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We would like to remind our readers that, strictly speaking, we are not reviewing the books and articles presented here (in the sense of giving a critical assessment of their contents) but intend to draw the readers' attention to the publications that are of particular interest for those who are engaged with both – anthropology and mission. The material in the bulletin partly consists of quotes taken from the presented books and articles.

Review of Books

(by Vinsenius Adi Gunawan and Othmar Gächter)

Moser, Paul K., and Chad Meister (eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 339 pp. ISBN 978-1-108-45911-2 (pbk)

For centuries, theologians and philosophers, among others, have examined the nature of religious experience. Students and scholars unfamiliar with the vast literature face a daunting task in grasping the main issues surrounding the topic of religious experience. “The Cambridge Companion to Religious Experience” offers an original introduction to its topic. Going beyond an introduction, it is a state-of-the-art overview of the topic, with critical analyses of and creative insights into its subject. Religious experience is discussed from various interdisciplinary perspectives, from religious perspectives inside and outside traditional monotheistic religions, and from various topical perspectives.

Paul Moser and Chad Meister: This book examines the nature, scope, context, and significance of religious experience, in search of a good explanation. In doing so, it raises many questions about religious experience that are important to religious studies, philosophy, theology, psychology, sociology, and history. This introduction clarifies some of these questions.

Augé, Marc, Jean-Paul Colleyn, Catherine de Clippel et Jean-Pierre Dozon: *Vivre avec les dieux*. Sur le terrain de l’anthropologie visuelle. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2019. 303 pp. ISBN 978-2-7351-2437-4 (pbk)

Véritable édition multimédia, associant films, photographies et textes, “Vivre avec les dieux” constitue à la fois le carnet de tournage d’une série de films documentaires et un ensemble de réflexions sur l’histoire récente de l’anthropologie, à travers la place qu’y ont occupé la religion, la maladie et l’image. La série comprend cinq films en DVD, réalisés entre 1984 et 1993, et tournés entre l’Afrique de l’Ouest et l’Amérique du Sud: “N’kpiti, la rancune et le prophète”, “Prophètes en leur pays”, “Les Dieux-objets”, “Les Esprits dans la ville” et “La Nuit des Indiens pumé.”

Née de la collaboration de trois anthropologues français et de la photographe et productrice Catherine de Clippel, cette série documentaire explore différents phénomènes religieux dont les similarités (possessions, dispositifs thérapeutiques, etc.) se répondent par-delà leurs spécificités contextuelles. Filmant tour à tour des figures prophétiques ivoiriennes, des cultes *vodu* au Togo, des rituels célébrant les divinités brésiliennes connues sous le nom de *caboclos* et les cérémonies du *Tôhé* des Indiens pumé au Venezuela, “Vivre avec les dieux” croise ainsi, de manière unique, anthropologie visuelle, anthropologie de la maladie et anthropologie religieuse.

Si cet ouvrage contribue à raconter le passage d’une ethnographie textuelle à une anthropologie visuelle, il permet également d’interroger la notion de représentation, à la fois dans la recherche scientifique et dans le cinéma documentaire, et ce plus particulièrement à partir de l’étude du fait religieux, où l’image comme la mise en scène jouent un rôle de tout premier plan.

Berner, Ulrich: Religionswissenschaft (historisch orientiert). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage, 2020. 456 pp. ISBN 978-3-8252-5297-7 (pbk)

Dieses Buch bietet einen in mehrfacher Hinsicht neuen Ansatz: Es ist thematisch aufgebaut und die Auswahl der Themen orientiert sich am aktuellen Religionsdiskurs – so werden z.B. Thesen zur (In)Toleranz der (monotheistischen) Religionen ebenso behandelt wie Thesen zur (Un)Vereinbarkeit von Religion und (Natur)Wissenschaft. Die Auseinandersetzung mit diesen Diskursen erfolgt im Rahmen einer historisch orientierten Religionswissenschaft, die keine Aussagen über das Wesen einer Religion macht, sondern das Nebeneinander widersprüchlicher Auslegungen zur Darstellung bringt. Das Material entstammt überwiegend der europäischen Religionsgeschichte, doch gibt es in jedem Kapitel auch einen Exkurs, der Vergleichsbeispiele aus nicht-europäischen Religionen bringt. Die historischen Betrachtungen enthalten ausgiebige Zitate aus den Quellen, um Ansatzpunkte für eine kritische Auseinandersetzung und Anregungen für die eigene Lektüre zu geben.

