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## Review of Books

(by Othmar Gächter und Anton Quack)

**Rödlach, Alexander:** *Witches, Westerners, and HIV. AIDS and Cultures of Blame in Africa.* Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2006. 247 pp. ISBN 1-59874-034-2. (pbk)

A witch's curse, an imperialist conspiracy, a racist plot – HIV/AIDS is a catastrophic health crisis with complex cultural dimensions. From small villages to the international system, explanations of where it comes from, who gets it, and who dies are tied to political agendas, religious beliefs, and the psychology of devastating grief. Frequently these explanations conflict with science and clash with prevention and treatment programs.

In "Witches, Westerners, and HIV" Alexander Rödlach draws on a decade of research and work in Zimbabwe to compare beliefs about witchcraft and conspiracy theories surrounding HIV/AIDS in Africa. He shows how both types of beliefs are part of a process of blaming others for AIDS, a process that occurs around the globe but takes on local, culturally specific forms. He also demonstrates the impact of these beliefs on public health and advocacy programs, arguing that cultural misunderstandings contribute to the failure of many well-intentioned efforts. This insightful book provides a cultural perspective essential for everyone interested in AIDS and cross-cultural health issues.

*Edward Green:* Rödlach documents in rich ethnographic detail sorcery and conspiracy theories that abound in Africa and beyond, convincingly arguing that indigenous logic can powerfully influence people's responses to the AIDS epidemic and render conventional approaches for preventing HIV infection ineffective. His findings urge those working in the field of AIDS awareness, prevention, and care to understand better the local perceptions of the epidemic as well as indigenous ethical and moral codes in order to develop culturally meaningful and therefore effective prevention strategies.

**West, Harry G.:** *Kupilikula. Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005. 362 pp. ISBN 978-0-226-89405-8. (pbk)

On the Mueda plateau in northern Mozambique, sorcerers are said to feed on their victims, sometimes "making" lions or transforming into lions to literally devour their flesh. When the ruling FRELIMO party subscribed to socialism, it condemned sorcery beliefs and counter-sorcery practices as false consciousness, but since undertaking neoliberal reform, the party – still in power after three electoral cycles – has "tolerated tradition," leaving villagers to interpret and engage with events in the idiom of sorcery. Now when the lions prowl plateau villages, suspected sorcerers are often lynched.

In this historical ethnography of sorcery, Harry G. West draws on a decade of fieldwork and combines the perspectives of anthropology and political science to reveal how Muedans expect responsible authorities to monitor the invisible realm of sorcery and to fend off or, as Muedans call it, "kupilikula" sorcerers' destructive attacks by practicing a constructive form of counter-sorcery themselves. "Kupilikula" argues that, where neoliberal policies have fostered social division rather than security and prosperity, Muedans have, in fact, used sorcery discourse to assess and sometimes overturn reforms, advancing alternative visions of a world transformed.

**Faulkner, Mark R. J.:** *Overtly Muslim, Covertly Boni. Competing Calls of Religious Allegiance on the Kenyan Coast.* Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2006. 293 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-14753-9. (pbk)

This volume explores the way of life of the Boni community, a hunter-gatherer people that straddle the Kenya/So-

mali border in East Africa. The Boni converted to Islam some fifty years ago and the reasons for this, both internal and external to the community, are identified. The book argues that former indigenous religious activity, far from having died out, is now being renegotiated so as to reflect an evolving Boni self-identity in a multiethnic setting as well as allowing the fermentation of resistance in the face of attempts at cultural hegemony advanced by outside forces. Employing a phenomenological approach and a methodology based on participant observation, this volume identifies three contrasting spheres of religious activity – the bush, the village centre, and individual homesteads.

**Hodgson, Dorothy L.:** *The Church of Women. Gendered Encounters between Maasai and Missionaries.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. 309 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-21762-2. (pbk)

In Africa, why have so many more women converted to Christianity than men? What explains the appeal of Christianity to women? Do religious conversion and spirituality serve as sites for the negotiation of gender and ethnic identity? Can religion inspire personal, political, and collective empowerment of women? How does spiritual power articulate with other domains of power?

In “The Church of Women,” Dorothy L. Hodgson explores how gender has shaped the encounter between missionary priests and Maasai men and women in Tanzania. Building on her extensive experience with Spiritan missionaries and Maasai, Hodgson examines how gendered change among Maasai has affected women’s and men’s notions of religious faith, religious practice, and spiritual power. Hodgson looks at the appeal of Catholicism among women in East Africa, the enmeshing of catholic and Maasai religious beliefs and practices, and the meaning of conversion to new Christians. This rich, engaging, and original book challenges notions about religious encounter and the dominance of political economic understandings of gender.

**Einarsdóttir, Jónína:** *Tired of Weeping. Mother Love, Child Death, and Poverty in Guinea-Bissau.* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004. 236 pp. ISBN 978-0-299-20134-0. (pbk)

In this comprehensive and provocative study of maternal reactions to child death in Guinea-Bissau, West Africa, anthropologist Jónína Einarsdóttir challenges the assumption that mothers in high-poverty societies will neglect their children and fail to mourn their deaths as a survival strategy. Based on ethnographic fieldwork from 1993 to 1998 among the matrilineal Papel, who reside in the Biombo region, this work includes theoretical discussions of reproductive practices, conceptions of children, childcare customs, interpretations of diseases and death, and infanticide. Einarsdóttir also brings compelling narratives of life experiences and reflections of Papel women.

Convincingly, she argues that in this setting, characterized by poverty and high fertility and child mortality, there is

no normalization of child death, despite it being a common event. Rather, poverty and high rates of child mortality contribute to maternal anguish and distress – not indifference – in relation to child diseases and death. Motherly love in Biombo is bound up with notions of give and take – it is not unilaterally self-sacrificing, nor is it simply a question of survival.

**Riesz, János:** *Léopold Sédar Senghor und der afrikanische Aufbruch im 20. Jahrhundert.* Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 2006. 349 pp. ISBN 978-3-7795-0047-6. (hbk)

Die Lebensdaten Léopold Sédar Senghoers – 1906 bis 2001 – schließen ein ganzes Jahrhundert ein. Die Spuren des Mannes, der Abgeordneter in der französischen Nationalversammlung, Staatssekretär der französischen Regierung und Präsident von Senegal war, sind vielfältig und tief.

Als Dichter und Theoretiker der “Négritude” führte Senghor den Kampf gegen die kulturelle Fremdbestimmung Afrikas und für die Wiedergewinnung der bedrohten Afrikanität, immer aber suchte er dabei den Dialog mit Europa. “Keiner hat begeisterter Brücken zwischen Schwarzafrika und Europa gebaut als L.S. Senghor – Dichter, Kulturtheoretiker, Kämpfer für friedlichen Ausgleich zwischen Nord und Süd”, schrieb *Die Presse* in ihrem Nachruf.

Doch gab es nicht nur Zustimmung für Senghors Wirken und den Opponenten ging der Kampf nicht weit genug. “Onkel Tom” nannten sie ihn verächtlich und sahen in ihm “ein reines Produkt des französischen Kolonialismus”.

János Riesz beleuchtet Léopold Sédar Senghors Rolle für den afrikanischen Aufbruch im 20. Jahrhundert und schließt damit im Jahr des hundertsten Geburtstags Senghors eine Lücke in der Geschichtsschreibung.

**Falola, Toyin, and Ann Genova (eds.):** *Orisa. Yoruba Gods and Spiritual Identity in Africa and the Diaspora.* Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005. 457 pp. ISBN 978-1-59221-374-0. (pbk)

This volume rests on the crucial recognition that Yoruba culture has extended far beyond the boundaries of Nigeria. For members of the Yoruba Diaspora, temporal and geographic distance has not fully erased their memory or cultural activism. Orisa worship remains one of the most prominent and recognizable evidences of this connection. With millions of Orisa practitioners in the world, Yoruba gods are very much alive and form part of the Nigerian and Yoruba diasporic religious experience. This volume seeks to introduce new ideas, perspectives, and methodologies on Orisa worship. The chapters reflect a multidisciplinary approach to Orisa study, covering a wide range of topics such as divination, the practice of Santeria, festivals and songs, the creation of the Orisa-based communities within the United States, and the glob-

alization of cults. Most importantly, the volume documents the survival of religious practices, and their important role of reinforcing cultural values within a community as well as empowering its members to progress in the modern world.

**Omari-Tunkara, Mikelle Smith:** *Manipulating the Sacred. Yorùbá Art, Ritual, and Resistance in Brazilian Candomblé.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005. 173 pp. ISBN 978-0-8143-2852-1. (pbk)

The religious and artistic umbilical cord of many African Brazilians is buried deep in Africa and is especially connected to Yorùbá beliefs and practices. The wider Brazilian society strongly models American, French, Portuguese, and other European-derived values and lifestyles. Within this frame, descendants of Africans are overwhelmingly relegated to socially, politically, and economically peripheral sites and roles. In contrast, Yorùbá-derived African Brazilian religion can be understood as a conscious mode of resistance to stratification and separation. The sacred is manipulated through artistic and religious expressions to provide adaptive responses that empower some African Brazilians to reconstruct their social and cultural identities according to a fundamental African conceptual model. Active and sustained participation in the sacred encourages viable, attainable goals and lifestyles.

