

Berkeley, has written an influential study of cynicism during Brezhnev's time in the Soviet Union, which the volume acknowledges as one of its theoretical sources. Or shall we think of the Chinese author, Hu Ping, his treatment of Chinese irony still tells a good story? However, on the other hand, one may also wonder, how far can we continue in such a lane of thinking? Is today's China still the same world as Hu Ping portrayed, for example? Or can we still pose Brezhnev's type of cynicism as a trope (e.g., K. Burke) for understanding what is happening in Beijing? Ranging from neighborhood struggles to Korean investment in Qingdao, from "implicit irony" to "rebel as trickster," from local governance to the use of Internet as a means of cynical response, etc., the volume contains an empirical richness helpful and suggesting, but the question it brings the volume answers much. Or shall we say, there is "Irony in Action" (Fernandez and Huber, Chicago 2001; cf. Santangelo's "Laughing in Chinese," Roma 2012) in any state political economics, with the ongoing American presidential election as an example?

Morality or ethics is the wider reference with which all the contributing authors have tried to engage. This is the second important issue this volume has brought to our attention. If we do not make a further distinction between morality and ethics, a distinction which the various authors did not themselves make, we could say, as the volume suggests, that ethical or moral problems, often ugly and disturbing, are the usual reasons for people to turn to irony or cynicism as a mode of self-protection or possible reaction. A variety of ethnographic cases are provided by the volume to show that difficult moral conditions of life, under the current rule of the party-state, tend to generate ironic or cynical responses in daily life. Like other anthropological studies, "everyday life" is taken as the ground for locating those moral or ethical problems we find in today's China. For this, Hans Steinmüller in his excellent "Introduction" used the term "the micro-ethics of everyday life" (8), and such a term accurately captures a general thematic orientation of the volume. In other words, the micro-ethics is an *everyday* phenomenon. Similar to other anthropological uses of the *everyday* or everyday life, if one may ask? We are familiar with such as "everyday modernity," "everyday Buddhism," and so on. Do we want to give this usage a theoretical meaning alone (cf. P. Bourdieu's theory of practice)? Or would we rather give it a more specific connotation, for example, as employed by Veena Das? This is not a criticism of the term but a wish to gain fuller explications of the ground upon which Chinese moral or ethical problems are tied to their own "everydayness."

Finally, a question that comes to mind when reading this volume is: Is the irony of China a Chinese irony? It seems, as the volume suggests, ethnographic studies of today's China may itself become an intellectual ground for us to think about what is happening around the world. This is an excellent collection, not because it has answered all the questions it poses, but because it provides another necessary angle for us to think about ourselves in relation to that which is conveniently called "China," a world in which we find not only a past but also future po-

tentials for investigations. An inquiry about today's China, therefore, has become a study of our own future possibilities.

Xin Liu

Stolle, Nikolaus: *Talking Beads. The History of Wampum as a Value and Knowledge Bearer, from Its Very First Beginnings until Today.* Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2016. 424 pp. ISBN 978-3-8300-8827-1. (HERODOT – Wissenschaftliche Schriften zur Ethnologie und Anthropologie, 16) Price: € 129.80

Wampum has played a vital role in the lives of many different societies across North America. Used as everything from currency to sacred ritual object, fashion accessory to purveyor of knowledge, the shell bead that has come simply to be known as wampum is ever present in the historical record of the 17th century and beyond. Yet wampum has largely blended into the background. Anthropologists and historians who look carefully at wampum tend to do so through a narrow lens, and fail to come to terms with wampum as the multifaceted material object that it is. However, Nikolaus Stolle in his new work "Talking Beads" has set out to place wampum at the center of discussion, by tracing the bead through its many forms.

This endeavor is a large and difficult one, and Stolle presents a thoroughly researched manuscript. The scope of his work can be seen by simply glancing at the table of contents, where it at once becomes evident that he has addressed all aspects of wampum use. Not only does he examine the vast utilitarian nature of the bead, he also provides his reader with a series of beautiful charts, including one large foldout, offering the visual essence of beads and belts. These charts have a great deal to offer academics with an interest in wampum.

