

l'Université allemande de Strasbourg où l'on envoyait les meilleurs professeurs pour en faire une vitrine culturelle, ou encore la situation au Congo "indépendant"). L'ouvrage se termine par un chapitre traitant des rapports de Park avec l'écologie humaine et urbaine.

Il s'agit donc là d'une contribution fortement structurée, débordant d'informations puisées sur place aux sources les plus directes, qui, avec d'autres du même auteur, vient combler une lacune dans la connaissance que nous avions de l'École de Chicago. Pierre Erny

**Hahn, Hans Peter, Karlheinz Cless, and Jens Soentgen** (eds.): *People at The Well. Kinds, Usages, and Meanings of Water in a Global Perspective*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2012. 316 pp. ISBN 978-3-593-39610-1. Price: € 34.90

Because key issues relating to water recur with undeniable regularity in vastly diverse cultural contexts, research on human-water interactions often forces ethnographers to risk the disapproval of hard-line cultural relativists and come clean about the comparative basis of anthropology. Thus the recent florescence of histories and ethnographies of water has encouraged not a return to homogenising 19th-century universalisms, but a more balanced theoretical recognition that important commonalities coexist with major cultural diversities in human lifeways. Still, there remains some unease amongst anthropologists about straying overtly from culturally specific analyses. In relation to water research, this can produce slightly conflicted accounts that – though engaging with crosscutting issues – strive to maintain a conventional ethnographic focus.

For the most part this edited collection is progressive in adopting a "global perspective" on temporally and spatially diverse engagements with water. Each chapter focuses on particular issues and examples, but there are multiple fluid connections between them in considering how water mediates social, economic, and political relations; how people think with and about water; how they evaluate its qualities and define its meanings. A further connective undercurrent is water itself, and the way that its particular properties affect all of these interactions.

The introduction to the volume is a little vague, perhaps illustrating the practical difficulty of providing an overview sufficient to encompass the vast range of issues pertaining to water. It also suffers slightly from a more mundane reality: that academic publishers have become too parsimonious to employ copy editors to catch the occasional awkwardness in translation to English. But the chapters that follow (some by the book's editors) are thoroughly engaging.

The text opens with Hans Peter Hahn's summary of anthropological perspectives on water. It engages usefully with broader historical analyses, providing a nuanced critique of Illich's insightful but rather linear ideas about changing relationships with water, and of accounts that similarly assume chronological movement from shared to enclosed and privatised water resources. It tackles the always difficult issue of scaling up and down analytically,

and tags on a case study from Togo, which illustrates the dynamic processes through which ideas about the spiritual vitality of water keep pace with changing infrastructures and practices. Simon Meissner then considers a range of water uses, with a very lucid account of "virtual water" and "water footprints." This starkly illustrates the way that international trade upholds massive inequities in people's access to global water resources, and also how it distributes the costs of production, for example in the "grey water footprints" of pollution emerging from industrial processes.

Klaus Ruthenberg's chapter takes a more philosophical direction to deconstruct dominant representations of water. Pointing to the fluid uncertainties inherent in these, he suggests that substances are better described as "a network of relations of dispositions" (68). Thus representations of water should be pluralistic, rather than taking a "physicalist, reductionist approach" (76). Jens Soentgen's essay on dew certainly takes us away from physical reductionism, with an intriguing description of how people in the ancient world imagined a "cosmic distillery" in which water glided to earth through the rays of a full moon (82). The notion of magically creative water sits easily with Karlheinz Cless' comparison of beliefs and rituals in China, India, and northern Ghana, which considers how these affect people's engagements with water at a micro-level. Magical water also appears in Richard Wilk's contribution, which takes us from ancient Mayan beliefs about "virgin" water to subaltern rituals valorising water's powers in contemporary Belize. This segues into an analysis of the iconography of bottled water, illustrating that "[r]ather than disappearing from view then, with *progress* the magic of water constantly rises in new places, through new conduits of power" (129). Though such ideas persist, Wolfram Laube's chapter shows how they have often been subsumed by changing practices and the commodification of water. While rainmaking rituals continue in northern Ghana, and people try to uphold traditional forms of water ownership that involve trust and sharing, such practices are being marginalised by new supply infrastructures, irrigation, and commercial water usage and larger-scale forms of governance. Irit Eguavoen's chapter, also dealing with northern Ghana, describes how such developments are socially and economically destabilising, often ignoring the potential for small-scale access to water to uphold local economic practices that make the difference between "generating a small income instead of no income" (187).

Bettina Weiz's strong contribution demonstrates that, while water and social power are invariably connected, this can play out very differently. Germany's historical changes in water supply mirrored moves towards (and continue to uphold) democratic notions of equality and citizenship. But in South India "the water mains stands for differentiation and inequality, an expression on as well as an agent of these" (193). The deep inequalities of access to water in India are also the subject of Nikhil Anand's chapter, which considers the historic and social causes of hugely differentiated water supply in Mumbai, making a key point that reducing public and private water owner-

ship to simple binaries, without locating debates in a cultural context, elides the complexities and potential outcomes of each.