*Babatunde Lawal:* “Manipulating the Sacred” is a fascinating study of the interconnectedness of art, ritual, and politics in Brazilian *candomblé*. The book is remarkable for its comprehensive field data, rigorous scholarship, and rare insights – all reflecting the author’s unique status as a scholar/initiate privy to ritual information seldom accessible to most researchers. It is a major contribution to the literature on African Diaspora art and religion.

**Johnson, Paul Christopher:** *Secrets, Gossip, and Gods. The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 225 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-518822-6. (pbk)

This wide-ranging book explores the changing, hidden face of the Afro-Brazilian indigenous religion of Candomblé. Despite its importance in Brazilian society, Candomblé has received far less attention than its sister religions of Vodou and Santería. Johnson seeks to fill this void by offering a comprehensive look at the development, beliefs, and practices of Candomblé and exploring its transformation from a secret society of slaves – hidden and marginalized – to a public religion that is very much a part of Brazilian culture. Johnson traces this historical shift and locates the turning point in the creation of a Brazilian public sphere and national identity in the first half of the twentieth century. His major focus is on the ritual practice of secrecy in Candomblé. Offering firsthand accounts of the rites and rituals of contemporary Candomblé, this book provides insight into this influential but little-studied group, while at the same time making a valuable contribution to our understanding of the relationship between religion and society.

**Prandi, Reginaldo:** *Segredos guardados. Orixás na alma brasileira.* São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2005. 328 pp. ISBN 978-85-359-0627-1. (pbk)

Este é um livro sobre o candomblé. Comenta a formação e a permanente transformação dessa religião de origem africana no Brasil, seu lugar no cenário mágico, mítico e religioso do país e seu extravasamento na cultura popular para integrar a alma brasileira. Candomblé, umbanda e outras denominações religiosas afro-brasileiras são analisados no contexto do mercado religioso em expansão, considerando o aspecto da competição entre as diferentes religiões em suas dimensões rituais, míticas, éticas e políticas. Observando as religiões dos orixás, voduns, inquices e encantados em termos de sua busca por legitimidade e do número de seus seguidores ao longo das últimas décadas, “Segredos guardados” discute o futuro dessas alternativas religiosas e sua capacidade de enfrentar as novas demandas e questões que a sociedade atual impõe à religião.

**Pereira, José Carlos:** *O encantamento sexta-feira santa. Manifestações do catolicismo no folclore brasileiro.* São Paulo: Annablume editora, 2005. 293 pp. ISBN 978-85-7419-508-7. (pbk)

A sexta-feira santa é tida, no imaginário religioso do catolicismo popular, como um dia assustador. Dia de resguardo, mais por medo que por devoção. Dia que, segundo os mais antigos, devia ocorrer mudança no comportamento social, inclusive nos hábitos diários da família, como nos trabalhos domésticos e na alimentação. Devia se cumprir um ritual sagrado de normas, regras, recomendações e proibições que restringiam os costumes cotidianos. Tais regras, se desrespeitadas, podiam acarretar desgraças na vida do infiel. Casos assombrosos ocorridos em consequência do desrespeito a essa data povoam o imaginário católico. Alguns destes casos estão reunidos neste livro. São expressões da experiência peculiar de vida coletiva de diferentes regiões do Brasil, constantemente vivida e revivida pelos praticantes do catolicismo popular que inspira e orienta comportamentos, de geração em geração. É um trabalho de gênero etnográfico, com o objetivo de agrupar e analisar “os encantamentos da Sexta-Feira Santa” e seu contexto (a Quaresma), redesenhando aspectos culturais da religião popular que estavam esquecidos. É um estudo descritivo e circunscrito à área do catolicismo, cujo objetivo é a investigação da literatura folclórica religiosa brasileira de influência lusitana.

**Galinier, Jacques, et Antoinette Molinié :** *Les néo-Indiens. Une religion du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire.* Paris : Odile Jacob, 2006. 329 pp. ISBN 978-2-7381-1813-4. (pbk)

Les Inca de Tintin en chair et en os? En 2001, le président du Pérou Alejandro Toledo s’est fait introniser en Inca à Machu Picchu par des chamanes qui ont présenté des offrandes aux dieux des montagnes. Le président de Bolivie Evo Morales s’est fait introniser dans le temple de Tiwanaku habillé en Aymara. Jacques Galinier et Antoinette Molinié nous montrent comment le “néo-Indien” qui

émerge en Amérique latine ne sort ni d'une monographie ethnographique, ni d'un métissage antiraciste. Mais de notre culture télévisuelle et de Disneyland. Il s'habille en prince aztèque ou en Inca les jours de fête, et ses vêtements traditionnels inspirent les stylistes californiens. Il ne danse plus pour la pluie, mais pour les touristes. Il pille les écrits des ethnologues pour découvrir ses rituels.

Un phénomène déconcertant mélangeant tour-opérateurs, nouvelles spiritualités, ethnologie et altermondialisme.

**Bolin, Inge:** *Growing Up in a Culture of Respect. Child Rearing in Highland Peru.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006. 214 pp. ISBN 978-0-292-71298-0. (pbk)

Far from the mainstream of society, the pastoral community of Chillihuani in the high Peruvian Andes rears children who are well-adjusted, creative, and curious. They exhibit superior social and cognitive skills and maintain an attitude of respect for all life as they progress smoothly from childhood to adulthood without a troubled adolescence. What makes such child-rearing success even more remarkable is that "childhood" is not recognized as a distinct phase of life. Instead, children assume adult rights and responsibilities at an early age in order to help the community survive in a rugged natural environment and utter material poverty.

This ethnography provides a full account of child-rearing practices in the high Peruvian Andes. Inge Bolin traces children's lives from birth to adulthood and finds truly amazing strategies of child rearing, as well as impressive ways of living that allow teenagers to enjoy the adolescent stage of their lives while contributing significantly to the welfare of their families and the community. Bolin demonstrates that traditional practices of respect, whose roots reach back to pre-Columbian times, are what enable the children of the high Andes to mature into dignified, resilient, and caring adults.

**Weiss, Gerald, Søren Hvalkof y Hanne Veber:** *Guía etnográfica de la Alta Amazonía; vol. 5: Campa Ribereños. Ashéninka del Gran Pajonal.* Lima: IFEA, 2005. 289 pp. ISBN 9972-623-37-8. (pbk)

La "Guía etnográfica de la alta amazonía" es un proyecto editorial de largo aliento que se propone publicar monografías etnográficas referidas a los diversos pueblos indígenas de la amazonía en varios volúmenes a cargo de destacados especialistas.

El presente volumen reúne monografías sobre dos segmentos de lo que hasta hace poco se conocía como "grupo etnolingüístico Campa", los Asháninka y Ashéninka. Estos segmentos forman parte del conjunto de pueblos cuyos territorios se ubican en el piedemonte andino en la región central del Perú. Los Asháninka ocupan actualmente las cuencas del Apurímac, Ene, Tambo, Satipo, Perené, Pichis y Pachitea. Los Ashéninka ocupan el Gran Pajonal, pero también se encuentran en el alto Perené y alto Ucayali.

Entre los temas tratados en las monografías que componen este volumen destacan los complejos procesos históricos que no solo han ido moldeando las fronteras étnicas de los pueblos estudiados, sino determinado su actual localización, organización social, cultura material y volumen demográfico. Si bien estos trabajos tienen enfoques y estilos distintos, y enfatizan diferentes dimensiones de la vida social de los pueblos estudiados, las mismas tienen la virtud de relieves la singularidad de cada uno de estos pueblos a la par que los elementos que tienen en común.

**Govers, Cora:** *Performing the Community. Representation, Ritual, and Reciprocity in the Totonac Highlands of Mexico.* Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006. 328 pp. ISBN 978-3-8258-9751-2. (pbk)

Economic liberalisation, modern mass media, and new religious and political movements have touched upon even the remotest areas in Mexico, and the Northern Highlands of the state of Puebla are no exception. When this coincides with recent infrastructures such as roads and electricity, and new income sources from cash crop production and urban migration, the nature of rural communities rapidly changes. This study shows how the people of the Totonac mountain village of Nanacatlán deal with their increasingly pluriform and differentiated local world. By performing stories, rituals, and exchanges, they have countered centrifugal cultural and social forces. Rather than leading to the demise of the community, modernization and globalisation thus seem to have reinforced the sense of local belonging.

This anthropological analysis points to simultaneous efforts of new and old cultural brokers – ritual specialists and healers as well as young migrants – who [re]create the community by linking the outside world to local customs. Their initiatives are taken up by women, crucial for community building through elaborate food exchanges, and men, whose involvement is central to public ritual life. Their combined efforts create a living community and link the village past to its rural-urban present and future, as a place of belonging in times of change.

**Kirsch, Stuart:** *Reverse Anthropology. Indigenous Analysis of Social and Environmental Relations in New Guinea.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. 272 pp. ISBN 978-0-8047-5342-5. (pbk)

While ethnography ordinarily privileges anthropological interpretations, this book attempts the reciprocal process of describing indigenous modes of analysis. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research with the Yonggom people of New Guinea, the author examines how indigenous analysis organizes local knowledge and provides a framework for interpreting events, from first contact and colonial rule to contemporary interactions with a multinational mining company and the Indonesian state.