Stolle lends his voice to a small group of academics who focus on various aspects of wampum. Most of the work done on the subject is relegated to the past, as the late Lynn Ceci arguably contributed the seminal works on wampum through a series of articles around 30 years ago. More recently, Mario Schmidt has offered a different interpretation of the Iroquois/Dutch economic relationship in his article "Entangled Economies. New Netherland's Dual Currency System and Its Relation to Iroquois Monetary Practice" recently published in *Ethnohistory* (62.2015.2: 195–216). Additionally, we all eagerly await Paul Otto's forthcoming monograph "Beads of Power." While the subject of wampum has lain largely dormant since the 1980s, it seems there is a wide and current revival of interest in the subject and Stolle is on the cutting edge of that discourse.

Stolle's work with belts is particularly noteworthy. Not only does he walk his reader through a tutorial on the weaving and manufacture of belts, he offers a visual representation of every belt he is able to trace through the historical documents. Beyond that, his work with these belts as knowledge bearers is perhaps the most comprehensive done on the subject. Stolle traces the use of talking sticks as mnemonic devices as a precursor to belts used in the same way (68). This claim is supported by

some pretty convincing evidence, and while it might be considered one the more provocative points of this monograph, it certainly bears further scrutiny.

While Stolle's work has a large scope, it is lacking in depth. The meticulous research he presents is largely offered without clear context or analysis. This problem can be traced to the fact that Stolle seems to be working without a compelling argument to drive his research forward. His primary contribution to the field, it seems, is compiling wampum research. At times, it feels as though he is simply sharing information because he found it, rather than to support any sort of thesis or narrative. On occasions where clear arguments do crop up, Stolle makes some bold claims.

On a number of occasions, Stolle challenges long established history. Examples of this include his assertion that William Bradford and the Plymouth colonists did not in fact adopt their understanding of wampum as a trade good from the Isaac De Rasiere and the Dutch East India Company. In fact, Stolle asserts that the Jamestown colony had wampum makers, and likely introduced the Dutch to wampum as an economic construct (49). While this might seem a trifling thing, this assertion calls into question many long held ideas regarding wampum production and movement, placing the bead more centrally in the Chesapeake and Tidewater than in New York and New England. While the idea is intriguing, Stolle does not offer enough evidence to evoke a historiographical change.

In the end, Stolle opens up some new avenues of interrogation regarding wampum. The challenges he presents to the established narrative need further assessment. Many of his most controversial claims are presented with a certainty that the scant evidence does not justify. Stolle's work certainly holds value to a small group of academics working in the somewhat narrow field related to wampum, but it also offers utility to a larger audience interested in material culture, economics, and ritual diplomacy.

Justin Power

Ṭāheri, 'Aṭā: Kuč, kuč. Tağrobe-ye nim qarn-e zendegi dar Kohgiluyeh wa Boyr-Aḥmad [Immer neuer Weggang, Ortswechsel. Lebenserfahrungen eines halben Jahrhunderts in Kohgiluyeh und Boyr-Aḥmad]. Tehrān: Soḥān, 2009. 635 pp. ISBN 964-372-402-3.

Die vorliegenden Erinnerungen des iranischen Regionalhistorikers und Ethnografen 'Aṭā Ṭāheri umfassen die Zeitspanne von seinem Geburtsjahr 1928 bis zum Jahr des CIA-Putsches (1953) und stellen insofern eigentlich nur etwas mehr als eine Viertel-Autobiografie des heute 88-jährigen Autors dar (der Untertitel mit der unzutreffenden Zeitangabe ist aus einem früheren Aufsatz übernommen). Für diesen Mangel entschädigt jedoch, dass der Zeitraum, den sie damit behandeln, gerade derjenige ist, in dem sich grundlegende Änderungen der iranischen Stammesgesellschaften (*'ašāyer*) vollziehen: Die militärische Bändigung durch den Zentralstaat ist fast erreicht, die Semiautonomie definitiv beseitigt. Bestimmte Segmente in der Stammesstruktur verlieren ihre Funktion und verschwinden. In das Verhältnis der Stammesober-

häupter – der Khane – zu den Stammesangehörigen dringen fremde Strukturelemente ein u. a. m.

