

RONALD DAUS: *Die Erfindung des Kolonialismus*. Wuppertal: Hammer Verlag, 1983. 382 pp., DM 24.80

In the German context considerable attention has been paid over the past decade to problems of cross-cultural or inter-cultural understanding and communication. In methodological terms this has taken place within the framework of the hermeneutics of the alien, or the "Other". The phenomenological underpinning of this approach often results in a curious neglect of the nexus of knowledge and power in historical contexts and this differentiates such studies from the related concerns of students of what might broadly be called the "colonial discourse". Attention to the latter has, of course, been greatly influenced by Edward Said's path-breaking "Orientalism" (1978) and it seems that one can speak now of an interdisciplinary area of concern where critical anthropologists, historians, literary critics and textual analysts interact to study and develop critiques of the way in which other societies are represented and the interests that guide such representations.

Daus' book on the "Invention of Colonialism" moves in this area of concern, as the title itself suggests (one thinks of Hobsbawm's formulation about the invention of tradition), and its significance lies to a considerable extent in the fact that the hermeneutical model is used for studying colonial history with emancipatory intent. Daus intertwines two parallel themes to develop his argument. He studies Portugal's "career" as a colonial power as a kind of paradigm for demonstrating how mercantile interests which grew into power relationships generated, constructed, "invented" beliefs, techniques and structures which in turn dominated their inventors. The Portuguese case is important because it became a model for the experience of later colonial powers, both in a positive as well as a negative sense. Daus shows how the Portuguese were able to systematize knowledge of foreign and strange lands and turn it into possession. They effected a radical change in the style of commercial encounters by the systematic recourse to force and by turning the question of profit and gain into a national "mission". In the process they laid the foundations for the European system of interpretation of the rest of the world. Their tentative formulations became specific attitudes, congealed into patterns of thought which survive as a tradition even after the decolonization process became effective.

The emancipatory part of Daus' project consists in the intention of alerting contemporary German readers to the fact that these colonial mechanisms still function and an analysis of their tradition opens the "slight"(!) chance of not acting in a programmed manner any longer. The desire is to help remove "typically European" hindrances in conceptions of domination, ethics and aesthetics. In order to realize this project Daus has sifted through an impressive amount of material to produce a very readable account aimed at the general reader, though I think specialists will benefit from it too. Daus distributes his themes over two parts. In the first, shorter, part (Development: From the expansion of horizons to the contraction of the mind) he gives

a competent summary of European ideas of the East prior to colonialism and then goes on to depict the realization of the sea route to India, the intervention and control over Asian trade, everyday life in Portuguese colonies, the effect of colonialism on Portugal and, finally the decline of Portuguese power and its shadow-like peripheral survival in the imperialist age.

The second part of the book ("Structures: The belief in the eternal lead of Europe") is more substantial. In consistence with his hermeneutical model Daus moves from the pole of the experiential world of the European to the alien pole of the Other in terms of contacts and encounters which ultimately result in "tragedy". He then traces the counter-movement back to Europe to wonder whether there was any productive result for European self awareness. For Daus, much of what is typical of colonial ideas, attitudes and rules of action results from the fact that the encounter was a one-sided, unilateral demand to establish relationships, "an isolated act of will of Europeans". As a result a continuous process of justification started to place this act under the protection of a higher law or mission (religious, civilisational etc.) Daus sees a kind of neurosis in the typical colonial situation, a result of the quasi unnatural nature of the encounter. The typical forms of distancing (exclusivism, creation of hierarchies, aesthetic and moral prejudice) are described convincingly. Daus shows how under colonialism the colonialist loses the ability to have a clear relationship with the world and other human beings. In Portuguese self-interpretations of the colonial enterprise, the decision to set out to colonize the world becomes a kind of original sin and the end result is a tragedy.

If the result at the colonized end was depressing, did the encounter bring dividends in terms of self-experience? Much of the material that Daus presents in this section should be familiar to interested readers though it is rarely presented in this systematic way. The encounter with alien social forms, sexuality, manners and mores was, as is well known, an important impetus for critical discussions during the Enlightenment. Perhaps the most important development was the upsurge of a comparative style of thought. Though the epistemological effectiveness of this style cannot be denied, it is equally true that the almost manic creation of dichotomies, of schemes of demarcation into "we" and "they" has had the most persistent hold on European thought. Daus is one of the few writers to note that the attempt by "Western" marxists to charge the Soviet Union with an "Asiatic" deformation of Marxism is in the colonial tradition which appropriated all attributes of freedom, liberty etc exclusively to Europe. The examples in this area are legion. From Daus' point of view the tragic feeling in colonialism is a result of the inability on the part of the colonialists to comprehend the real complexity of the cultural contact between Europe and other "life forms" in the world (114). Even the instances of xenophilia were not interested in understanding the Other in its own context; it served merely as a foil, or instrument for an inner struggle.

Daus ends his study by returning to the theme of the first part in order to present an interesting account of the picaresque fortunes of what he calls the "flotsam and jetsam", descendants left behind by the Portuguese colonial

enterprise in Southeast Asia in colonies taken over by the British and the Dutch. In the context which enabled them to survive and, indeed, thrive Daus sees the working of a timeless arsenal of attitudes and directions for action which, though first worked out by the Portuguese, have become available to all apparatuses of power, a kind of perverted universal heritage of the colonial enterprise. Daus does not systematically expound a theory of colonialism in this book but from occasional remarks it seems that he favours a view of colonialism which treats it as a contingent rather than a structural phenomenon of capitalist development. This accounts for the curious tone of regret underlying the book. The colonial enterprise is viewed in terms of a lost opportunity in which the possibility of expanding horizons through voyages of discovery was distorted and destroyed by insufficient awareness of the rights or sensitivities of the sphere of other cultures. This position is, of course, consistent with the hermeneutic analysis but it seems to me to rest on some debatable assumptions. Eric Wolf, in "Europe and the People without History" (1982) has reminded us that extensive communicative linkages at the world level existed even prior to colonialism. Colonialism brought about an extensive qualitative change but both colonisers and colonized were part of the same historical trajectory. The view that bounded cultures came into contact, or more strongly, that the coherent sphere of the Other was "penetrated" is probably itself a colonial fiction. Perhaps it would be more accurate to suggest that cultures were constructed in the colonial process and that even now there is a greater differentiation and discontinuity in them than is commonly assumed.

Notwithstanding this, Daus' study is an impressive account and his intention of helping readers overcome prejudices that vitiate relationships not only with other peoples but also within their own country is a matter of common concern.

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KARLHEINZ HOTTES/CHRISTIAN UHLIG (eds.): *Joint Ventures in Asien - Eine Form internationaler Produktionskooperation*. (Bochumer Materialien zur Entwicklungsforschung und Entwicklungspolitik, 25). Stuttgart: Edition Erdmann in K. Thienemanns Verlag, 1983. 307 pp., DM 54.-

This volume which presents a collection of seven essays - three in English and one with English summary - aims at empirically analyzing various forms and effects of "Joint Ventures in Asia". Realistically enough and in order to dampen unduly high expectations which might be raised from the title, the restriction of the analysis to selected countries (India, China, Taiwan, South