Klaus Hilbert provides a fascinating account of relations with water in the world's wettest environment, the Amazon, while noting that anthropogenic pressures have brought droughts and major fluctuations in water levels, along with red dust "from [a] region where there is no rain forest anymore" (243). Petra Weschenfelder takes us back to issues of water and power, describing how, in the ancient Sudan, early Pharaohs benefited from the Nile's "cosmic order;" and created reservoirs that drew nomadic pastoralists into supporting profitable trade routes that further empowered their hydraulic kingdoms. And, resonating with the issues raised by Laube, Emmanuel Akpabio's chapter deals with the conflicts in Nigeria between traditional beliefs about water as a connection to supernatural powers, and Christian-led, development-oriented ideas and practices, which seek to override local voices to commercialise and privatise water, with major impacts on people's relationships with resources.

The final chapter, by Anne-Christina Achterberg-Boness, considers one of the most powerfully recurrent cross-cultural themes in relation to water, that of pollution, illustrated by an account of the fears induced by polluting "devils" in the Iraqw wells of northern Tanzania. Her description of how highly localised rules and norms reflect recurrent cross-cultural issues in relation to water encapsulates the way that such research allows anthropologists to engage with unique worldviews and common humanity simultaneously. Thus the volume provides a rich selection of studies that show how attention to ethnographically-located beliefs, values, and practices can flow quite readily into larger anthropological questions. As such, it provides the reader with real insights into the complexities of human relationships with water.

Veronica Strang

**Haller, Dieter:** Die Suche nach dem Fremden. Geschichte der Ethnologie in der Bundesrepublik 1945–1990. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2012. 395 pp. ISBN 978-3-593-39600-2. Preis: € 39.90

With his newest publication, Dieter Haller provides us with a uniquely comprehensive and intriguing investigation of the formative path of ethnology (sociocultural anthropology) in the Federal Republic of Germany between 1945 and 1990. Haller shows how the formation of this academic discipline during the cold-war era was interwoven with the broader issues of rebuilding German society. In the aftermath of National Socialism, genocide, and war, the field of ethnology was linked to the past as much as to the subsequent transformation of society in a divided nation. By contextualizing ethnology (*Völkerkunde*) in German political history, Haller's work makes an important contribution to the current international debates about the place of anthropological research past and present. The book's title, which may be roughly translated as the "search" or "quest for the unknown other" (foreign), captures the disciplinary preoccupation with

non-European peoples and exotic lifeworlds. Organized into seven chapters, accompanied by footnotes, an extensive bibliography, and index, Haller's work provides an exceptional resource for anyone interested in the history of anthropology and its distinct national manifestations. Throughout the book, Haller presents readers with astute insights into the ways in which German political culture has shaped the commitments, debates, and directions of ethnological research and practice.

The research on which this work is based is highly impressive. Haller not only draws on a vast repertoire of published works and extensive archival documents, but he also relies on in-depth interviews with over fifty academic practitioners whose narratives furnish additional insights on formative events. The book thereby provides a superb account of German anthropology by transforming both published materials and archival data into social facts confirmed by the living memory of scholars. Haller has managed to produce a well written, informative, interesting, and in part dramatic text in which the details of specific scenarios unfold along an attention-gripping narrative about influential figures, personalities, political conflicts, and institutional alliances that have steered the ethnological profession in postwar West Germany.

Dieter Haller begins with an overview of the long-standing European fascination with difference and distinction among peoples, cultures, and societies, which culminates not only in the creation of separate disciplines but also forges various national trajectories. From the outset, Haller suggests that the present-day anthropological profession carries a North Atlantic (Anglo-American) imprint, in which German ethnology assumes a special place. While focused on the anthropological study of non-European peoples (formerly called *Völkerkunde*), Haller suggests that postwar German ethnology has not significantly contributed to or nourished international scholarly debates. Nevertheless, Haller insists that the specificities of German sociocultural anthropology can provide a unique voice within the international arena, even if articulated from the global academic margins.

The book brings to light the prominent disciplinary moments, movements, and institutional forms, which are according to the author indicative of the "self-understanding of a discipline in crisis" (25). Haller takes readers through a fascinating political history of the reorganization and rebuilding of German ethnology as an academic discipline. In the immediate postwar years, the field needed to be remade from the ground up. The discipline's active membership was small. Many scholars had died during the war; others lived in exile or had been implicated as Nazis. Libraries, museums, and institutes had been destroyed, like most German cities. Faced with rubble and ruination, ethnologists in training longed to be elsewhere: abroad and in the field. Both curiosity about different lifeworlds and a desire to leave Germany behind promoted the initial rebuilding of the profession. Enabled by new funding sources, younger scholars organized expeditions and field trips to faraway places, including India, East Africa, Latin America, the Pacific, and Australia. Haller recounts the subsequent disciplinary shifts with insight