

chenen von den Zuhörern ergänzt. Bei der Rede zum Osterfest sind es beiläufige Wortgeplänkel von Anwesenden, die die Rede gewissermaßen einleiten, bei der Rede zu einer Heilzeremonie erwecken die Zwischenrufe von Anwesenden den Eindruck, der Heiler müsse sich mit seiner Rede gegen diese Widerstände und Unterbrechungen durchsetzen und die Oberhand behalten. Diese Reden im rituellen Kontext zeigen damit einen wichtigen Punkt auf, den Deimel "Sprachklima" nennt. Für einen Nawésari gibt es keine endgültige, festgelegte Form, sondern er ist abhängig von den Zuhörern. So gibt Deimel zu bedenken, dass in den eigens für ihn gehaltenen Nawésari das gesagt wurde, von dem man glaubte, dass es für ihn wichtig sei. Dass es keine allgemeingültige Form eines Textes gibt, ist in Gesellschaften mit mündlich weitergegebener Tradition wohl üblich; für Menschen, die mit schriftlich tradiertem Kultur aufgewachsen sind, ist dies jedoch keine Selbstverständlichkeit.

Wiedergegeben sind die Texte auf Rarámuri, in einer Interlinearübersetzung und einer zusammenfassenden Übersetzung des Autors. Konfrontiert wird der Leser dabei mit dem Übersetzungsproblem. Zahlreiche Wortpartikel werden in älteren Übersetzungen als nicht übersetzbar bzw. bedeutungslos eingestuft – eine Auffassung, der Deimel widerspricht.

Auf den ersten Blick vermitteln die Nawésari – sei es im rituellen Kontext, sei es um den Ethnologen und seine Leser zu informieren – sehr wenig. Der Inhalt ist nicht spektakulär, denn es werden altbekannte Dinge wieder und wieder gesagt. Ältere Sprecher entwickeln in ihrer Laufbahn einen individuellen Redestil, der das Verständnis weiter erschwert, denn diese Reden werden in sehr hohem Tempo, aber in charakteristischer Weise vorgetragen. Deimel vermutet, dass nicht der Inhalt, sondern Art und Melodie des Vortrags von größerer Bedeutung sind, wobei er auf die lateinische Liturgie in der christlichen Tradition verweist, die ja auch für einen Großteil der Zuhörer unverständlich war. Ein vom Inhalt unverständlicher, aber stets in ähnlicher Form dargebotener Text mag für einen Zuhörer eine ganz eigene Wirkung entfalten, indem einzelne Wortteile oder Passagen Gefühle ausdrücken, Erinnerungen heraufbeschwören, Assoziationen auslösen o. Ä. Eine beliebte Redewendung in vielen Nawésari ist "risoa" (= in Schwere, leidend), die nach Deimel keine bedeutungslose Floskel, sondern Ausdruck eines Gefühls ist. Die Texte thematisieren nach seiner Auffassung "eine mit christlichen Elementen gefärbte indianische Leidensgeschichte" und "monotone Klage über die Unmöglichkeit des Entrinnens aus dem kollektiven Leiden".

Bei den Rarámuri ist es nicht üblich, erklärend und analysierend über religiöse Dinge zu sprechen. Deimel folgt diesem Usus, indem er die Texte im Rarámuri-Stil überliefert und dem Leser überlässt, was er daraus über eine Kultur lernen kann, die der Religion den Vorrang sogar vor materiellem Wohlbefinden einräumt. Die Feststellung, dass das "Eigentliche" in den Nawésari verborgen bleibt, legt nahe, es nicht zu suchen und

in analytischen Deutungen einzukreisen, sondern es als gegeben vorauszusetzen. Die Rarámuri geben sich mit der Tradition zufrieden, die ihnen religiöses Wissen nur uneigentlich und indirekt vermittelt und überliefert, aber letztlich auf diese Weise doch erschließt.