Mambelli, Anna, and Valentina Marchetto (eds.): Naming the Sacred. Religious Toponymy in History, Theology, and Politics. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2019. 230 pp. ISBN 978-3-95650-636-9 (pbk)

At what point is a place perceived as holy? And when does it become officially so in its definition? Inspired by the UNESCO debate and decisions made concerning holy places, the authors seek answers to these questions. “Naming the Sacred” is a diachronic excursus into the issues of perception and denomination of holy places. The volume examines historical cases in which names and places have been modified or literally eliminated and others where places were subjects to policies of protection and tutelage. The work appertains to an ongoing, evolving global debate where the challenge of the reciprocal recognition of holy sites has become increasingly complex.

Giordan, Giuseppe, and Adam Possamai (eds.): The Social Scientific Study of Exorcism in Christianity. Cham: Springer Nature, 2020. 244 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-43172-3 (hbk)

This book presents an academic analysis of exorcism in Christianity. It not only explores the crisis and drama of a single individual in a fight against demonic possession but also looks at the broader implications for the society in which the possessed lives. In recognition of this, coverage includes case studies from various geographical areas in Europe, North and South America, and Oceania.

The contributors explore the growing significance of the rite of exorcism, both in its more structured

format within traditional Christian religions as well as in the less controlled and structured forms in the rites of deliverance within Neopentecostal movements. They examine theories on the interaction between religion, magic, and science to present new and groundbreaking data on exorcism.

The fight against demonic possession underlines the way in which changes within the religious field, such as the rediscovery of typical practices of popular religiosity, challenge the expectations of the theory of secularization. This book argues that if possession is a threat to the individual and to the equilibrium of the social order, the ritual of exorcism is able to re-establish a balance and an order through the power of the exorcist. This does not happen in a social vacuum but in a consumer culture where religious groups market themselves against other faiths.

Sansi, Roger (ed.): The Anthropologist as Curator. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. 244 pp. ISBN 978-1-350-08190-1 (hbk)

Why do contemporary art curators define their work as ethnography? How can curation illuminate the practice of contemporary anthropology? Does anthropology risk disappearing as a specific discipline within the general model of the curatorial? “The Anthropologist as Curator” collects the research of international scholars working at the intersection of anthropology and contemporary art in order to explore these questions. The essays in the book challenge what it means to do ethnographic work, as well as the very definition of the discipline of anthropology in confrontation with the model of the curatorial.

The contributors examine these ideas from a variety of angles, and the book includes perspectives from anthropologists who have set up their own exhibitions; those who have conducted fieldwork on the arts, including participatory practices, digital images and sound; and contributors who are currently working in a curatorial capacity at a museum. With case studies from the USA, Canada, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, India, and Japan, the book represents an international perspective.

Laplante, Julie, Ari Gandsman, and Willow Scobie (eds.): Search after Method. Sensing, Moving, and Imagining in Anthropological Fieldwork. New York: Berghahn Books, 2020. 259 pp. ISBN 978-1-78920-883-2 (hbk)

Reigniting a tradition of learning by experience, “Search after Method” is a plea for livelier forms of anthropology. The anthropologists in the collection recount their experiences of working in the field, framed within a range of anthropological debates. The book thus provides accounts of lived experiences from both extensive and contemporary fieldwork as well as

offering solutions for how to evolve the art of anthropological research beyond what is currently imagined.

Kersten, Carool: *Contemporary Thought in the Muslim World. Trends, Themes, and Issues.* New York: Routledge, 2019. 228 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-85508-2 (pbk)

This book presents an intellectual history of today's Muslim world, surveying contemporary Muslim thinking in its various manifestations, addressing a variety of themes that impact on the lives of present-day Muslims.

Focusing on the period from roughly the late 1960s to the first decade of the twenty-first century, the book is global in its approach and offers an overview of different strands of thought and trends in the development of new ideas, distinguishing between traditional, reactionary, and progressive approaches. It presents a variety of themes and issues including: The continuing relevance of the legacy of traditional Islamic learning as well as the use of reason; the centrality of the Qur'an; the spiritual concerns of contemporary Muslims; political thought regarding secularity, statehood, and governance; legal and ethical debates; related current issues like human rights, gender equality, and religious plurality; as well as globalization, ecology and the environment, bioethics, and life sciences.

An alternative account of Islam and the Muslim world today, counterbalancing narratives that emphasize politics and confrontations with the West, this book is an essential resource for students and scholars of Islam.

Ebrahim Moosa: Carool Kersten captures a breathtakingly vast canvas of Islamic thought in a brilliant, effortless, and digestible manner in this book... The author dissects the critical debates and offers the reader a valuable and informative read.

