

punkt des Sammelbandes. Er spielt eloquent mit Nuancen von Begriffen wie Zufall, Glücksfall, Schicksal und Vorsehung, die er belesen durch die gesamte biblische, westliche und moderne Geistesgeschichte verfolgt. Dabei verkehren sich die Verhältnisse: Während Charles Darwin, der heute als bedeutender Naturwissenschaftler gilt, der Variabilität der Arten in seiner Evolutionstheorie große Bedeutung beimaß, die eher dem Zufall als naturwissenschaftlicher Gesetzmäßigkeit folgt, verhält sich der biblische Jonah rational gegenüber einem unberechenbaren Gott. Das für den menschlichen Geist Nichterkennbare befördert die Divination, die auch in der Gegenwart in den "glücklichen Zufällen", Glücksfällen oder schicksalhaften Ereignissen zugegen ist, d. h. Ereignissen, in denen der (moderne) Mensch hinter dem Zufall ein nichtevidentes Motiv vermutet.

Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum porträtiert in seinem Beitrag "Arrows, Aiming, and Divination. Astrology as a Stochastic Art" die Astrologie im Rekurs auf antikes Denken als stochastische Kunst. Im Unterschied zur produktiven Kunst, bei der ein fixiertes Verfahren, ein definiertes Ziel, für den Erfolg oder Misserfolg des Endproduktes entscheidend ist, existiert bei der stochastischen Kunst zwar ein systematisches, aber kein festgelegtes Vorgehen. Der Autor zieht einen Vergleich mit der Medizin, die mit der Astrologie die Absicht teile, den Klienten heilen zu wollen, ohne dass diese Heilung in jedem Fall garantiert werden könne. Angela Voss "Life between Lives Therapy. A Mystery Ritual for Modern Times?" überspringt die Grenze zur Esoterik und berichtet über die aus der Psychologie entwickelte Therapieform eines "spirituellen Regressionsisten", der Klienten in ein früheres Leben bzw. zwischen zwei Leben zurückführt, um aus gemachten Fehlern zu lernen. Paul Devereux "Talking and Walking with Spirits. Fresh Perspectives on a Medieval Necromantic System" beschreibt, wie alte Formen der Totenbeschwörung bis in die Gegenwart fort dauern; während der letzte inhaltliche Beitrag eines Autorenkollektivs mit dem Titel "Clarifying Divinatory Dialogue. A Proposal for a Distinction between Practitioner Divination and Essential Divination" sich um eine Verständigung bemüht zwischen der Divination als konkreter Praxis und den universellen divinatorischen Denkmustern der Menschen.

Das Nachwort, das sein Autor Martin Holbraad als Endnote bezeichnet, geht auf ethische Fragen ein. Das Problem, dass der Wahrheitsanspruch der Divination von unbeteiligten Beobachtern in Frage gestellt werden könne, erkläre sich aus dem Charakter der Divination selbst, die, wie im Fall des kubanischen Ifá deutlich gemacht wird, "unablässig die Grenzen zwischen dem, wie die Dinge sind, und dem", wie sie sein sollten, verwischt.

Nicht alle Beiträge überzeugen in der gleichen Art und Weise. Beeindruckend ist die empirische Breite, die Beispiele aus allen Kontinenten umfasst, und die theoretische Diskussion, die biblische Beispiele und Debatten aus der Antike, der Aufklärung und der Moderne rezipiert. Dass die vermeintlich rationalisierte westliche Moderne nicht frei von divinatischem Denken ist, ist an vielen Stellen überzeugend dargelegt. Dass Divination auch unbeachtete Wirkungen freisetzt, etwa die gezielte Durchsetzung des

Willens eines Einzelnen zu durchkreuzen, müsste in allen Implikationen noch weiter durchdacht werden. Insbesondere das Problem des Zufalls, das in vielen Beiträgen aufscheint, bedarf einer weitergehenden Reflexion. Für den distanzierten Beobachter mag das Resultat einer Orakelbefragung in der Tat dem Zufall überlassen sein, und es lässt sich viel darüber nachdenken, was Zufall bedeutet. Für den Divinationsexperten und Klienten ist das Ergebnis einer Orakelbefragung hingegen nie Zufall, sondern die Botschaft übermenschlicher Kräfte oder die Erhellung des persönlichen Schicksals. Wer also Zufall im Orakel wirken sieht, geht an die Divination mit einer ethischen Haltung heran. Eine emische Perspektive anzunehmen, schließt Zufall hingegen aus. Einige Beiträge scheinen die Divination in den Kanon der Wissenschaften einzuführen zu wollen. Auch wenn diese Absicht niemandem verwehrt werden kann, wäre es doch redlich(er), dies offen zu tun und nicht als eine Art *hidden history*. Erst dann wird neben der Divination auch der (mündige) Leser ernst genommen, was für einen Dialog zwischen Wissenschaft und Divination eine unabdingbare Voraussetzung ist.

Lioba Rossbach de Olmos

**Das, N. K., and V. R. Rao** (eds.): *Identity, Cultural Pluralism, and State. South Asia in Perspective*. Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India, 2009, 541 pp. ISBN 978-023-063-859-7. Price: Rs 240

South Asian countries are divided along multiple lines. Since there is a widespread struggle for recognition of individual identities, be it related to language, religion, or culture, the diversity of the geography has led to the emergence of various kinds of identity politics and social unrest. Therefore, with the increase in the heterogeneous character of the societies, serious questions have emerged with reference to identity recognition and cultural pluralism.

