

interest in upholding the fragile evidence on which the case for eugenics rested. By contrast, as Campbell shows, Whitehall afforded the colonial advocates neither financial nor intellectual support; thus no legislation based purely on eugenics was implemented. Nonetheless, as Campbell also reveals, in part this could have been on account of Whitehall's unwillingness to make the necessary financial investment in both health and education.

Campbell's book offers a detailed account and analysis of networks between the metropole and the colony that demonstrated a shared mindset to which an 'African mind' was not only *sui generis* but could, with appropriate 'Western' education, become 'civilized'. The book has drawn extensively on archival sources in both Britain and Kenya, and Campbell also provides an overview of the support given by different 'interest groups' in the Kenyan eugenics movement. Unsurprisingly, among those supporting the movement were other white settler societies.

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STEPHAN F. MIESCHER, *Making Men in Ghana*. Bloomington and Indianapolis IN: Indiana University Press (pb \$24.95 – 978 0 25321 786 8). 2005, 324 pp.

The research for *Making Men in Ghana* was carried out in Kwahu society (or Kwawu, as Miescher prefers). After breaking away from the Asante state in the 1870s, Kwawu chiefs welcomed some of the first Presbyterian missionaries from Basel, Switzerland. Situated on a high ridge, Kwawu offered the missionaries a cool climate and a relatively comfortable and healthy environment. The presence of the missionaries, which brought early European education and a Western/Christian style of living to the area, plays a prominent role in Miescher's book.

Apparently, the author, originally from Basel himself and with a grandfather in the missionary organization, also had personal reasons to choose Kwawu as the location of his research on the construction of masculinity. Most of the older men he selected for his study had, from their early childhood, been well acquainted with the ideas and norms of Christian manhood. They were a pastor, two teachers, a wealthy trader, a cocoa farmer, two elders in the chief's palace and a policeman/lorry driver.

After a quarter-century of gender ethnography focusing on women, this study on manhood is long overdue. Miescher befriended and spoke with eight older men from the towns of Abetifi, Pepease and Obo. Instead of posing questions about the abstract concept of 'masculinity' he asked them to relate their memories about childhood, gender games, sexuality, marriage, child rearing, work, migration, the involvement in hometown affairs and their more recent experiences as elders. He discussed with them their role models, their hopes for their children and other relatives, and the advice they would give to the younger generation (p. xvi). These conversations constitute most of the book but the author also succeeded in including an impressive amount of written material, both from archives and from the eight elders themselves.

The chapters follow the five main life stages of the men: childhood, education, employment, marriage, and old age. As a fellow scholar of Kwawu culture, with a special interest in the experiences of growing old, I am

delighted with this study. It adds personalized details and historical depth to the understanding of present-day life in Kwawu society and, in particular, to the meaning of being a 'man'.

The memories conjure up a vivid picture of life in Kwawu, reaching back as far as eighty years ago. They deal with children's games and child labour; the experiences of missionary rules about morality; hygiene and discipline; dress codes; courtship; and family life torn between local and Christian demands. In a particularly touching passage, one of Miescher's subjects tells of his experiences as a young teacher: 'I went to my station with my trunk and one blanket and one pillow . . . my room was empty. . . . As a young man, you were interested in women, and women would be visiting young teachers. And so, when I heard a knock, I ran out to meet that person so she should not come to see that my room is as poor as if I was not a teacher.' A proper teacher, according to the older man, had 'a table, a writing desk, cupboard, and chairs' (p. 111).

When Miescher met them, these eight men were in the final stage of their lives, celebrating their successes and enjoying people's respect. Four of them lived in houses they had built themselves. They participated in funerals and were actively taking measures to ensure that they would be remembered after their deaths. The Swiss anthropologist's arrival was indeed well timed. These men were ready to tell their life stories.