Dieser Wandel vollzieht sich jedoch nicht geradlinig; etwa in der Mitte des genannten Zeitraums kommt es zu einer spektakulären Umkehr: Die durch den Rücktritt Reza Schahs (1941) verursachte Schwächung der staatlichen Ordnung ermöglicht es den Söhnen der in der Verbannung hingerichteten Führer mehrerer südiranischer Stämme, heimlich zurückzukehren und für einige Jahre die Khan-Herrschaft wiederaufzurichten – in der Folge davon erstet das Stammesleben fast in seiner ganzen traditionellen Gestalt neu. Diese kurze Periode des Wiederauflebens tribaler Institutionen und tribaler Politik hat der Autor miterlebt; die in seiner Autobiografie enthaltene ethnografische Information ist daher nicht nur authentisch, sondern auch außerordentlich gehaltvoll.

'Aṭā Ṭāheri ist der Sohn des Oberhauptes (*kadḥodā*) einer Untergruppe (*ṭāyefe*) des großen Stammes der Boyr-Aḥmad im Südwesten Irans (Provinz Kohgiluyeh wa Boyr-Aḥmad). Sein Großvater mütterlicherseits war einer der bedeutendsten Khane dieses Stammes und dessen Söhne gehörten zu den von Regime-Vertretern umgebrachten Stammesführern.

Die tribalen Konflikte dieser Zeit prägen Ṭāheris persönliches Schicksal von Anfang an: zwei Jahre nach seiner Geburt wird sein Vater von dessen eigenem Bruder umgebracht. Ṭāheris Mutter sucht darauf mit ihren Kindern Zuflucht bei den Familien ihrer getöteten Brüder, folgt später einer von diesen für etwa 2 Jahre nach Teheran und hält auch nach der Rückkehr sich und ihren Sohn konsequent von den Verwandten ihres Mannes fern. Damit bereitet sie ihrem Sohn eine für seines Werdegang verhängnisvolle Ausgangslage. Die Beziehung zur Gruppe der Mutter war für Männer der Eliteschicht dieser Gesellschaften von hoher Bedeutung, da sie politischen Rückhalt gab. Die primäre soziale Stellung mit ihren *assets* jedoch wurde allein durch die Zugehörigkeit zur Patrigruppe vermittelt. Indem Ṭāheris Mutter ihren Sohn daran hindert, zu seiner Gruppe heimzukehren, enthält sie ihm die ihm zukommende Stellung vor, ohne ihm bei ihrer eigenen Gruppe eine äquivalente bieten zu können: Ṭāheri verbleibt infolgedessen in einem Zustand der sozialen Unmündigkeit und des Mangels an eigentlichem sozialen Gewicht, der für ihn umso kränkender ist, als mehrere der Khan-Söhne unter seinen ehemaligen Teheraner Spielkameraden nun selbst Khane sind. Auch sein schließlich unternommener Versuch, diese Lage durch eine Art Flucht zu wenden, ändert nichts, da seine Onkel (FB) ihm feindselig die Aufnahme in seine Gruppe verweigern. Er bleibt weiterhin faktisch an die seiner Mutterbrüder gebunden und verkörpert damit die ehrschädigende Anomalie, dass ein Mann "die Kappe seines Vaters seiner Mutter aufsetzt". Sie wird in seinem Fall noch dadurch verschärft, dass die *ṭāyefe* seiner Mutterbrüder seit einer Teilung der Boyr-Aḥmadi dem gegnerischen Teilstamm angehört – die gesamte Zeitspanne seines Erwachsenwerdens hindurch ist Ṭāheri daher dem Verdacht der mangelnden Loyalität ausgesetzt.

Ein wichtiges Symbol vollgültiger Männlichkeit in der *'ašāyer*-Gesellschaft war der Besitz eines bestimm-