Brigitte Wiesenbauer

Diamond, Jared M.: Collapse. How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed. London: Penguin Books, 2006. 575 pp. ISBN 978-0-14-027951-1. Price: £ 9.99

Ringmar, Erik: The Mechanics of Modernity in Europe and East Asia. The Institutional Origins of Social Change and Stagnation. London: Routledge, 2005. 256 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-34254-4. (Routledge Explorations in Economic History, 29) Price: £ 85.00

Schmidt, Volker H. (ed.): Modernity at the Beginning of the 21st Century. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007. 232 pp. ISBN 978-1-84718-302-6. Price: € 47.84

The biologist Jared Diamond tackles in his book "Collapse" one of the most interesting questions of the history of mankind. Why do some societies destruct their own foundations? Why do rulers sometimes take decisions that lead to the destruction of their societies? What is the meaning of the results from the past for our contemporary world? Can we avoid an ecological collapse? This is not the first book of Diamond tackling many centuries of human history. His book "Guns, Germs, and Steel" (New York 1997) has dealt with no less than 13,000 years of human history. Diamond received the Pulitzer Prize for this book. Since then, the biologist is an academic superstar according to the Washington Post.

The book reviewed here discusses collapses of societies. The author asks for the conditions why some societies break down and why others survive even to major crises. Only by reading carefully the book, the reader learns that Diamond has reduced this question to the ecological collapse. According to Diamond, wrong decisions lead societies to failure. Diamond's main interest originates in the present and his comparative analysis should permit us to obtain information in order to avoid current or future catastrophes. The author discusses this topic without acknowledging disciplinary and territorial frontiers. A special trait of the book is that the author gets lost in personal anecdotic stories and the great variety of Diamond's examples contributes to the fact that the readers have difficulties to follow the argument.

The book is composed of a prologue and 16 chapters of different length. An important part of the book is devoted to notes where Diamond gives further literature on the different topics, and sometimes, lengthy digressions on cultures that he doesn't treat in the main text. Thus the book spans over the entire world. In the introduction, the author defines the "collapse" of a society: "By collapse, I mean a drastic decrease in human population size and/or political/economic/social complexity, over a considerable area, for an extended time" (3). Diamond

isolates five factors that may lead to a collapse of a society: ecological damages caused by men, climatic change, hostile neighbours, friendly commercial partners, and the more or less vague category of the behaviour of a society regarding its environmental problems. After lengthy chapters on the Easter Island, the Mayas, the Vikings, Rwanda, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, China, and Australia, the chapters 14, 15, and 16 are consecrated to the practical lessons that Diamond can deduce from this sort of global history. Under different headings, Diamond discusses in chapter 14, which is rather interesting, the following topics: “Road Map for Success,” “Failure to Anticipate,” “Failure to Perceive,” “Rational Bad Behaviour,” “Disastrous values,” “Other Irrational Failures,” “Unsuccessful Solutions,” and “Signs of Hope.” According to him, the failure to anticipate arrives when a problem is new or if people can no longer remember the already found solutions; the slowness of change may lead to deficits when the change is realized by different generations and if there is a missing knowledge on problematic situations; the missing endeavour to find a solution among elites if they can separate themselves from the rest of the society; and the last category is caused by the failure of efforts to find a solution when these efforts are too feeble or too expensive or when they arrive too late.

The positive aspect of the book is certainly that this is history in a true sense: Diamond has asked what we can learn for the present by studying the past. His book has received a large public interest not only in the USA and the UK but also in other major developed states where it has been translated. Nevertheless, historical scholars do not treat Diamond’s suggestions. In a highly specialized scientific landscape, each member of the academe has something to criticise in his book. Yet one should not oversee that Diamond acts as a cultural mediator who has tried to write a large synthesis that is important for scientific progress. Sure, some descriptions are superficial and can’t persuade. But “Collapse” is an important political book. It is important because of the presentation of rich materials in order to found the hypothesis suggested and because of a proceeding that has never forgotten the critical questions asked at the beginning of the book. Diamond displays what the possibilities are when we treat history in a comparative manner. Thus the book challenges us even if Clifford Geertz considered Diamond’s analysis as “remarkably thin” in a sociological manner.