Magout, Mohammad: *A Reflexive Islamic Modernity. Academic Knowledge and Religious Subjectivity in the Global Ismaili Community.* Baden-Baden: Ergon Verlag, 2020. 230 pp. ISBN 978-3-95650-636-9 (pbk)

Nizari Ismailis are one of most active Muslim communities in academic education and knowledge production in the fields of Islamic studies and humanities. For this purpose, the community runs two academic institutions based in London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies and the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations. Drawing on sociological approaches to

religion and knowledge, this study examines the academic discourse of these two institutes and the religious subjectivities of their international body of students. It shows that the Ismaili community is navigating challenges along three axes: its relationship to secular modernity, to mainstream Islam, and to itself (its own history and identity). The Ismaili response to this three-dimensional challenge is interpreted as a process of reflexive modernization, whereby Islam is discursively reconceptualized as culture rather than religion and uncertainty is internalized into individual religious subjectivity.

Luithle-Hardenberg, Andrea, John E. Cort, and Leslie C. Orr: *Cooperation, Contribution, and Contestation. The Jain Community, Colonialism, and Jainological Scholarship, 1800–1950.* Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2020. 615 pp. ISBN 978-3-86893-316-1 (hbk)

The relationships of the Jains with colonial administrators, Western scholars, and missionaries between 1800 and 1950 were marked by both competition and cooperation, as they interacted in economic, political, intellectual, and religious spheres. This volume traces these encounters and examines the contributions to the history of Jain studies made by Jain and non-Jain Indians through their collaborations with Western scholars. The book is divided into three sections. The first considers the engagement on the part of European missionaries and Orientalists, and British colonial officials, with Jains and Jainism from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. The second focuses on the changing dynamics of identities within the Jain community during the nineteenth century, brought about through their mercantile, entrepreneurial, philanthropic, and legal activities. The final section maps the trajectory of Jainological studies undertaken by German, Italian, American, and Indian scholars from the second half of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. Taken together, these chapters make an important interdisciplinary contribution to scholarly understanding of the Jains' situation as a religious minority.

Kreyenbroek, Philip. G, and Yiannis Kanakis: *“God First and Last”. Religious Traditions and Music of the Yaresan of Guran.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2020. 202 pp. ISBN 978-3-447-11424-0 (pbk)

The Yaresan or Ahl-e Haqq are a relatively large minority group whose religion originates in the border regions between Iran and Iraq. As members of traditional Yaresan communities are becoming more visible in

the West, both as diaspora groups and in academia, there is an increasing demand for reliable information about their background. Academic interest is also growing. Recent scholarly publications, however, tend to assume a fundamental knowledge of the Yaresan tradition, which is not easy to glean from existing sources. This is made more complicated by the very real differences between the European world view and that of traditional Yarsanism.

For that reason and because music plays an unusually prominent role in Yaresan observance, it was decided to combine the authors' work on religious traditions and music respectively in two volumes. In doing so the religious realities of the traditional Yaresan of the Guran region is communicated by quoting extensively from interviews with community members. The first volume also offers a survey of other religious traditions that are thought to have been influential in shaping modern Yarsanism.

Payton, Joanne: *Honor and the Political Economy of Marriage. Violence against Women in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2020. 186 pp. ISBN 978-1-9788-0171-4 (pbk)

"Honor" is used as a justification for violence perpetrated against women and girls considered to have violated social taboos related to sexual behavior. Several "honor"-based murders of Kurdish women, such as Fadime Sahindal, Banaz Mahmod, and Du'a Khalil Aswad, and campaigns against "honor"-based violence by Kurdish feminists have drawn international attention to this phenomenon within Kurdish communities.

This book provides a description of "honor"-based violence that focuses upon the structure of the family rather than the perpetrator's culture. The author, Joanne Payton, argues that within societies primarily organized by familial and marital connections, women's "honor" is a form of symbolic capital within a "political economy" in which marriage organizes intergroup connections.

Drawing on statistical analysis of original data contextualized with historical and anthropological readings, Payton explores forms of marriage and their relationship to "honor", sketching changing norms around the familial control of women from agrarian/pastoral roots to the contemporary era.

Lina Fruzzetti: "Honor and the Political Economy of Marriage" underlies ambitious narratives regarding the rights of women in marriage and formation of alliance, women offered as gifts to form and continue alliances. This rich text dialogues with a global

comparative approach analyzing the giving and receiving of women in various contexts, providing a survey of types of marriages and cultural significance of women as commodity within the lens of marriages and what unions entail.

