldaten, Polizisten und Verwaltungsbeamten in der Inselgruppe, offiziell im Rahmen einer Hilfsmission, agiert, und sich die Inseln de facto einverleibt hat, bleibt unerwähnt. Der Verdacht entsteht, dass der Autor da gerne ein Auge zudrückt. Laufend sind Sätze eingestreut, deren Informationsgehalt gegen Null tendiert: “Die Gewinne waren nach europäischen Maßstäben nicht zukunftssträftig angelegt” (174) meint der Autor, um darzulegen, dass der Inselstaat Nauru seine durch Phosphatabbau erworbenen Reichtümer verspekuliert hat. In wohl allen Kulturen hat man, wenn man die angelegten Gelder verspekuliert, diese nicht sinnvoll und zukunftssträftig angelegt. Dass der chilenische Diktator Pinochet seine Liebe zur Osterinsel nicht wegen der Osterinsulaner entdeckte (162), sondern strategische und ökonomische Aspekte im Vordergrund sah, wäre zumindest erwähnenswert gewesen. Und dass Amerikanisch-Samoa, welches der Autor fälschlich als Ostsamoa bezeichnet (132), nicht amerikanisches Staatsgebiet ist, sondern nur ein “Unincorporated Territory”, fällt bei den vielen Fehlern, die das Buch laufend durchziehen, schon gar nicht mehr ins Gewicht.

Hier in diesem Länderteil wird klar, dass der Autor die Region nicht kennt und sich nur oberflächlich eingelesen hat. Die Infos hätten auch aus der Bild-Zeitung stammen können, und auf diesem Niveau befinden sich auch Teile des Textes. Dem Ganzen den Untertitel “Ozean der Zukunft” zu geben, wird nur im letzten Kapitel nachvollziehbar, und da geht es fast ausschließlich um das aufstrebende China. Damit ist der Untertitel irreführend, denn die pazifischen Inseln, also Ozeanien im engeren Sinn, kommt da gar nicht vor, und schon gar nicht als Zukunftsregion. Das wäre bei steigender Abwanderung, zunehmender Isolation und permanenten politischen Problemen auch unbegründet. Der Titel dieses Buches wäre wohl besser gewesen: “Der Pazifik und Chinas Aufstieg in der Region”. Man muss dem Autor zugestehen, dass er sehr viele Dinge anspricht, aber kaum welche argumentativ und schlussfolgernd zu einem Ende bringt. Aber wer dieses Buch kauft, will ohnehin nicht eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme oder gar Erklärungen, sondern sucht einen Zugang zu einer spannenden und von großer Vielfalt geprägten Region, in der es viel zu entdecken gibt. Diese Vielfältigkeit vermittelt der Autor auch. Es ist dem Verlag der Vorwurf zu machen, einem Autor hier ein Forum gegeben zu haben, welches er nicht verdient. Ein so schön gestaltetes Buch von so begrenzter inhaltlicher Seriosität, das tut bei all dem Aufwand weh. Es bleiben die im ersten Teil vermittelten Schnurren, die sich in vielen Fällen interessant lesen, die so manche spannende Information bereithalten, aber das ist es eben auch schon. Wer sich vorstellungsmäßig in eine Seglerkneipe versetzen

lassen will und dort den Geschichten der braungebrannten “Salzwasserbuckeln” lauschen möchte, die von diesen, nur bedingt zusammenhängend und Höhepunkte aneinanderreihend einem Publikum präsentiert werden, der ist mit diesem Buch jedoch gut bedient.

Hermann Mückler

Fowler, Ian, and Verkijika G. Fanso (eds.): *Encounter, Transformation, and Identity: Peoples of the Western Cameroon Borderlands, 1891–2000*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. 253 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-336-7. (Cameroon Studies, 8) Price: \$ 95.00

At its core, Ian Fowler and Verkijika Fanso’s edited volume is a tribute to the tireless efforts of Shirley Ardener, an esteemed scholar and mentor, who, along with her husband Edwin Ardener, was inspired by the idea, “a people without memory of its past is doomed to live with mistakes forever” (xix). While the history of anthropology is replete with examples of researchers appropriating narratives and presenting their “findings” in whichever arena is deemed most suitable, the Ardeners have strived to collaborate as much as possible with Cameroonian researchers, the Cameroon National Archives at Buea being perhaps crowning jewel in their collaborative efforts. Each author contributing to this volume, whether tangentially or directly, has been influenced by the guiding hand of Shirley Ardener. Incredibly, her commitment to research, both independent and collaborative, in Cameroon, continues more than fifty years after first arriving alongside Edwin Ardener.

The first chapter is a previously unpublished work by Edwin Ardener that offers rich ethnographic details on the peoples and cultures of West Cameroon, largely based on reports formulated by British administrators. Through his piece, Edwin Ardener suggests that the “feedback” from scholars, researchers, and colonial administrators was well under way during the earliest of encounters with locals and somewhere within this “feedback process” peoples emerged. That being said, Edwin Ardener is careful to place agency within the hands of the peoples for they are not merely written on, they have in turn written back and have begun a correspondence with those scholars, authors, and colonial administrators doing the writing. Sally Chilver’s contribution continues the German colonial thread with excerpts from the life and times of Hermann Detzner, a contemplative German colonial officer who wore many hats, including that of ethnographer. Peter Geschiere’s ruminations on the tragedy that befalls the young and awkward German commander, *Freiherr* von Gravenreuth, during the Battle of Buea in 1891, resonates with the earlier chapters of Edwin Ardener and Sally Chilver. All three reflect the impact of the German colonial administration, not only on the historical narratives as presented by anthropologists but on the production of a regional identity amongst the communities inhabiting Western Cameroon.