This book highlights Yonggom participation in two political movements: an international campaign against the Ok Tedi mine, which is responsible for extensive de-

forestation and environmental problems, and the opposition to Indonesian control over West Papua, including Yonggom experiences as political refugees in Papua New Guinea. The author challenges a prevailing homogenization in current representations of indigenous peoples, showing how Yonggom modes of analysis specifically have shaped these political movements.

**Wardlow, Holly:** *Wayward Women. Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. 284 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-24560-0. (pbk)

Written with uncommon grace and clarity, this extremely engaging ethnography analyzes female agency, gendered violence, and transactional sex in contemporary Papua New Guinea. Focusing on Huli “passenger women” (women who accept money for sex), “Wayward Women” explores the socioeconomic factors that push women into the practice of transactional sex, and asks if these transactions might be an expression of resistance, or even revenge. Challenging conventional understandings of “prostitution” and “sex work,” Holly Wardlow contextualizes the actions and intentions of “passenger women” in a rich analysis of kinship, bridewealth, marriage, and exchange, revealing the ways in which these robust social institutions are transformed by an encompassing capitalist economy. Many “passenger women” assert that they have been treated *olsem maket* (like market goods) by their husbands and natal kin, and they respond by fleeing home and defiantly appropriating their sexuality for their own purposes. Experiences of rape, violence, and the failure of kin to redress such wrongs figure prominently in their own stories about becoming “wayward.” Drawing on village court cases, hospital records, and women’s own raw, caustic, and darkly funny narratives, “Wayward Women” provides a riveting portrait of the way modernity engages with gender to produce new and contested subjectivities.

**Bashkow, Ira:** *The Meaning of Whitemen. Race and Modernity in the Orokaiva Cultural World.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006. 329 pp. ISBN 978-0-226-03891-9. (pbk)

A familiar cultural presence for people the world over, “the whiteman” has come to personify the legacy of colonialism, the face of Western modernity, and the force of globalization. Focusing on cultural meanings of “whiteman” in the Orokaiva society of Papua New Guinea, this book provides a fresh approach to understanding how race is symbolically constructed and why racial stereotypes endure in the face of counterevidence.

While Papua New Guinea’s resident white population has been severely reduced due to postcolonial white flight, the “whiteman” remains a significant racial and cultural other here – not only as an archetype of power and wealth in the modern arena, but also as a foil for people’s evaluations of themselves within vernacular frames of meaning. As Ira Bashkow explains, ideas of self versus other need not always be anti-humanistic or deprecatory, but can be a creative and potentially constructive part of all cultures.

A brilliant analysis of whiteness and race in a non-Western society, “The Meaning of Whitemen” turns traditional ethnography to the purpose of understanding how others see us.

**Goddard, Cliff:** *The Languages of East and Southeast Asia. An Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 315 pp. ISBN 0-19-924860-5. (pbk)

This book introduces readers to the remarkable linguistic diversity of East and Southeast Asia. It contains wide-ranging and accessible discussions of every important aspect of the languages of the region, including word origins, cultural keywords, tones and sounds, language families and typology, key syntactic structures, writing systems, and communicative styles.

Students of linguistics will welcome the book’s treatments of celebrated features such as classifiers, serial verb constructions, tones, topic-prominence, and honorifics. It shows students of particular East and Southeast Asian languages how their language fits structurally and culturally into the regional language mosaic. With its exercises, solutions, glossary, and many fascinating cases and insights, the book is an ideal introduction to descriptive and field linguistics.

Cliff Goddard writes with great clarity and an eye for interesting examples. His book will appeal to all those with a serious interest in the languages and cultures of the region.

**Chalmers, Ian:** *Indonesia. An Introduction to Contemporary Traditions.* South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2006. 341 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-551547-3. (pbk)

“Indonesia: An Introduction to Contemporary Traditions” explores the social and cultural forces that have shaped Indonesian politics in recent decades, and especially since the 1990s. It examines various sociocultural traditions and analyses their contemporary relevance.

The first purpose of this book is to delve into these forces and introduce to the interested reader the fascinating mixture of religions, cultures, and communities that provide this nation-state with some of the most complex societies on earth. Its second purpose is to provide a guide to important scholarly references on Indonesia. A great deal has been written on the politics, cultures, and societies of Indonesia in recent decades, but much of this work is either very general or involves specialised investigation of particular subjects. Finally, the theoretical intent of the book – and the thread running through its analysis – is to explore the social and cultural dynamics of political change in Indonesia today. With each chapter focusing on a particular aspect of social and cultural life, this book will place the events of the last decade in their social and historical context, helping the student both to understand and to interpret the evolution of sociocultural traditions. In short, this book will help us understand how Indonesian politics has been shaped by changing cultural and social patterns.

**Harnish, David D.:** *Bridges to the Ancestors. Music, Myth, and Cultural Politics at an Indonesian Festival.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006. 261 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-2914-8. (hbk)

The spectacular Lingsar festival is held annually at a village temple complex built above the most abundant water springs on the island of Lombok, near Bali. Participants come to the festival not only for the efficacy of its rites but also for its spiritual, social, and musical experience. A nexus of religious, political, artistic, and agrarian interests, the festival also serves to harmonize relations between indigenous Sasak Muslims and migrant Balinese Hindus. Ethnic tensions, however, lie beneath the surface of cooperative behaviour, and struggles regularly erupt over which group – Balinese or Sasak – owns the past and dominates the present. “Bridges to the Ancestors” is a broad ethnographic study of the festival based on over two decades of research. The work addresses the festival’s players, performing arts, rites, and histories, and explores its relationship to the island’s sociocultural and political trends. Music, the most public icon of the festival, has been largely responsible for overcoming differences between the island’s two ethnic groups. Through the intermingling of Balinese and Sasak musics at the festival, a profound union has been forged which, as participants confirm, has been the event’s primary social role.

**Singh, Udaya Narayan:** *India Writes. A Story of Linguistic and Literary Plurality.* New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2006. 152 pp. (pbk)

This slim volume tells in an informative and lucid manner India’s story of linguistic and literary plurality. The author covers a broad spectrum from the past to the present. First, he deals with the quest for the Unknown in the early writing; the rich interpretative traditions of literary theoreticians; the linguistic space; the writing systems; the major scripts of the geo-political space and the major and minority languages; the Indian constitution and the linguistic recognition of multilingual India. Second, he addresses the language families in India and dimensions of ancient Indian writing. The following sections contain: the emergence of modern Indian literary canons; English in India; the Southern Saga (Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam); the major literary languages in the East (Assamese, Manipuri, Bodo, Nepali, Bangla, Maithili, Oriya, Santali); the Western India (Gujarati, Sindhi, Marathi, Konkani); literary languages in the North (Kashmiri, Punjabi, Dogri, Hindi, Urdu). The author concludes with an overall picture of India as a linguistic area and refers in a postscript to some crises that happened in the past. Last but not least, the publication includes an informative diagram of the Indian language families (based on the 1991 Census) by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (Mysore).

In “India Writes,” U.N. Singh has given a statistically and descriptively rich overview of a country which has 75 major languages out of a total of 325 languages used in Indian households and according to one estimate 1652 mother tongues with more than 10,000 speakers.

**Awungshi, Yaruigam:** *Hinduism and Christianity in India. A Study of Socio-Historical Process of Conversion.* New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 2005. 222 pp. ISBN 81-7658-032-5. (hbk)

“Hinduism and Christianity in India” is a sociological exploration of the impact of religion on two communities (Tangkhus and Meiteis) of Manipur. The primary focus of the study is to examine the process of conversion of Tangkhus into a Baptist group of Protestant Christianity, and Meiteis into the Vaishnavite branch of Hinduism. The social, political, educational, and economic impact of these two alien religions on the two communities has been analysed on the basis of empirical data. The study finds out that the coming in of Vaishnavites and Baptists of Protestant Christianity to Manipur has brought a profound transformation in the local society. Due to influence of Hinduism, the Brahmanical social order of caste hierarchy emerged in the casteless society of Meiteis and Tangkhus.

**Sharma, Arvind:** *Modern Hindu Thought. An Introduction.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005. 208 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-567638-9. (hbk)

Hinduism is widely regarded not just as a set of religious beliefs, but as a philosophy of life based upon certain key tenets. Viewed in a casual manner, these concepts seem to be eternal and unchanging. A Hindu today would describe his or her tradition in terms of the concepts of Brahman, Isvara, Jiva, Samsara, Karma, Dharma, among others, much like his counterpart a thousand years ago would have done. Yet, has anything changed in Hinduism?

“Modern Hindu Thought” questions such simplistic assumptions. This volume explains the manner in which these terms have been reconfigured in modern Hinduism, and how they compare with the way they were understood in classical Hinduism. Most of us are familiar with the idea that the more things change the more they remain the same. This book suggests that the opposite may well be true – the more things seem to remain the same, the more they may have changed.

The book is conceptually divided into three parts. In the first, the historical context of modern Hindu thought is delineated. In the second, the key concepts of modern Hinduism are presented in a succinct and pithy manner to offer a view of modern Hindu thought at a glance. In the final part, each term constitutive of the modern Hindu worldview is put under scrutiny.