The second book I wish to review here is Ringmar’s “The Mechanics of Modernity in Europe and East Asia.” This book is very interesting as it discusses the differences and similarities between two regions that challenge contemporary transformation studies and the wider public. Ringmar asks the question why “from the eighteenth century onwards, did some countries embark on a path of sustained economic growth while other stagnated?” (1). His conclusion is that institutions are important to attain a possible sustained development. This argument, as Ringmar displays in lengthy chapters on China, Japan, and Europe, has important implications

for development processes in other parts of the world. The institutions that Ringmar discusses are the following: institutions that reflect such as scientific academies and parliaments; go behind institutions that get things done such as entrepreneurship, property rights, and financial support; a third set of institutions are those that deal with conflicts such as self-regulating institutions (polite society, courts, power balance in the state and related to parties, and the *laissez-faire* economic system). These different factors are then described in their actual outcomes in Europe and China. In a second step, Ringmar compares the developments in these regions and adds Japan as a further example.

The book is challenging insofar as the author shows that change is brought about by institutional means and not by the efforts and abilities of individuals. Ringmar can demonstrate that many “institutions charged with reflective, entrepreneurial, and conflict resolving tasks existed in Europe, China, and Japan” (207). According to him, differences in institutionalization can explain the divergent developments of these societies. Change that in previous societies was down to individuals and good luck is in modern societies pursued by institutional means. This argument has important consequences for development models that Northern elites try to implement in Southern countries and for the globalization process that should have beneficial effects on poor countries. According to Ringmar, “globalisation will . . . help the poor while simultaneously reinforcing existing worldwide inequalities” (209). Ringmar underlines that the growing economy of China is based on “assuming the role of a proletarian in the new international division of labour. The Chinese are putting together cheap consumer goods for European and North American markets but they are responsible for little by means of market creation, research, or technological development” (209). According to Ringmar, the test for China is “whether the country would continue to change even without such external support . . . (international trade and foreign direct investments)” (209).

Ringmar argues in a concluding chapter that development models are plural but for him institutions such as reflection, entrepreneurship, and pluralism are important even if the institutionalized efforts might be quite different. As other scholars, he argues that there are no alternatives to modernity and that “we all face the challenge of making our societies more modern than they currently are” (215). Even if Ringmar’s approach is historical, the book is a pleasant and exciting reading for those interested in modernization and development.

The third book I would like to review here is a collection of articles, edited by Volker H. Schmidt. The book assembles 9 chapters including an introduction and a conclusion by the editor. Famous sociologists such as Mike Featherstone, Edward A. Tiryakian, and Alberto Martinelli have contributed to the volume. Volker H. Schmidt’s aim is to discuss the notion of modernity at the beginning of the 21st century. The authors analyze thus different new varieties or aspects of modernity. According to Schmidt: “In the past half-

century, modernity has not only penetrated its Western birthplace much more deeply; it has also spread to other world regions at a historically unprecedented pace. As a result, modernity is now a genuinely global phenomenon" (3).

The chapter of Hartmut Rosa is interesting insofar as he suggests a theory of acceleration according to three dimensions: "technological acceleration within society," "accelerations of society itself," and "the acceleration of the pace of life" (5). According to him, "'early' modernity is the phase during which a substantial change in society's basic structures required several generations. During 'classical' or 'high' modernity, this pace was reduced to one generation, and in the current phase of 'late' modernity, far-reaching change can occur in a matter of just a few decades, i.e., at intra-generational pace" (5).