Obviously, the author hastens to emphasize that the accounts of the eight men should not be taken as factual historical data but are performances and subjective reconstructions of their lives to please and impress a European visitor who became a good friend. These narratives are conscious self-presentations. This said, the narratives remain fascinating because they offer the reader glimpses of the past, however 'coloured' those may be. Moreover, the caveat about their performative character is not really thematized in the book. The author is most interested, and rightly so, in their memories as approximate 'facts' of the past and how these reveal the ideals of successful manhood. Occasionally he points out that his conversational partners forget or omit certain—perhaps too delicate—details. It should further be taken into account that some of the men had relatively little reason to distort their life histories as they were successful elders who had impressive deeds to recount. Six of them had been to school and were called *akrakyefo* (freely translated as 'scholars'): they occupied respected positions in their families, their church and the community.

Miescher's main conclusion is that the old ideals of masculinity were not swept away by the intense changes that were brought to Kwawu by missionary activities, colonization, increased mobility and monetization: 'Akan ideas of adult masculinity, elderhood and big man status proved to be resilient while also subject to reformulation and contestation' (p. 199). The lives of the eight men provide convincing portraits of the elegant accommodation of seemingly contradictory cultural ideals.

Discussing the constructionist character of the old men's memories, the author should perhaps have reflected more on his own contribution to that construction. Friendship has its side-effects. The reader gets a rosier picture of these men's life histories than seems 'objectively' warranted. The author could have been more explicit about their 'failures' in life and their worries and anxieties during old age, such as divorce, loneliness, poverty and perfunctory respect.

Clearly, this study had an additional function. The pleasure of writing the life histories of successful men is that one can highlight the beauty of a culture and present those who helped in the research with a book that adds

to their happiness and glory. Apart from being a fascinating retrospective of eight full lives, this book is indeed a mnemonic monument for these same men and their children.

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JOHN COMAROFF, JEAN COMAROFF and DEBORAH JAMES (eds), *Picturing a Colonial Past: the African photographs of Isaac Schapera*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press (hb \$60–978 0 22611 411 8; pb \$25 – 978 0 22611 412 5). 2007, 234 pp.

This unique book is a touching homage to Isaac Schapera (1905–2003), a South African-born anthropologist, the son of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, who spent the first half of his life in the Northern Cape and Bechuanaland (the old Botswana) before resettling in London in 1950 and lecturing at the London School of Economics until 1969. He is presented as a man ahead of his contemporaries in his methods of investigation, whose writings—his *Handbook of Tswana Law and Customs* (1928) in particular—are still considered as authoritative in their field, and whose prestige in Botswana and South Africa remains undiminished. The book starts with a survey of the history behind the book and its journey from compilation to publication, followed by a brief presentation of Schapera's life and a reprint of his preliminary report on his fieldwork (1933). This text, while outlining his methodology, 'situates his camera work in the broader history of colonial photography and explores its complex relationship to his mode of producing anthropological knowledge' (p. viii). Words then give way to a compilation of 136 photos, most of them taken in and around Mochudi during Schapera's first major fieldwork (1929–34) among the Bakgatla of Bechuanaland. Those pictures, selected for their technical quality out of more than 400 photos held at the London Royal Anthropological Institute, are organized into chapters covering the years 1929–40.

A former student of British Social Anthropology's founding fathers Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, Schapera distanced himself very early from his masters, preferring pragmatic ethnography to abstract theories. His photos record people's material circumstances, practices and passions, details of village life, architecture and domestic activities, with portraits of adults and children at play and at work, initiation rites, local economy, the rainmakers' art and communal activities. He lived among the Bakgatla, whose ways were already considerably affected by European colonial influences, for some 13 months in 1929–30 and often returned afterwards, achieving a sophisticated command of Setswana which allowed him to dispense with the services of interpreters. His photos cover the whole optical spectrum, from close-up to wide-angled shots, and the postures, eye contact, and absence of artificiality reveal a very personal bond between him and the Tswana, consisting of a mixture of trust, respect and familiarity. They also testify to his emotional engagement with his work, and to an aesthetic impulse seldom expressed in words; for him, the camera was 'a visual notebook', and photos a personal memoir, 'an unadorned record of everyday life' (p. 1) among the Tswana, and the best way of salvaging elements of a fast-changing culture. The closing chapter in particular, which offers a wider picture of changes in people's life