**Holton, Kimberly DaCosta:** *Performing Folklore. Ranchos Folclóricos from Lisbon to Newark.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. 293 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-21831-5. (pbk)

Through the lens of expressive culture, “Performing Folklore” tracks Portugal’s transition from fascism to democracy, and from imperial metropolis to EEC member state. Kimberly DaCosta Holton examines the evolution and

significance of *ranchos folclóricos*, groups of amateur musicians and dancers who perform turn-of-the-century popular tradition and have acted as cultural barometers of change throughout twentieth-century Portugal. She investigates the role that these folklore groups played in the mid-twentieth-century dictatorship, how they fell out of official favour with the advent of democracy, and why they remain so popular in Portugal's post-authoritarian state, especially in emigrant and diasporic communities. Holton looks at music, dance, costume, repertoire, venue, and social interplay in both local and global contexts. She considers the importance of revivalist folklore in the construction and preservation of national identity in the face of globalization. This book embraces "invented tradition" as process rather than event, presenting an ethnography not only of folkloric revivalism but also of sweeping cultural transformation, promoted alternately by authoritarianism, democracy, emigration, and European unification.

**Morris, Brian:** Religion and Anthropology. A Critical Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 350 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-61779-6. (pbk)

This important study provides a critical introduction to the social anthropology of religion, focusing on more recent classical ethnographies. Comprehensive, free of scholastic jargon, engaging, and comparative in approach, it covers all the major religious traditions that have been studied concretely by anthropologists – Shamanism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and its relation to African and Melanesian religions, and contemporary Neo-Paganism. Eschewing a thematic approach and treating religion as a social institution and not simply as an ideology or symbolic system, the book follows the dual heritage of social anthropology in combining an interpretative understanding and sociological analysis. The book will appeal to all students of anthropology, whether established scholars or initiates to the discipline, as well as to students of the social sciences and religious studies, and to all those interested in comparative religion.

**Engelke, Matthew, and Matt Tomlinson** (eds.): The Limits of Meaning. Case Studies in the Anthropology of Christianity. New York: Berghahn Books, 2006. 239 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-170-7. (hbk)

Anthropologists often claim to unearth "meaning" through their work, and none more so than anthropologists of religion. Even studies that are sensitive to questions of power – which is often cast as an alternative focus – do not deny the existence of meaningful events in religious practice. But what happens when case studies confound the coherence of the meaning approach, or even the meaning vs. power model? What happens when rituals "fail" because a preacher cannot remember what to say, or refuses to speak? What happens when the audience gets bored, or is left perplexed and discomfited? And why might some people choose to describe the religious practices of others as "meaningless"?

Drawing on research in the anthropology of Christianity from around the world, the authors in this volume suggest

that in order to analyze meaning productively, we need to consider cases that challenge its theoretical and practical relevance. We need to look, in other words, at "the limits of meaning." The chapters explore these "limits" through ethnographically grounded examples, and are framed by an introduction, that offers one of the most comprehensive overviews of theories of meaning published in anthropology. This collection is a welcome new addition to the anthropology of religion, offering fresh insights on a classic topic and drawing attention to meaning in a way that other volumes have for key terms like "culture" and "fieldwork."

**Stauth, Georg** (ed.): On Archaeology of Sainthood and Local Spirituality in Islam. Past and Present Crossroads of Events and Ideas. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2004. 220 pp. ISBN 978-3-89942-141-5. (pbk)

Saints, their places, the rituals of their veneration – the heroes and martyrs they represent or to whom they are often connected with – and the beliefs in their powers have often been described as being counter-thematic to the constructive issues of modern society in our times. However, in the Middle East – and certainly this is true for many other world regions and other world religions – local saints, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic, have gained a very ambiguous status in religious movements, political struggles and events of social reconstruction. In the case of Islam, perhaps more openly, modernists and fundamentalists alike attempt to abolish or to reformulate the agenda of venerating the saints. However, at the same time saints and their localities have become a sort of overcharged symbolic incidence in the modern presence of Islam, in politics, in the media and – perhaps on a more hidden ground – in the struggle of ideas. In this volume, historians, islamologists, anthropologists, and sociologists give a multiple description of the inherent issues of the unhampered continuity of Muslim saints and their significance. This volume is linking empirical research on individual saints (cases from Egypt, Turkey, Algeria, Syria, and Morocco) with the debates around Islam and modernity.

**Heusch, Luc de :** La transe et ses entours. La sorcellerie, l'amour fou, saint Jean de la Croix, etc. Bruxelles : Éditions Complexe, 2006. 241 pp. ISBN 2-8048-0059-8. (pbk)

Se fondant sur son expérience de la transe, Luc de Heusch élargit considérablement l'horizon des religions fondées sur la possession ou le chamanisme. Il n'hésite pas à intégrer dans le même champ anthropologique l'extase mystique, tant chrétienne qu'islamique, certains aspects de la sorcellerie, le charisme, l'amour fou ; il compare notamment le roman de Tristan et Iseult à un mythe mélanésien expliquant l'origine de la magie d'amour.

L'auteur enjambe allègrement les frontières académiques arbitraires. Platon avait déjà eu l'intuition de l'unité de la possession religieuse et de l'érotique. L'hypnose, dont Freud avait pressenti le rôle omniprésent, connaît un regain d'intérêt parmi les thérapeutes.



*Claude Rivière* : Au total, voilà un brillant essai de confrontation de données et d'idées qui paraissent jusqu'alors cloisonnées. En embrassant une pensée si riche, si documentée, si suggestive, je finis par comprendre ce qu'il y a comme magie d'amour dans ma culture d'anthropologue.

**Turner, Edith:** *Among the Healers. Stories of Spiritual and Ritual Healing around the World.* Westport: Praeger, 2006. 185 pp. ISBN 0-275-98729-9. (hbk)

Here, a renowned anthropologist takes the reader on a tour of the myriad spiritual healing traditions from around the world. Lessons from communities in rural Ireland, Mexico, Brazil, Europe, Israel, Russia, Africa, and the United States will provide a road map for readers as they navigate the many traditions, rituals, and sacred mysteries of healing.

Eleven degrees south of the equator in Africa, members of a small mud-hut village gathered around a little African shrine – just a forked pole – to heal a member of their community. Holy things were being done. Music played. The old medicine men sang, and everyone joined in. The crowd was intent on “singing-out” a harmful spirit from the body of a sick woman. Would the ritual work? Would the woman be healed? The stories and anecdotes found here will enlighten readers about alternative, nonmedical approaches to healing a variety of illnesses through spirit and ritual. The stories, told from firsthand accounts in many cases, are fascinating and will move readers to a greater understanding of the role of religion and the spirit in the life of the body.

**Spindler, George, and Janice E. Stockard** (eds.): *Globalization and Change in Fifteen Cultures. Born in One World, Living in Another.* Belmont: Thomson Higher Education, 2007. 380 pp. ISBN 978-0-534-63648-7. (pbk)

In this volume, fifteen case study authors write about culture change in today's diverse settings around the world. Each original article provides insights into the dynamics and meanings of change, as well as the effects of globalization at the local level.

Across fifteen field sites, the repercussions of global transformation for local peoples are described by the anthropologists who study them: William Young documents how the Rashaayda Bedouin of Sudan, in forging new ties with their distant cousins in Saudi Arabia, have created a transnational Arab kinship. Among the Ju/'hoansi of Africa, Richard Lee finds out that the renowned autonomy of women now serves to protect them from the worst ravages of HIV/AIDS, which has decimated other tribes in the region. In the Sambia tribe of New Guinea, Gilbert Herdt and Birgitta Stolpe discover a crisis in gender and a search for new models of masculinity. Cindy Hull reports from a Yucatecan village that global markets and factory work have transformed not only the everyday working lives of men and women, but their established domestic hierarchies as well. From China, Dru Gladney analyzes how contemporary ethnic groups employ self-identification to navigate national and international politics and advance their own special interests. These and many more local accounts reflective of globalization await the reader of this anthology.

**Pinxten, Rik, and Ellen Preckler** (eds.): *Racism in Metropolitan Areas.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2006. 190 pp. ISBN 1-84545-089-2. (pbk)

Cultural identity, whether real or imagined, has become an important marker of societal differentiation. The series “Culture and Politics / Politics and Culture” focuses on the interplay of politics and culture and offers a forum for analysis and discussion of such key issues as multiculturalism, racism, and human rights.

Concentrating on the growth of racism in large cities and urban areas, this volume presents the views of international scholars who work in the social sciences, as well as statements by nonpracticing academics such as journalists and policy makers. The contributions of the scientists and the non-academic specialists are grouped around common themes, highlighting existing debates and bringing together widely scattered information. The book explores the ways in which old forms of racism persist in the urban context, and how traditional exclusion systems like casteism can be likened to contemporary forms like racism directed at refugees.

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## Review of Articles

(by Joachim G. Piepke, Dariusz Piwowarczyk, and Alexander Rödlach)

**Beneduce, Roberto, and Simona Taliani:** Embodied Powers, Deconstructed Bodies. Spirit Possession, Sickness, and the Search for Wealth of Nigerian Immigrant Women. *Anthropos* 101.2006: 429-449.

Possession often proliferates during times of dramatic social and cultural changes, such as colonisation, evangelisation, war, etc. These transitional and collective meanings of this phenomenon received many interpretations. On the other hand, not much attention was paid to the individual experience of change and to contradictory attitudes often accompanying events such as religious conversion or immigration. The authors argue that possession has the ability to metaphorically catch the complex and contradictory experiences of such events. The argument is illustrated through possession experiences of Nigerian women who immigrated to Italy.