Hemmasi, Farzaneh: *Tehrangeles Dreaming. Intimacy and Imagination in Southern California's Iranian Pop Music.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020. 254 pp. ISBN 978-1-4780-0790-6 (pbk)

Los Angeles, called Tehrangeles because it is home to the largest concentration of Iranians outside of Iran, is the birthplace of a distinctive form of postrevolutionary pop music. Created by professional musicians and media producers fleeing Iran's revolutionary-era ban on "immoral" popular music, Tehrangeles pop has been a part of daily life for Iranians at home and abroad for decades. In "Tehrangeles Dreaming" Farzaneh Hemmasi draws on ethnographic fieldwork in Los Angeles and musical and textual analysis to examine how the songs, music videos, and television made in Tehrangeles express modes of Iranian-ness not possible in Iran. Exploring Tehrangeles pop producers' complex commercial and political positioning and the histories, sensations, and fantasies their music makes available to global Iranian audiences, Hemmasi shows how unquestionably Iranian forms of Tehrangeles popular culture exemplify the manner in which culture, media, and diaspora combine to respond to the Iranian state and its political transformations. The transnational circulation of Tehrangeles culture, she contends, transgresses Iran's geographical, legal, and moral boundaries while allowing all Iranians the ability to imagine new forms of identity and belonging.

Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi: In this book, Farzaneh Hemmasi offers a novel reading of Iranian exilic pop music, raising insightful conceptual questions about the notion and significance of pop culture and diasporic imagination. By taking pop music seriously, she opens up a space for conversations about transnational networks of artistic production, the construction of nationhood and nationalism, and the politics of identity.

Chioventa, Andrea: *Crafting Masculine Selves. Culture, War, and Psychodynamics in Afghanistan.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. 268 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-007355-8 (hbk)

Against the backdrop of four decades of continuous conflict in Afghanistan, the Pashtun male protagonists of this book carry out their daily effort to internally

negotiate, adjust (if at all), and respond to the very strict cultural norms and rules of masculinity that their androcentric social environment enjoins on them. Yet, in a widespread context of war, displacement, relocation, and social violence, cultural expectations and stringent tenets on how to comport oneself as a “real man” have a profound impact on the psychological equilibrium and emotional dynamics of these individuals.

This book is a close investigation into these private and at times contradictory aspects of subjectivity. Stemming from five years of research in a southeastern province of Afghanistan, it presents a long-term, psychodynamic engagement with a select group of male Pashtun individuals, which results in a multi-layered dive not only into their inner lives, but also into the cultural and social environment in which they live and develop. Behind the screen of what often seems like outward conformity, Andrea Chiovenda is able to point to areas of strong inner conflict, ambivalence, and rebellion, which in turn will serve as the seeds for cultural and social change. These dynamics play out in a setting in which what was considered legitimate and justifiable violence on the battlefield has now spilled over into everyday life, even among non-combatants.

Byron Good: This book offers a remarkable glimpse into the psychological lives of individual Pashtun men, achieving everyday masculinity at a time of extraordinary violence in Afghanistan. The book reframes our understanding of both Pashtun masculinity and the place of psychoanalytic interpretation in the practice of person-centered ethnography. A rare achievement pointing to new directions for psychological anthropology.

Silvio, Teri: *Puppets, Gods, and Brands. Theorizing the Age of Animation from Taiwan.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019. 287 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-8116-0 (pbk)

The early twenty-first century has seen an explosion of animation. Cartoon characters are everywhere – in cinema, television, and video games and as brand logos. There are new technological objects that seem to have lives of their own – from Facebook algorithms that suggest products for us to buy to robots that respond to human facial expressions. The ubiquity of animation is not a trivial side-effect of the development of digital technologies and the globalization of media markets. Rather, it points to a paradigm shift. In the last century, performance became a key term in academic and popular discourse: The idea that we construct identities through our gestures and speech

proved extremely useful for thinking about many aspects of social life. The present volume proposes an anthropological concept of animation as a contrast and complement to performance: The idea that we construct social others by projecting parts of ourselves out into the world might prove useful for thinking about such topics as climate crisis, corporate branding, and social media. Like performance, animation can serve as a platform for comparisons of different cultures and historical eras.

Teri Silvio presents an anthropology of animation through a detailed ethnographic account of how characters, objects, and abstract concepts are invested with lives, personalities, and powers – and how people interact with them – in contemporary Taiwan. The practices analyzed include the worship of wooden statues of Buddhist and Daoist deities and the recent craze for cute vinyl versions of these deities, as well as a wildly popular video fantasy series performed by puppets. She reveals that animation is, like performance, a concept that works differently in different contexts, and that animation practices are deeply informed by local traditions of thinking about the relationships between body and soul, spiritual power and the material world. The case of Taiwan, where Chinese traditions merge with Japanese and American popular culture, uncovers alternatives to seeing animation as either an expression of animism or as “playing God.” Looking at the contemporary world through the lens of animation will help us rethink relationships between global and local, identity and otherness, human and non-human.