This is made even more evident in Verkijika Fanso’s piece, in which he asserts that the struggle for autonomy by the Southern Cameroons begins far earlier than the

national debates of the 1940s. Soon after the partition of Kamerun, the rumblings of proto-nationalism could be heard, suggesting that the encounter between the peoples of Southern Cameroons and the earlier German colonial administration, while not solely responsible for the burgeoning nationalist movement, left an indelible mark on the region and its people. Peter Geschiere's contribution underscores the significance of violent encounters as part and parcel of history building and in the case of Buea the possibility that the violent encounters between the Germans and the local populations and the subsequent memories of this collision has mobilized the inhabitants of Buea to underscore their belonging to the exclusion of "strangers" infiltrating their "homeland."

The historical emphasis of Fowler and Fanso's edited volume continues with the contribution of Michael Mbapndah Ndobegang and Fiona Bowie's piece. It is with this chapter that Ndobegang and Bowie relocate the historical narrative of the encounter between the German trader and commercial agent Gustav Conrau and the Bangwa people to include the active engagement of subaltern voices that have previously been silenced in the attempt to create historical uniformity. Ute Röschenthaler engages in the re-emergence of a formerly "submerged" German colonial influence on the village of Nsanakang and offers a cautionary tale regarding the reappropriation of colonial knowledge and more importantly teasing out the idea that we as anthropologists all too often forget. There is not one story, no matter how often we try to paint an image but rather recollections and reconstructions of history that are continuously being recreated.

The second half of the edited volume turns its focus on gender, development, and globalization with Caroline Ifeka's challenging and provocative contribution in which she not only asserts that the fertility practices of Anyang women have changed, but suggests that female fertility is an essential component in challenging "old cosmologies of biological reproduction and metaphysical renewal" (152). Margaret Niger-Thomas offers a retrospective examination of the *ndem* association, a formerly powerful female association that memorialized female leaders with large statues in the Banyang and Ejagham communities. Her piece attributes particular factors to the decline in the importance of the *ndem* association as well as other Cameroonian cultural associations. Bowie complements her earlier coauthored piece with Michael Mbapndah Ndobegang to address the transformation of fieldwork from the proverbial small village to a multi-sited approach which spans the globe and offers a fresh perspective on how anthropologists must learn to confront the anxiety of incorporating movement into their fieldwork as well as coming to terms with the notion that the boundedness that has intrigued anthropologists and been utilized to create realities has never existed. The penultimate chapter and perhaps the most riveting chapter gives the reader food for thought as Ludovic Lado unpacks two clashing discourses; one centered on the imposition of the Catholic doctrine on African cultures, the other pointing to the necessity of the "Africanization" of the Eucharist. Lado challenges both discourses and aims to resist the

"essentialist temptation." Providing the final comments to this volume are the words of Joyce Endeley and Nalova Lyonga, who return to the common thread weaving together each contribution, the indomitable spirit of Shirley Ardener and the positive ramifications of her role as the "human seed" in fostering international networks vis-à-vis her work within and outside of Cameroon.

After turning the last page and closing the book, one is left with profound admiration for not only the wonderful contributions to this edited volume but to the legacy of Shirley Ardener, a woman, mentor, and researcher whose encounter with Cameroon in 1961 left her transformed and transfixed, to which we all owe a tremendous thanks.

Anne-Elise Keen

Geissler, Paul Wenzel, and Ruth Jane Prince: *The Land is Dying. Contingency, Creativity, and Conflict in Western Kenya.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. 423 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-481-4. (Epistemologies of Healing, 5) Price: \$ 95.00

If this book's title, from a Luo saying, suggests just one more volume of Afro-pessimism, it should not dissuade the curious reader. While not a light book, this is one for anyone seeking ethnographic understanding based on an equatorial African setting not to overlook.

Eastern Africa, and a Luo-speaking part of western Kenya in particular, have produced some exceptional collaborative anthropology in recent years. David William Cohen and E. S. Atieno Odhiambo have teamed up for historical and political anthropology, and Michael Dietler and spouse Ingrid Herbich for ethnography blended with archaeology. Now Wenzel Geissler and Ruth Prince, a pair who met, married, and reproduced in western Kenya themselves, have melded ethnography, public health research, and a locally grounded kind of philosophic reflection in a single, densely filled volume. It draws on the work of earlier ethnographers of Luo, some of them raised as Luo themselves; and it braids in personal recollections of married life and neighborly acquaintances with a rounded portrayal of their research site, and of Luo culture and society as represented there.

Physician-anthropologist Geissler, from Germany, and social anthropologist Prince, from England, resided between 2000 and 2002 (with other briefer visits before and after) in two homes in a rural community of about a thousand called Uhero, in Yimbo, an area severely hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, near the lake most still call Victoria. After local experience in international public health research, Geissler and Prince decided to move beyond its typical survey-dependent, sample-collecting methods, and well beyond its topical scope. The epidemic and its effects and local handling receive due attention in the book's course, but the authors refuse to let it take over their study, just as people in Uhero resist letting it take over their daily lives.

These are Kenyan Luo people up close and personal. The book's central, related themes are three, each with a physical dimension and an imaginative side too: touch, creative mixture, and the contingent potential for growth