Possession represents for some Nigerian women a social practice that encourages certain kinds of emotions, discourses, and actions. Possession is particularly appropriate to articulate the problems posed for the individuals by displacement, loneliness, and the challenges of modernity. By recognizing the ordinary dimension of possession as the most complex trait to interpret, the authors move successfully from an anthropology of possession to an anthropology of the possessed. By this they mean an anthropology which derives the structure and meaning of possession from the experiences, biographies, and accounts of the possessed.

Possession by spirits of the waters or by divinities from the religious pantheon of the Igbo, Yoruba, Ibo, etc. is a familiar experience among Nigerian immigrant women in Italy. However, since it is no longer carried out in its original context, it is caught in other dilemmas, promises, and uncertainties, thus becoming at the same time foreign and uncanny. The relation with the spirit, which assumes in some cases the form of a perennial alliance, conflicting and ambivalent as it might be, situates possession among realisations of otherness. Possession indicates an urgent need to reaffirm conflicting identities, which is both a bond and a memory, which have become laborious to sustain.

The authors conclude that such phenomena force us to avoid the risk of essentialising the notion of “the African person,” and to bring back the attention to the concrete “exercise of existence,” to the “meaningful acts” possessed individuals carry out in their daily lives. The Nigerian immigrant women have shared, for a more or less extensive period of time, a specific experience, whose meaning cannot be disregarded in the comprehension of their possession – that of being women who have prostituted themselves and whose bodies have been bodies possessed by others, or better said, dispossessed, submitted to blackmail and other manipulations which have

been imposed on them, from time to time, in moral and medical discourses. Their bodies have been captured by the logic of mimetic adherence, which struggles to realize dreams of wealth and power of ambiguous expression, which expresses desires, identity, and other motives. Their condition as clandestine immigrant women, besieged by envy of their compatriots and united by temporary bonds with their friends-clients, makes every strategy aimed at gaining security contradictory and at the same time uncertain. This subjugation can now move along the unexpected lines of a stubborn illness resistant to therapy – the possession –, in the silence of an inner monologue made up of dilemmas and anxiety.

**Colombijn, Freek:** The Search for an Extinct Volcano in the Dutch Polder. Pilgrimage to Memorial Sites of Pim Fortuyn. *Anthropos* 102.2007: 71-90.

On 6 May 2002 Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn was shot dead. The murder formed the shocking climax to the most eventful election campaign in the Netherlands for decades. Pim Fortuyn was poised to win a landslide victory, which would upset the Dutch political landscape. His political heirs did go on to take a resounding electoral victory, but did not know how to cash in on their good fortune. Pim Fortuyn’s party is no longer a force to be reckoned with, but several of his ideas have become common property in the Dutch political domain.

Fortuyn was born on 19 February 1948. He first made a career at the universities of Groningen and Rotterdam in sociology and economics. In the 1990s, he acquired a reputation for his talent to present his case in a provocative style. He became a welcome guest in talk shows on TV, wrote columns in the conservative, prestigious weekly *Elsevier*, and wrote books such as “Against the Islamisation of Our Culture.”

Core themes of his ideas were: a poorly functioning, over-staffed bureaucracy; the existence of politicians who only talked about themselves and had lost contact with the electorate; the European Union with far too many competences; long waiting lists for medical treatment; crime; asylum seekers; and the threat of Islam. The anti-Islamism was probably the theme he kept hammering on most. The Netherlands has, in Fortuyn’s view, a Christian culture, although most people no longer go regularly to church or do not even call themselves Christian. In contrast to Dutch culture, he labelled Islam a “backward culture.” The construction of mosques with minarets, women wearing veils, and the call to Friday prayer were all elements that did not fit in with Dutch culture and should be for-bidden.

Actually, the pilgrimage consists of three parts. The first part is a bus trip from Rotterdam (where Fortuyn lived) to

the Dutch TV studios at the so-called Media Park in Hilversum, then on to his temporary burial site in Driehuis, and back to Rotterdam. The roundtrip is about 210 km. The second part consists of a march through Rotterdam on foot. The march starts at the zoo, which was also the main collector point for the bus trip, and goes via Fortuyn's house to a statue in the centre of Rotterdam. The third part is a meeting at a large cafe during the evening.

Without using the term themselves, Dutch nationalism is very important to the pilgrims. The flag with Fortuyn's image against a background of the colours of the Dutch flag was a material symbol of this nationalism. The Pilgrims stressed the importance of the Dutch identity in words: "I am loyal (to my fatherland) into death (*tot in den dood*), not until death." When urged to explain what characterised Dutch identity, the informants stressed two elements: Christian (as opposed to Islam) and non-immigrant.

With regard to the Christian element of Dutch identity, a couple with children, for example, make a detour to Fortuyn's statue on their way to church on Christmas Eve. They do so to counterbalance Islam, which – in their view – is being thrust upon them by the Dutch State, for example, when children are given a day off at school on *Id al-Fitr* (the end of the Muslim fasting month). The most radical participant stated that the Netherlands are being brainwashed by the mosques. The professed non-immigrant element of Dutch identity translates itself into opposition to non-Europeans: Antilleans walk on the street in "spread-out" fashion; they have an urban dance culture; rhythm-and-blues: that is "un-Dutch." Moroccans do not have a specific way of walking, but differ "in other respects": they are strangers to emotions; lack stamina; and cannot accept criticism. Turks are easily offended and quickly resort to taking revenge (especially in matters of women). Considering the xenophobic attitude of many Fortuyn supporters, it is worth noting that five pilgrims on the trip were nonwhites. They were probably not Muslims. Apparently the opposition between Dutchmen and nonwhite immigrants, as perceived by the pilgrims, is really a matter of Dutchmen versus *Muslim* immigrants.

Taking a theoretical turn, the radical and xenophobic nationalism of the pilgrims seems to be a response to the globalisation process. Nationalist sentiments are a reaction to the erosion of the autonomy of states and the feeling that one has lost one's grip on the societal changes. Familiar ways of doing things are disappearing and people have to face more uncertainty than they have been used to. To cope with these fears, individuals seek to align themselves with new authorities and try to find again a clear place in the world. Therefore this era is an age of imagined communities. The enhanced Dutch nationalism gave them a new place and a sense of belonging to an "imagined community."

**Carton, Benedict:** "We are Made Quiet by This Annihilation": Historicizing Concepts of Bodily Pollution and Dangerous Sexuality in South Africa. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39.2006: 85-106.

It has become a sad truism that black youths comprise one of the groups in South Africa most at risk to become infected with HIV. Their rising rate of HIV infection is ascribed, in part, to chronic unemployment, which afflicts post-apartheid society and frustrates their "pursuit of modernity." In this milieu, transactional sex becomes a vital source of income and commodities. Such quests, in turn, stoke rumours in provinces hard hit by AIDS that women with multiple partners spread fatal bodily pollution. Pollution is a prominent concept in Zulu cosmology, *umnyama*, which refers to misfortune that, in this case, is transferred through intimacy. Pollution is viewed as the driving force behind the AIDS epidemic.

Some observers of the pandemic have asserted that this attribution reflects novel responses to a scourge defying local explanation. But B. W. Vilakazi's poem from 1935, mourning those "dying in their prime" and criticizing "the lust of youths," begins to tell a different story. A decade before his birth in 1906, his parents lived through the rinderpest epizootic. By 1897, this virulent virus had left the cattle kraals emptied of every ox, cow, or calf their owners possessed. One key noun for rinderpest explains that livestock perished "like flies," a term frequently applied to the AIDS epidemic. The similarities between AIDS and rinderpest extend beyond linguistics. As bride wealth cattle was annihilated in the rinderpest epidemic, it became nearly impossible to traditionally seal nuptial negotiations sanctioning reproduction. Subsequently, youths increasingly engaged in premarital intercourse. Such transgressions worried elders who tried to safeguard sexual norms. At the centre of this era's "loose morality" were young women, some of whom became prostitutes infected with gonorrhoea. Forbidden sex, a source of hazardous bodily pollution, now coincided with strong *umnyama*, cosmological pollution conveyed by a killer disease. The author concludes that subsequently animal plagues profoundly affected people's cosmological outlook.

This cosmological shift can even be observed in the teachings of some Christian churches in southern Africa. For instance, Pentecostal movements in southern Africa call to build a moral bulwark against sexual pollution. The author gives the example of a pastor in a revivalist church near Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, who opened her sermon with an admonition. She advised worshippers, particularly mothers and daughters, that true healing and life-giving power strung from penitence, which kept "death from stalking everyone." After denouncing the sins of fornication, she laid out a path of proper conduct and cleansing. Unmarried congregants were told to be abstinent; husbands and wives were implored to go forth and multiply. Obviously, such notions draw not only from the cosmological change resulting from a previous epidemic, but coincide and mingle with other codes of conduct and moral worldviews.

**Buckley-Zistel, Susanne:** Remembering to Forget: Chosen Amnesia as a Strategy for Local Coexistence in Post-Genocide Rwanda. *Africa* 76.2006: 131-150.

History and memory had a devastating impact on Rwandan politics in the past, and people are acutely aware of

this. Each individual life in Rwanda is today defined by reference to the genocide from twelve years ago. In order to escape the grip of the past, they eclipse it. This is not a denial of what happened, however, but a deliberate coping mechanism. Only through remembering what to forget, or chosen amnesia, are rural Rwandans able to cope with their present social milieu, their day-to-day life in the proximity of “killers” who, truly or falsely, participated in the genocide, or “traitors,” who denounced the right or wrong people.