The chapter of Tiryakian focuses on cultural aspects of modernity and modernization. According to his reading, the values espoused by Confucianism and Western modernity "overlap to a significant extent" (6) so that a dialogue should be opened in order to discuss the impact of culture and religion on development. The chapter of Martinelli focuses on the multiple modernities approach that "deserves praise for having heightened our sense of the variability of modern forms" (7). It is now common knowledge that the spread of modernity to other world regions has deeply influenced these "regions' cultural forms, social practices, and institutional arrangements" (7). In the last chapter, the editor of this volume argues that cultural aspects of modernity should not be overstated. Scholars should better analyze "the significance of structural forces" (7). Schmidt mentions that there is an absence of definition of modernity in the literature on multiple modernities. This means that there are still defenders of modernization theory such as Schmidt himself who argues that "*social structural and institutional* peculiarities of modern societies are ... ignored" by defenders of the approach of multiple modernities (212). Yet according to him, and I think he is right, "neither claim can be validated or invalidated by *purely* empirical means" (221). As a socio-anthropologist, I have tried for the last years to collect empirical case studies around different cultural topics and globalization, arguing for the appearance of similar structural phenomena in culturally very different societies (U. Schuerkens [ed.], *Global Forces and Local Life-Worlds: Social Transformations*. London 2004; "Transnational Migrations and Social Transformations." Special issue of *Current Sociology* 53.2005.4/2; *Local Socio-Economic Practices and Social Transformations*. London 2007). These publications show that there is something different that emerges than convergence between societies on a global level or global diversity. Depending on various elements, we can today find a mixture of global and local processes, which seems to go further than the approaches (multiple modernities vs. modernization theory) discussed here suggest. Insofar the discussion on modernity, as Schmidt underlines, "is not over yet" (9).

Ulrike Schuerkens

Dieckmann, Ute: *Hai||om in the Etosha Region. A History of Colonial Settlement, Ethnicity and Nature Conservation*. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2007. 398 pp. ISBN 978-3-905758-00-9. Price: sfr 55.00

Hai||om is, in Ute Dieckmann's view, an ethnic category that has been shaped by colonization. Many Hai||om hunt and gather, or have until recently hunted and gathered for all their subsistence, and thus are "Bushmen" or "San." Yet they speak Khoekhoe, the language of Damara and Nama herding communities. Some work as labourers for Ovambo; some work for white farmers; some own livestock themselves. Early publications, such as those of medical doctor and amateur ethnographer Lewis Fourie writing in the 1920s and physical anthropologist Viktor Lebzelter writing in the 1930s, saw Hai||om as Bushmen with some cultural attributes picked up from their non-Bushman neighbours. More recently Thomas Widlok, in his masterly "Living on Mangetti" (Oxford 1999), portrays them as "still a gathering people" but also as strategic gatherers, hunters, labourers, and entrepreneurs who practise a high degree of individual autonomy, albeit within social constraints of inside and outside forces. Dieckmann puts this work in a larger, historical framework, with an emphasis on recent developments in self-identity as well as agency, and on past portrayals through government documents as well as through the imagery of ethnography.

Ute Dieckmann was involved in a car accident while on the way to begin fieldwork in Outjo in 1998. Her original intention had been to concentrate on Hai||om land rights and identity, but her long recovery period meant that when she returned to research she ended up concentrating initially on archival material and historical issues. When finally she was able to work in northern Namibia, she followed through her historical approach with the exploration of recent changes in Hai||om life through interview data. This book, derived mainly from her 2005 Ph.D. thesis at Cologne University, is the result. It complements rather than duplicates the more traditional social anthropological concerns of Widlok. Whereas Widlok's "Living on Mangetti" is mainly about subsistence and exchange, he also gives descriptions of other seasonal activities and broader issues in settlement ecology, kin term usage, and naming practices, and puberty rites, and medicine dances. Dieckmann's traditional anthropological emphases are on local politics, clientship, and, above all, ethnicity, but she describes these against a background of precolonial representations (from 1850 to 1884), German colonial rule (1884 to 1915), South African rule and especially "Bushman policy" (1915 to 1989), and Namibian policy since independence (21st March 1990).

Each chapter in Dieckmann's book, except the introduction and the closing ones on recent shifts in identity, begins with a description of the scholarly and political *Zeitgeist* and a discussion of representations by academics and the wider public. Then, in each case, this is followed by contextual explications of the policies