

obligation (147), simultaneously as it is a zone of excess production of violent youth labor, as youth gather at the barracks and wait to be deployed to some patron's purpose. The combination of manipulation, production, evasion, and waiting become the topos of postmodernity.

This is a novel departure from most previous studies of youth and violence in Africa, and as such it is a necessary and provocative addition to the literature. Few books situate warring African bodies within their global context and specifically disavow the possibility that violence is nested in a cultural past (as is suggested in many studies from around Africa) that there is a parent "culture" to which this violence or its "work" both refers to and is drawn from. Rather, violence exists in a shifting terrain of possibilities that transcend culture and history. Hoffman takes a cue from Henrik Vigh's work on youth navigating the terrain of war in Guinea-Bissau, though nesting it firmly in the global present, a much larger terrain than Vigh's nation-state.

I see the primary weakness of Hoffman's argument in an overstatement of the difference between social institutions and social relations, and the relationship of both to "premodern" versus "modern" Africa, and thus also to "postmodern" Africa. The book's conclusion clouds the very notion of "modern," "global" Africa – by which the *kamajors* exist as a war machine and thus an emergent phenomenon – by stating that fundamental facets of African sociality, from kinship to the occult, are the "most modern" practices existing today. These emerged in the wake of the slave trade, which marked Africa's initial incorporation into global logics of extraction and capitalism. If *kamajor* mobilization draws on the same cultural capital as did other projects organizing young male violence in the wake of the slave trade, does that make it an entirely new phenomenon? When do we mark the departure of the postmodern from the modern, by which the *kamajors* exist in a different logic than did previous organizations of young male violence emanating from patronage relations? For example, Hoffman is clear that the civil militias were organized along the lines of patron-client relationships and not by "traditional military logic." I believe he makes too much of the difference between the *kamajors* and the military, and thus the difference between the "modern" and the "postmodern." From the beginning of the postcolonial era, the military was an arm of patronage, especially during Siaka Stevens' reign, and the incorporation of the *kamajors* into the state was a direct result of Tejan Kabbah shifting patronage from the army of his predecessors to a force that he could control. The conclusion clouds the reader's understanding of the transition between modern and postmodern and the difference between institutions and relations. Hoffman thus dampens the power of his heuristic device at the precise moment he should reemphasize it. However, this is more than compensated for by the wealth of material he brings to bear on our understanding of youth violence.

Catherine Bolten

Hollan, Douglas W., and C. Jason Throop (eds.): *The Anthropology of Empathy. Experiencing the Lives of Others in Pacific Societies*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. 233 pp. ISBN 978-0-85745-102-6. (ASAO Studies in Pacific Anthropology, 1) Price: \$ 75.00

This book follows on the heels of a special issue of *Ethos* (2008) devoted to empathy, edited by the same scholars. Both volumes announce a rediscovery of this topic across a range of disciplines. Why now? In their introduction, the editors suggest that anthropologists were put off empathy for a generation by Clifford Geertz's influential and exclusive focus on the public forms of knowledge, on the cultural framing rather than the subjective qualia of experience. Geertz's interpretivism inspired many fine-grained accounts of the person that enriched the literature but somehow left out actual persons. It was as if the concepts, symbols, and cultural models had the experiences on the actor's behalf. As a consequence of this approach, emotions tended to be dismissed as private sensations, amenable to neither observation nor analysis; either that, or they became grist for the interpretivist mill, cultural items like any other. Contrary voices that argued for transcultural common denominators persisted nonetheless. And phenomenologically-inspired anthropologists continued to assert the primacy of the body, the experiencing self, or other avatars of consciousness. The door was left open for a return of empathy.

While going over some of the same ground, what the new book adds to the *Ethos* volume is a regional focus on the Pacific intended to identify common patterns and facilitate comparison. In this venture it admirably succeeds. Among the cultural themes pursued by contributors are the inscrutability of other minds, the notion that empathy must be practiced rather than merely felt, a focus on the exchange of food as the medium of mutual concern, and a regional prizing of love or compassion. (As some contributors suggest, the latter value is possibly a result of Christianization, even if, in many cases, behind the injunction to "Love Thy Neighbour" lies fear of thy neighbour's witchcraft.)

The central paradox of the book is that none of the societies described possesses an explicit concept of empathy; indeed, many hold to a view of the "opacity of other minds" (a notion not confined to the Pacific). If empathy depends upon achieving an accurate "first-person-like perspective on another," then a study of empathy in the Pacific would seem to be a nonstarter. Fortunately, despite the ideological disclaimer, Pacific peoples evidently share the panhuman capacity to respond to others' needs, to identify with others' distress, and to put themselves imaginatively in another's predicament: in a word, to empathize. The fascination of the collection lies in this ethnographic contradiction between practical empathy and ideological denial. And there is, perhaps, a further contradiction – one that could have been more fully explored. If people like the Yapese (described by Throop) find other minds opaque, why do they go to such lengths to dissemble and evade? Conversations held back-to-back, staring away from interlocutors, or conducted in evasive banter might be presumed to suggest the opposite: an assumption

of the *transparency* of other minds, the dangerous readability of word and gaze. Is the ideology perhaps contradicted by practical knowledge, rather like the Trobrianders' dogma of "virgin birth"?