Regarding the dynamics that led to the genocide, chosen amnesia, the deliberate forgetting of the circumstances, prevents people from accepting the cleavages which mark Rwandan society. From an ontological perspective, the stories people choose, or eclipse, in reference to their past, prevent a sense of closure and fixed boundaries between “us” and “them.” Through not referring to the underlying social cleavages, they seek to reduce their impact and subvert their dividing powers. This marks a deferral and deliberate leaving open of bounded, in this case Hutu or Tutsi, communities, which is essential for day-to-day survival and allows for peaceful coexistence.

Moreover, eclipsing past divisions protects bystanders and participants from acknowledging guilt and at least partial responsibility for the genocide. Through blaming agents external to the community for the genocide – the former politicians and elites – all community members are relieved of responsibility. The external scapegoats allow everybody to feel victimized and create at least some sense of collective identity under the guise of victimhood.

Yet, the danger of chosen amnesia is that it leaves social antagonisms untouched. It prevents the transformation of the society into one that will render ethnicity-related killings impossible. Many Rwandans thought that this lack of change constitutes a time bomb. If, for whatever reasons, the current government is replaced by a dictatorship that chooses, once more in the history of Rwanda, to incite ethnic hatred, the message will again fall on fertile ground.

This poses the difficult question of what such a transformation process would look like. According to some Rwandans, there is a need to mediate between individuals and groups in a community. In many cases, when someone accused of actively participating in the genocide has confessed in prison, and subsequently been released, he or she does not repeat the confession back home. However, it is desirable to deal with confessions in local court hearings. Victim-offender mediation happens in some cases on local, intimate levels. It allows the participants to voice their feelings, share their experience, and learn about the other’s perspective. Mediation is a long process and it might take years for participants to actually talk to each other. There is an urgent need to emphasize on local levels of reconciliation that should be the first premise in planning a wider national, as well as justice-related, reconciliation policies. Only through changing the way Rwandans relate to each other today can future ethnicity-related violence be prevented.

**Schulz, Dorothea E.:** Promises of (Im)mediate Salvation: Islam, Broadcast Media, and the Remaking of Religious Experience in Mali. *American Ethnologist* 33.2006: 210-229.

Over the past 20 years, Muslims in Africa, similar to their brethren throughout the Muslim world, have witnessed the rise to prominence of new types of religious leaders who promote Islam as a mission geared toward social and individual moral reform. In Mali, Islam’s invigorated and unprecedented public visibility manifests itself in a multitude of symbols of Islamic piety and in an infrastructure of Islamic proselytizing ranging from mosques and reformed schools to oversized billboards declaring the presence of numerous, often foreign, Islamic welfare associations in Mali.

Most notable, however, is the pervasive presence of Islam in broadcast media. Various Muslim leaders and activists presently disseminate their teachings on local and national radio stations, facilitated by the mushrooming of local radio stations since the establishment of multiparty democracy in 1991. These leaders are particularly successful in Malian towns where established religious lineages, such as those affiliated with Sufi orders, were never as influential as in other cities. Striking resemblances can be seen between these charismatic preachers and the various media figures, which, in recent years, have risen to fame throughout the Muslim world, and who, in their roles of preachers, personal counsellors, or legal advisors, attract broad constituencies of believers. Whereas the level of instruction and of doctrinal arguments of these media stars varies widely, they all have in common that they draw and unite astounding numbers of fans and acolytes concerned with knowing more about the central tenets of Islam and how to integrate them into their daily affairs and dealings. The most outstanding attribute of these preachers, one that uncannily establishes their resemblance to U.S. televangelist preachers, is their highly skilled and very self-conscious style of media presentation.

The author argues that the heightened prominence of an Islamic symbolism in public arenas should not be read as an increasing permeation of secular politics by Islamic morals. Instead, ethical conduct, although allegedly defined in Islamic terms, becomes a polyvalent source of identity that appeals to a broader constituency of urbanites. Muslim leaders who seek a following in a plural arena tend to frame their moral quest in terms that resonate with people’s daily concerns, and that draw inspiration from local conceptions of Muslim knowledge and piety rather than displace them.

A mass-mediated, commercial context is intrinsic to the changing significance of Islam, as this informs the ways in which Islam is publicly propagated and perceived by audiences. This development is the result of educational reform, religious conversion, and, more recently, the increasing permeation of everyday life by a mass-mediated commercial culture, as a consequence of economic and political liberalization. Along with the proliferation of religious media and debate, knowledge of the proper teach-

ings of Islam has gained new relevance for many urbanites in Mali. Listening to a preacher's moral advice forms part of an endeavour to transform the self and society, as people grow aware of their personal responsibility for salvation.

Concomitantly, Islam no longer plays the same role in indicating a group or ethnic identity, and instead, comes to designate a faith to be professed publicly as an individual conviction. This process is not limited to contemporary Mali, nor is it a specific feature of Muslim Africa. Rather, it resonates with a process animating politics and personal life in much of the contemporary Muslim world and in which media technologies play a decisive role in reorganizing the conditions for religious experience, argument, and authority.

**Òkè, Moses:** From an African Ontology to an African Epistemology: A Critique of J. S. Mbiti on the Time Conception of Africans. *Quest* 18.2005: 25-36.

The article focuses on the claim of Mbiti that Africans lack the concept of future time. The ontological core of the traditional view of time reported by Mbiti is that to constitute time is to live through it. With reference to this perception, since existence in space presupposes existence in time, it should follow from the premise that time is essentially experienced time only, that to exist is to exist in time alone. Assuming that Mbiti's claim about Africans' conception of time is true, Africans should be incapable of conceiving a perception-transcending or knowledge-transcending world. In which case, they should be incapable of a scientific epistemology.

Given that it is living humans that have experiences and reckon with time, this position, in the context of Mbiti's argument that Africans lack the concept of future time, is ambivalent and needs to be further explicated. The article attempts an explication of the epistemological consequences of such position. Although the general laxity of Africans about time, especially future time, pervades their collective attitude to work, the best we can say is that they lack "time-discipline," not that they do not have the concept of future time. A philosophically significant concern with the African concept of time, therefore, no matter what it is, should be highly critical of received notions and should point out the consequences of holding an outdated idea of time or time-related patterns of behaviour. In this regard, Mbiti ought to have pointed out the grave dangers inherent in a futureless conception of time such as the one he attributed to Africans.

Had Mbiti addressed the existential implications of a lack of the concept of the indefinite future in a given culture, he would have become aware of the need to introduce it into that culture as part of the task of a worth-while philosophy conceived as the constructive critique of cultures. He would thus have gone beyond just describing African cultures, correctly or incorrectly, to making attempts to change them for the better, by infusing them with crucial concepts that they might lack or appear to lack.

**Bigenho, Michelle:** Embodied Matters: "Bolivian Fantasy" and *Indigenismo*. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 11.2006/2: 267-293.

The article concerns the field of *Indigenismo*, or Indigenism, in Bolivia during the Revolutionary government of the 1950's. In general, Indigenism denotes the 20<sup>th</sup> century discourses and institutional efforts through which Latin American elites reflected and acted upon indigenous populations in their countries, in the process of construction of regional and national identities. Bigenho analyzes one manifestation of that discourse, namely, the one developed by the artists of *Fantasia Boliviana* ("Bolivian Fantasy") – an operetta of sort – performed in La Paz during the government of Victor Paz Estenssoro, and subsequent presidents, who frequently evoked the image of the Indian as a nation-building strategy.

The "Bolivian Fantasy" consisted of several scenes not integrated into a single narrative plot. They were held together through the positing of an imagined national community that celebrated its staged cultural diversity in spite of the existing differences. Unlike the Bolivian literature or painting of that time, the artists who worked for *Fantasia Boliviana* represented (sometimes extravagantly) the "Indian-ness" through the medium of their own bodies (theatrical performance) in an effort to change the "racialized" views of the Indian held by the non-Indian part of Bolivian society. It was a stage embodiment of the indigenous world, as the artists required that the participants and viewers temporarily dress, dance, and sound like Indians. At the same time, the "Bolivian Fantasy" was also a theatrical collage that brought together and mixed elements of the elite and Indian cultures of Bolivia, such as ballet-trained dancers who interpreted the *cueca* (Indian dance that became identified with "Bolivian-ness") dressed in tutus and toe shoes, and tuxedo-dressed orchestra musicians who used the traditional Andean *zamponas* (pan pipes).

One needs to remember as well that *Fantasia Boliviana* was located within the particular historical moment of Bolivia's 1952 Revolution with its ideology of *mestizaje* and recovering the country's indigenous roots. Participants interviewed by the author said that "Bolivian Fantasy" broke with the de facto segregation of the city, bringing under the same theatre roof national Bolivian elites and urban Indians. Specifically, they recall the presence of women who were wearing the *polleras* (wide gathered skirts) and *bolero* hats that mark the urban Aymara women, indigenous *campesinos* and *cholitas* (working class women) of La Paz. As such, the "Bolivian Fantasy" was an attempt to blur the boundaries between the *mestizos* and Indians, between folklore and art, and between the Bolivian nation and the world.

**William Miles:** When Is a Nation "a Nation"? Identity-Formation within a French West Indian People (Martinique). *Nations and Nationalism* 12.2006/4: 631-652.