"Identity, Cultural Pluralism and State. South Asia in Perspective" is a commendable endeavour in the context of the overall understanding of culturally pluralistic societies and the challenges confronted by them with reference to identity recognition. Acknowledging the importance of issues such as cultural identity, nationhood, and ethnic conflicts, the Anthropological Survey of India organised an international conference in 2006. The book, edited by N. K. Das and V. R. Rao, brings together the contribution made by various scholars in the conference.

The volume is an attempt at acquainting the readers with how identity issues are actually intertwined with power and politics. It seeks to inquire about ways in which different cultures could harmoniously coexist in an era wherein the idea of recognition of distinctness is important. The articles put together deal with some of the most pertinent dimensions of identity and explore how claims of distinctive culture and language affect nation-building processes. Besides, it also looks at the politics of the call for a certain identity that suppresses diverse identity based claims in the name of nation-building.

In the foreword by renowned sociologist T. N. Madan the outline of the overall engagement is drawn. Madan has

approved of the engagement of anthropologists regarding state's policy of integration and has not denied anthropologists their due of what he calls political wisdom. He believes their understanding of otherness and subsequent scepticism around the notion qualify them for the task. Highlighting the cultural aspect of globalisation, Madan points out that ethnicities are asserted when sameness become oppressive for certain groups.

Oommen's article on situating South Asia in the context of the overall theme is an interesting introduction. Emphasising on state as an instrument of negotiation and reconciliation and the crucial role of culture, he proposes the much-needed shift from nation-state to what he calls national-state. For him it will be a shift from cultural monism to cultural pluralism. He argues that what remains to be understood by people in general is that identities are not inferior or superior. However, since people fail to perceive contextuality of identities, identities end up inducing solidarity and, often, triggering hostility. Oommen sees the problem in South Asian states' pursuit of West European ideal of nation-state, an ideal that cannot justly address high cultural diversity.

Exploring linguistic diversity in the context of emerging information society, Khubchandani reveals how in the name of a global phenomenon a great number of languages are going extinct and, consequently, lesser number of languages are becoming dominant. Referring to India in particular, the author has highlighted the unfortunate shift from an organically accommodating plurilingual nation to an institutionally assertive multilingual one. Pointing out linguistic differences as primarily ideological ones, the article informs us about the dangers inherent in having "custodians of language" on the basis of virtues in the sociopolitical domain.

Asha Sarangi's article looks at the interlinkages between language, culture, and region and situates them in the context of states reorganisation process in independent India. The author, by means of situating political ideologies that redefine these three categories, considers them as sociopolitical zones. Referring to the shift from pluralism to cultural nationalism, Sarangi has pointed out how linguistic diversity has often been simplified for political purposes. Acknowledging that the nuances of region and language go unnoticed in the overall discourse around nation-building, the author urges for a more anthropological understanding so that notions of representation, recognition, and redistribution could be attended to.

Ursula Rao's article on urban spaces and negotiation of modern religious identities is remarkably insightful. Based on a research carried out in Bhopal, it informs us how the state switches to a plural self when negotiating on temple matters. Analysing the processes of temple building in the context of "religious needs" of the people, Rao has highlighted how religious and social meanings are closely intertwined. The article promisingly underlines the conflict between the secular character of planning and religious nature of day-to-day life.

The article on identity and nation-state focusing on scheduled tribes in southern Orissa by Georg Pfeffer underlines the cultural lag that is there between the castes

and the tribes. Since the tribal identity is not challenged very often and there is a "Hindu" notion of maintaining distance from the "polluted," the author maintains that there is a cultural lag. Besides, with definitions being attentive to the economic side of things, the ideological differences found between castes and tribes are often bypassed.

The collection comprises many more scholarly articles that throw light on the myriad manifestations of identity in South Asia. There are pieces on the Muslims in contemporary South Asia that attempt towards a progressive understanding of the issues. The article by Mondal, an exploratory one in the words of the author, looks at the question of Muslim OBCs and the state's response to the demands of the marginalised. In another article, Hossainur Rahman makes a very interesting case for the role of interaction with reference to progress. However, the author is not even remotely correct when he treats Emperor Akbar, Shah Waliullah, and Abul Kalam Azad alike.

The book also contains articles that deal with Sufism and shrines, paying closer attention to their syncretic character. Yoginder Sikand's article in particular is strikingly revealing for it informs us how even shrines, contrary to their essential syncretic character, become sites of contest and political manoeuvring. Through his research he has pointed out how shrines are not outside the communal realm.

A considerable section of the articles looks into the question of tribal identity from various angles. There are articles that deal with state's engagement with tribes in terms of politics of definition. They point out how various terms have helped the state and policy makers to bypass the pertinent issues. With reference to tribal identity, it is being argued how less articulate sections of a nation are not encouraged to become actively involved in a situation of plurality of identity. There are also contributions that underline the distinctness of tribal religions and make a case for a sincere recognition of the same by both the state and the society.

Though the book primarily derives from anthropology, its importance for sociologists, historians, political scientists, and South Asian studies scholars cannot be denied. Even though a major section of the articles deals with India, the arguments make a valid case for South Asia in general. The collection's overall approach to inquiry is quite fresh and sensible. The volume urges us to believe that each one of us is a carrier of many identities at the same time, identities that are different but not hierarchical.

Irfanullah Farooqi

**Dean, Bartholomew:** *Urarina Society, Cosmology, and History in Peruvian Amazonia*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. 325 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-3378-5. Price: \$ 56.20

In der vorliegenden Monografie untersucht Bartholomew Dean, wie das soziale Leben der Urarina im Tiefland Perus durch Austausch auf materieller und ideeller Ebene strukturiert wird und wie die soziale und historische Reproduktion der Gruppe seit dem Zusammentref-