Most contributors make some kind of distinction between what Rumsey, in his afterword, calls *instances* of empathy and *talk about* empathy. But the applicability of the etic concept to indigenous thought and practice causes some confusion. Several contributors note a regional preoccupation with compassion/pity/love (usually denoted by a single word); and some (e.g., Mageo, p. 77) regard this sentiment as equivalent to empathy, or at least as depending on acts of empathy. As the editors' introduction has it, "empathy and its withholding find their consummate expression in food giving and taking. One prepares and gives food to those one loves, pities, and is concerned for, and one withholds food as a sign of reproach and lack of concern." But I am not convinced that, conceptually or in practice, empathy is necessarily involved in love or pity, especially when these concepts are taken to refer to pragmatic acts, not interior states. A mother feeds her children because she recognizes their needs, not because she imaginatively empathizes with them or tries to feel what they are feeling. A host knows that weary travellers are hungry and does not depend upon imaginative projection to intuit their needs. Custom mandates the response. Nor is the assumption of a first-person perspective regarding others exclusive to empathy. Jealousy, pride, and shame, among other emotions, require a comparison of self with others, a putting of oneself in the other's position, an intuiting of their perceptions and feelings.

If the arguments provoke debate, as they should in any good collection, the individual contributions offer an absorbing range of case studies. Hermann analyses Banaban empathy in its historical formation as a product of interwoven native and Christian discourses on pity, equality, and community. Banabans view themselves as both a people to be pitied and a people who take pity on others, Christian notions blending with older ideas of solidarity and compassion. Lepowsky notes a "fierce insistence on personal autonomy" in Vanatinai that underlies islanders' fear of others' malevolence and inscrutability. She argues for the use of narrative strategies in making sense of emotional episodes. Mageo proposes that modes of empathy are shaped in socialization practices. In an extended comparison with Western models, she suggests that "attachment in more individually oriented places inspires empathy as an imaginative identification of self with another, bridging the self/other divide," whereas in group-oriented societies like Samoa, "attachment leads to empathy as enacted: giving care in gifts of food and services." Lohmann points to empathy as a complex set of evolved capacities and makes the intriguing suggestion that "all forms of alternative perspective-taking ... are based on impressions of empathy with real or imagined volitional beings." Empathy, as such, lies at the basis of social life. Nonetheless, in some societies it is minimally cultivated: the Asabano, empathy-sceptics, seem not to be very good at it. In a long chapter on Yap, Throop offers a complex and engrossing analysis of how empathy relates to subjectivity, so-

cial performance, morality, and knowledge. Pragmatism, secrecy and evasion engender a "communicative opacity" that limits insight into others' thoughts and feelings. Yet the capacity to respond to others' suffering with *runguy* (concern/pity/compassion) is highly valued. Whether this capacity amounts to empathy is a moot point, especially if empathy is taken to mean "approximating the quasi-first-person perspective of another's internal life." Writing on Anuta, Feinberg, squarely faces the paradox noted above and suggests that empathy for the pragmatic Anutans is not about "mind-reading" but "educated guesses" based on observed actions. His point seems borne out in von Poser's richly detailed portrait of Bosmun food exchange. She argues that "since Bosmun foodways permeate emotional spheres, they play a role in empathic processes." To conclude this excellent volume, Hollan shows how biographical differences play a crucial part in the capacity to empathize. His chapter introduces a comparative perspective with a case study from Toraja (Indonesia) that echoes the Pacific cases. Another Indonesian example, however, might have proved more contrastively revealing: the Javanese both cultivate and comment upon empathy; indeed their well-known conceptual and moral relativism, instilled through cultural models of "changing places" in ritual, language registers, and domestic arrangements, is to empathy what fertile mud is to rice. Just beyond the Pacific, things can look – and feel – very different.

Andrew Beatty

Jebens, Holger (Hrsg.): Herbarium der Kultur. Ethnographische Objekte und Bilder aus den Archiven des Frobenius-Instituts. Frankfurt: Frobenius-Institut, 2011. 150 pp. Fotos. ISBN 978-3-9806506-5-6. Preis: € 19,95

Frankfurt am Main ist die einzige Stadt in Deutschland, die über drei etablierte ethnologische Institutionen verfügt: das Museum der Weltkulturen (*1904 als Städtisches Völkermuseum), das Frobenius-Institut (*1898 als Afrika-Archiv in Berlin; seit 1925 in Frankfurt als Forschungsinstitut für Kulturmorphologie) und das Institut für Ethnologie (*1946 als Ordinariat für Kultur- und Völkerkunde). (Die Beschlussvorlage des Magistrats von 05.11.2010 [M219] zur erneuten Umbenennung des Museums der Weltkulturen in "Weltkulturen Museum" wurde am 24.02.2011 vom Magistrat aus dem Beschlussverfahren der Stadtverordnetenversammlung zurückgezogen; <<http://www.stvv.frankfurt.de/parlis2/parlis.php>> [10.03.2012].)

Die fachliche Nähe von Museum und Frobenius-Institut (FI) wurde durch die jahrzehntelange gemeinsame Leitung (1935–1965), durch die Nutzung gemeinsamer Räumlichkeiten und ab 1935 durch eine (Honorar-)Professur an der Frankfurter Universität für den jeweiligen Direktor gefördert. 1967 wurde diese Verbindung verwaltend getrennt und nach der Aufteilung ihrer Bestände geht seitdem jeder seine eigenen Wege (Felsbilder, Bild-dokumente, Manuskripte und Bücher gingen an das FI / Objekte blieben im Museum [15]).

Umso begrüßenswerter ist das Ausstellungsprojekt für eine Präsentation im Hessischen Ministerium für Wissen-