Nationhood is usually defined as a state of being acquired by a self-conscious group sharing certain distinctive cul-

tural traits and political goals. One can distinguish, after Miroslav Hroch, a renowned theorist of nationhood, three major phases in the process of emerging of a nation: the “cultural phase,” during which intellectuals “invent” the nation (create national consciousness) by “construing” (standardizing) the national language, history and indeed culture out of existing dialects, folklore and the work of historians, the “political phase” when political activists rally masses around the so constructed concept of the nation in order to create a sovereign state and, finally, the phase of the “nation-state.”

Very rarely do the officials of a non-sovereign people have the opportunity to actually vote, using the political institutions of an existing nation-state, on whether or not their constituency constitutes a discrete nation. The extraordinary Congress of 2002 in the French overseas territory of Martinique did provide such opportunity however. Nonetheless, the contradictory outcomes of that event, as well as the plebiscite in 2003 on a proposed change of the political status for this island within the French Republic, reveal much about the ambiguous status of Martinican group identity. Moreover, Miles’ findings seem to demonstrate that a formerly colonized people may actually prefer the material benefits coming from the existing political bonds with its former colonizer to full nationhood and sovereignty within their own nation-state. This phenomenon, which also occurred in the French territory of Pondicherry in India, is termed “counter-colonialism” (“post-independence materialism”) – that is, the situation when a former colonizer is actually exploited more heavily than the formerly colonized. Miles attribute the presence of this phenomenon to globalization and the ideal of the European Union that transcends the historical boundaries of Western Europe and, indeed in the case of the French overseas territories, the boundaries of Europe itself. It also challenges the conventional wisdom with regard to nationalism, sovereignty and “independentism.”

**Jokić, Željko:** Cosmo-Genesis or Transformation of the Human Body into a Cosmic Body in Yanomami Shamanistic Initiation. *Shaman* 14.2006 (1/2): 19-39.

Jokić’s paper concentrates on the initiation to shamanism among the Yanomami Indians from the Upper Orinoco River in Venezuela. Shamanism may be defined as a variety of interrelated practices, beliefs, and oral literature that focus on trance and ecstasy (or what is otherwise known as “altered states of consciousness”), as a means and the manifestation of the shaman’s special relationship with his or her helping spirits.

Past analyses of shamanism mainly focused on describing the mechanisms of achieving ecstasy. While these mechanisms are today generally well understood, to date there has been a paucity of information regarding the nature of consciousness associated with shamanism and the socio-cosmic position of shamans. Jokić attends to these issues. Another interesting aspect of the article is the fact that its author is himself a shaman, as during his fieldwork among that Amerindian group he was adopted by one of the Yanomami shamans, and initiated into that local ver-

sion of the shamanistic worldview and practice. In this way, truly in the post-modern methodological fashion, the paper blurs the boundary between the object and the subject, between the observer and the observed, and consequently, between the mind and the body. According to this perspective, then, ideas about cosmos are not only inculcated into one’s mind but also “embodied.”

The main analytical tool used by the author to describe the “embodied” cosmos as imagined by the Yanomami is the notion of “hologram.” The basic premise of a holographic worldview postulates that the whole is contained within each of its constitutive parts, or that each part is equal to the whole. Thus Yanomami think of their universe as a multi-layered holographic totality consisting of five separate but inter-connected celestial and terrestrial discs which together form a bounded cosmic whole, a totality of existence, past, present and future, perceived by the Indians as a cosmic anaconda.

During the shamanistic initiation, the neophyte’s body becomes a micro-replica of this vision of cosmos through trance, induced by the hallucinogenic *epena* powder, in which he experiences his own death. As a result, the legs and the lower parts of the neophyte’s body become the path of the spirits; his abdomen becomes the spirit-house; the head is turned into the head-crown of light that enables the shaman to see through time and space; his arms function as toucan’s wings. Finally the *axis mundi*, which connects all spheres of the universe, and which is normally represented by the wooded ceremonial pole, is embodied in the chest. Moreover, during the initiation, through the influx of spirits, the shaman loses his human nature and becomes himself an immortal spirit, which – in relation to the number of other spirit-helpers living in his body – is a whole with its parts.

**Gordillo, Gaston:** The crucible of citizenship: ID-paper fetishism in the Argentinean Chaco. *American Ethnologist*. 33.2006 (2): 162-176.

The article examines how the past alienation from citizenship has affected the collective memory of the Toba and the Wichi Indians of the Argentine Chaco. Specifically, Gordillo focuses on the phenomenon of what he terms “fetishization” of official identity papers among those indigenous groups. The legal position of those peoples within the Argentinean state has always been quite ambiguous. The early constitution of 1853 clearly placed the natives outside the emerging Argentinean nation on the grounds of their alleged “savagery,” although indeed, they fulfilled the main prerequisite for being citizens – that is, being born in territories located within the national borders. In the early 1880s, after the military conquest of the last Argentine frontiers – namely, the Chaco and Patagonia – had been concluded, this ambiguity emerged in parliamentary debates. Without reaching an agreement, members of congress debated whether Indians should be considered “second class citizens,” “underage citizens,” “nationals but not citizens,” or “rebellious Argentineans.” In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the influx of immigrants from Europe and the rapid modernization of the nation,

the discussion on the status of people deemed external to the nations – foreigners and Indians – was renewed in Argentinean politics and the media. The citizenship status of those groups still remained unresolved though, which however did not hinder their immersion within the expanding capitalist frontiers of Argentina.

One way of achieving this purpose was to impose constraints on the mobility of those traditionally nomadic groups. Thus, paradoxically, local military authorities demanded that the natives, although officially not citizens, produce a written document that would testify to their “good conduct.” This ambiguous bureaucratic demand forced these groups to rely on official documentation in order to navigate the violent political landscape of the Chaco. Consequently, the natives began to value identity papers to the point of seeing them as fetishes – that is objects whose potency emanates from their materiality rather than from their social and bureaucratic importance. The potency with which they would imbue these documents was closely related to their view of the written word as an emblem of power. By attending to this phenomenon, Gordillo moves away from the Weberian paradigm of the state as the pinnacle of bureaucratic rationality toward the most recent explorations of states as regulated culturally, and cultural forms as state regulated.

**Hubbert, Jennifer:** (Re)collecting Mao: Memory and fetish in contemporary China. *American Ethnologist* 33. 2006/2: 145-161.

Contemporary Mao-badge collecting has its roots in the Cultural Revolution, although Mao badges initially appeared in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Although the earliest badges featured Mao’s image, they celebrated the collective successes of socialism rather than Mao himself. They were produced, for example, to commemorate outstanding service to the revolution, successful military battles, the establishment of liberated territories and minority independence zones, and socialist construction projects.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Mao’s image and Mao badges were symbols of the socialist revolution and the liberated Chinese nation. As the fervor of the Cultural Revolution reached its apogee, however, Mao himself – his ideas, his productions, and his physical body - became the primary object of veneration. Wearing a badge signified one’s loyalty to the chairman, and the more one sacrificed to obtain it, the greater one’s commitment to Mao. This is poignantly chronicled in often repeated tales of devotees pinning Mao badges directly to their skin to prove their loyalty to the chairman.

By the time of Cultural Revolution, the Mao badge had become implicated in the “communalization” of culture, a process through which culture is made common or mandatory through the widespread possession of material objects. The scale of Mao-badge production is mind-boggling. Although estimates vary, apparently, nearly five billion badges were produced, consuming a quantity of aluminium that could have produced nearly 40 thousand airplanes. Mao is reported to have once ordered badge

production halted because it had ostensibly brought the manufacture of aircrafts to a standstill. In the heyday of the Cultural Revolution, over 90 percent of the population routinely wore Mao badges.

Cultural Revolution Mao badges were material objects, but their status as commodities was, nonetheless, tenuous. Although one could purchase badges at government stores and through work units, the linguistic nature of such transactions was crucial. One could, indeed, use cash to obtain a badge; however, one spoke of “requesting” (*qing*) a badge rather than buying it. Thus, one confronted the problem of the commodity that could not be. Incorporating the sacred symbol of devotion into the utilitarian world of finance would have cheapened its use, commercially corrupting an object that was “symbolically supercharged.” This rendered the badges rhetorically “priceless,” paying homage not only to Mao the material man (who himself refused physical contact with money), but also to Mao as representative of the ideology of utopian socialism.

Following the death of the former chairman, Mao badges lingered predominantly as reminders of a utopian vision gone awry. As former Mao devotees turned their badges in to recycling centers where they were melted down for scrap metal, the badges changed from being priceless, as sacralized non-commodities, to being priceless in the sense that they had become monetarily worthless. What was once a public display of pride and loyalty had been refigured as private humiliation.

The tide turned again, however, and in the late 1980s, Mao’s image was resurrected, and brought back into the public realm as a potent symbol of moral rectitude and selflessness. Nostalgic retirees speak of the Maoist era, particularly the 1950s, as marked by fervent commitment to an ideological system, selflessness, and communitarian spirits. Even young college students, most of whom remember Mao through the memories of their parents or popularized television shows and state film productions, profess him as a representative of a clean government and political passion, in contrast to the perceived moral and ideological bankruptcy of the contemporary regime.

In the early 1990s, reaching a climax around the centenary of Mao’s birth in 1993, a Mao Zedong fever (*Maore*) swept through China, manifested in an unprecedented wave of nostalgia that crossed class, generational, and gender lines. After a long period in which the chairman appeared to have been relegated to the dustbin of official historiography, popular interest in Mao escalated to heights not scaled since the ardor of the Cultural Revolution. Whereas the Mao fever disappeared as quickly as it sprouted, for the more serious Mao-badge collectors, amassing and displaying the buttons proved more than a fleeting fad, legitimating the interests and activities of Mao loyalists and professional collectors alike. The stories of two extraordinary collectors who have dedicated themselves to the acquisition of Mao badges, demonstrate how these badges, as fetish objects, mediate between the high-socialist and late-socialist eras and provide their owners with a means to negotiate the tensions between

the two. Through these collections (Wang of 53,000, Huang of 23,000 pieces), one comes to understand how the meaning of the fetish is rarely stable. The same objects, within the same historical context, become “primitive” idols, exchangeable commodities, and psychoanalytic crutches, each fetish form privileging different valuations of history and self.

The Chinese experience of the post-Mao era has been replete with ambiguities, and the practice of Mao-badge collecting reflects these ambiguities. What is so interesting about the collections of Wang and Huang, at opposite ends of the celebrated Yangtze River, is that both individuals took similar objects and through similar activities created such radically different worlds. Each collection both replayed and chastised excess, even as the targeted excesses were different. Wang’s chaotic display invoked and applauded the excesses of the Maoist past as it rebuked the excesses of contemporary market formations that relegated peasants and workers to the lower rungs of the status ladder. He strove to acquire as many buttons as possible as proof that the totemic figure on the badges was worthy of the immense number of badges that had been produced and consumed. In contrast, Huang’s collection revealed in the excesses of the present, in the potential for fiscal reward, as its systematicity rejected the perceived disorder and lack of meritocracy of the Maoist past.

**Forth, Gregory:** Flores after *Floresiensis*. Implications of Local Reaction to Recent Palaeanthropological Discoveries on an Eastern Indonesian Island. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 162.2006: 336-349.

In a recent article Forth discusses possible implications for anthropology of the discovery, on the eastern Indonesian island of Flores, of skeletal remains interpreted as a new species of Homo – *Homo floresiensis*. The discovery was, and remains, controversial, not least because the creature so classified, interpreted by the discovery team as an endemic dwarf descendant of Homo erectus, stood just over a meter tall and had a cranial capacity of just 380 cc, that is a brain about the size of a chimpanzee’s. It had also survived until at least 12,000 BP, well within the period modern humans (Homo sapiens) were present in this part of Indonesia. According to a counter-interpretation, most closely associated with the Indonesian anthropologist Teuku Jacob, the diminutive hominid is not a new species but was either a modern human suffering from microcephaly or a modern human dwarf or pygmy. Analysis of skeletal material from another eight individuals tends to confirm the discovery team’s interpretation of a new, non-sapiens member of the genus Homo, but disagreement over the nature of the hominid is likely to continue for some while yet.

Interesting is the way in which some of the palaeanthropological discoverers, as well as other scientific commentators, had proposed a connection between *floresiensis* and a category of hairy hominoids recognized by Florenese villagers. Assuming that Florenese themselves might make such a connection, the question is raised of how the

news of *Homo floresiensis* could affect local representations such as *ebu gogo*, a population of wildmen claimed by the Nage people of central Flores to have existed in their region until several generations ago, when their ancestors exterminated them.

During a two-and-a-half month trip to Flores, between May and July 2005, Forth was able to investigate these issues, both in the Nage region (where *ebu gogo* reputedly once lived), and elsewhere on the island where one encounters local representations of hairy hominoids, including the Manggarai region of western Flores, where *floresiensis* was discovered. On the whole, the impression is that news of the discovery has had rather less influence than might have been predicted.

Several Nage men expressed skepticism about the truth of the story of *ebu gogo* which, perhaps ironically, seemed to exceed that of some western scientific commentators. Why, they asked rhetorically, should one expect *Homo floresiensis* to be connected with *ebu gogo*, when the former is supposed to have died out thousands of years ago (and in a quite different part of Flores), whereas the *ebu gogo*, according to local tradition, survived in the Nage region until just a couple of hundred years ago? The men were further skeptical about the veracity of the legend of *ebu gogo*, in a way that contrasted with everything Forth had recorded, partly from these same informants, during previous visits. Specifically, the suggestion was that *ebu gogo* may be nothing more than a “folktale” (*dongeng*), a possibility indicated, as one man pointed out, by local disagreement about details of the tradition.

Among more educated and urban Florenese, Forth encountered other possible reasons for not connecting *Homo floresiensis* and *ebu gogo*. Most people in this category were either Roman Catholic priests or others, directly associated with the Church, or they were people educated in Catholic schools and seminaries. Two or three intertwined strands of opinion were discernible among this group. One is the view that, rather than reflecting a new species, what has come to be called *Homo floresiensis* is of a site with human remains uncovered in the 1950s, in Liang Bua (the later site of *floresiensis*’s discovery) and other caves of western Flores, by the Dutch missionary archaeologist Theodor Verhoeven, SVD. Dating from 4000 to 3000 BP and revealing individuals of relatively short stature with large teeth and indications of skeletal robusticity, these materials were interpreted by Verhoeven (1958) as reflecting an ancient “proto-negrito” substrate among the human population of Flores. This essentially is the interpretation of the new Liang Bua skeleton, the type specimen of *Homo floresiensis*, advanced by the Indonesian palaeanthropologist Teuku Jacob (1967), whose doctoral dissertation includes an analysis of Verhoeven’s findings and an elaboration of his proto-negrito theory. Jacob generally concurs with the characterization of the prehistoric population discovered by Verhoeven as “proto-negrito.” He also describes it as pygmy or pygmoid, even while noting that the group was not sufficiently short to qualify as “dwarf.” Florenese Catholics, and specially seminarians, obviously view the priest,



Verhoeven, as one of their own. One could even go so far as to say that they regard Verhoeven's discoveries and interpretations, rather possessively, if not as local Catholic science than as a significant part of their own scientifically informed understanding of the people and history of Flores. The interpretation of *Homo floresiensis* as something very new, indeed as a new species, is perceived by this group as definitely an outsider's view. What is more, while the discovery team comprised Indonesians and other nationalities, educated Florenese, and especially Church officials, consistently identified the team with its Australian members and more particularly with one of its leaders, the Australian archaeologist Michael Morwood.

In addition to what might be called the "religious" dimension of Florenese opinion on *floresiensis*, therefore, it is not difficult to discern a strong dose of nationalism. Describing Morwood and his fellow-nationals as "scientific terrorists" (mainly, it seems, because it was Australian members of the team, rather than Indonesians, who announced the discovery to the media), a critical attitude specifically towards "Australians" is also apparent in several pronouncements of Professor Jacob (who derives from Aceh, in northern Sumatra, and who, incidentally, is not a Catholic). As has been widely reported, Jacob has interpreted the type skeleton of *Homo floresiensis* as belonging to a microcephalic human dwarf, although he has more recently suggested that the diminutive female specimen was the pygmy ancestress of modern Manggarai people, whom he also identifies as pygmies. Forth encountered a version of this view – that *floresiensis* was genealogically continuous with local humans – among educated Florenese, some of whom wanted to claim that the interpretation of the find as a new species had therefore been unequivocally disproved. To paraphrase one opinion, the skeleton dubbed *Homo floresiensis* reflects nothing more than the fact that the modern population of Flores is made up of short, including very short, individuals as well as taller people; they are all equally human and Florenese, and not members of different species. What one appears to confront here is an ideological reluctance to countenance an interpretation of human (or hominid) remains on the island that threatens modern Florenese unity and the belonging to "humanity."

**Goodale, Mark:** Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights. *Current Anthropology* 47.2006/3: 485-511.

Some 17 years after the end of the cold war, the international and transnational human rights regimes that emerged in the wake of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are at a crossroads. On the one hand, the political openings created by the end of the bipolar post-war world have allowed what Eleanor Roosevelt described as the "curious grapevine" of nongovernmental actors to carry ideas and practices associated with universal human rights into different parts of the world as part of broader transnational development activities. On the other hand, this spread of human rights discourses has only magnified the different problems at the heart of human rights, problems that are theoretical, practical, and phenomenological. Anthropology has an important part to play in addressing these problems and in suggesting ways in which human rights can be reframed, so that their purposes, those embodied in documents like the UDHR, stand a better chance of being realized.

The real contribution of a critical anthropology to human rights theory and practice is that it proposes an alternative to the false choices. The pursuit of this middle space means that the alternative paradigm for human rights can never be *merely* either normative or descriptive, but is based on what anthropologists can say comparatively: that social actors across the range of history and place seek to create meaning in their relations with others, with greater or lesser degrees of success, by striving toward a *normative humanism*. Normative humanism constitutes a central analytical framework for a critical anthropology of human rights. Normative humanism is a way of describing a basic cross-cultural fact of collective ordering: that, in given circumstances people will organize themselves to establish conditions for meaningful interactions that are both patterned and prescriptive. At the same time, they recognize and incorporate a basic set of human-centered values, values that balance the whole breadth of local cultural and social possibilities with common cognitive, physical, and emotional imperatives. Reconstituted human rights, to be effective and legitimate, would be dependent on the *capacity* – freedom from constraint – of collectivities to organize themselves on these terms.

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