Angela Zito: Teri Silvio's book is an important and original tour-de-force of theorized ethnographic engagement. She convincingly argues that we are in the midst of a paradigm shift, which she calls the Age of Animation – a time of giving objects lives of their own, a widening of the sense of an agency heretofore jealously guarded as the purview of humans alone. Her book achieves anthropology's Holy Grail: It makes surprising connections about the world around the reader, rendering legible, in new ways, aspects of it that she did not even know she did not understand. And this is accomplished via ethnography of a seemingly peripheral place – Taiwan – that proves to be deeply significant in our globalized world.

Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui: *Re-enchanting Modernity. Ritual Economy and Society in Wenzhou, China.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2020. 374 pp. ISBN 978-1-4780-0827-9 (pbk)

In “*Re-enchanting Modernity*” Mayfair Yang examines the resurgence of religious and ritual life after decades of enforced secularization in the coastal area

of Wenzhou, China. Drawing on twenty-five years of ethnographic fieldwork, Yang shows how the local practices of popular religion, Daoism, and Buddhism are based in community-oriented grassroots organizations that create spaces for relative local autonomy and self-governance. Central to Wenzhou's religious civil society is what Yang calls a "ritual economy," in which an ethos of generosity is expressed through donations to temples, clerics, ritual events, and charities in exchange for spiritual gain. With these investments in transcendent realms, Yang adopts Georges Bataille's notion of "ritual expenditures" to challenge the idea that rural Wenzhou's economic development can be described in terms of Max Weber's notion of a "Protestant Ethic." Instead, Yang suggests that Wenzhou's ritual economy forges an alternate path to capitalist modernity.

Rambelli, Fabio (ed.): *Spirits and Animism in Contemporary Japan. The Invisible Empire*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. 240 pp. ISBN 978-1-350-09709-4 (hbk)

This book draws attention to a striking aspect of contemporary Japanese culture: the prevalence of discussions and representations of "spirits" (*tama* or *tamashii*). Ancestor cults have played a central role in Japanese culture and religion for many centuries; in recent decades, however, other phenomena have expanded and diversified the realm of Japanese animism. For example, many manga, anime, TV shows, literature, and art works deal with spirits, ghosts, or with an invisible dimension of reality. International contributors ask to what extent these are cultural forms created by the media for consumption, rather than manifestations of "traditional" ancestral spirituality in their adaptations to contemporary society.

"Spirits and Animism in Contemporary Japan" considers the modes of representations and the possible cultural meanings of spirits, as well as the meta-physical implications of contemporary Japanese ideas about spirits. The chapters offer analyses of specific cases of "animistic attitudes" in which the presence of spirits and spiritual forces is alleged and attempt to trace cultural genealogies of those attitudes. In particular, they present various modes of representation of spirits (in contemporary art, architecture, visual culture, cinema, literature, diffuse spirituality) while at the same time addressing their underlying intellectual and religious assumptions.

Barbara R. Ambros: In recent years, debates about the use of the term "animism" have resurfaced as the ontological turn has reinvigorated the concept. This timely and diverse collection of essays contributes to

these conversations by interrogating how the concepts of animism and spirits have been deployed in modern and contemporary Japan.

Roque, Ricardo, and Elizabeth G. Traube (eds.): *Crossing Histories and Ethnographies. Following Colonial Historicities in Timor-Leste*. New York: Bergahn Books, 2019. 372 pp. ISBN 978-1-78920-271-7 (hbk)

The key question for many anthropologists and historians today is not whether to cross the boundary between their disciplines, but whether the idea of a disciplinary boundary should be sustained. Reinterpreting the dynamic interplay between archive and field, these essays propose a method for mutually productive crossings between historical and ethnographic research. It engages critically with the colonial pasts of indigenous societies and examines how fieldwork and archival studies together lead to fruitful insights into the making of different colonial historicities. Timor-Leste's unusually long and in some ways unique colonial history is explored as a compelling case for these crossings.

James J. Fox: This is an important book, a valuable book, and in many ways, a path-setting book that brings together an impressive group of contemporary social analysts – from both a historical and anthropological perspective – in a focused consideration of Timor-Leste.

Woodfill, Brent K. S.: *War in the Land of True Peace. The Fight for Maya Sacred Places*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019. 304 pp. ISBN 978-0-8061-6728-2 (pbk)

For the ancient and modern Maya, the landscape is ruled by powerful entities in the form of geographic features like caves, mountains, springs, and abandoned cities – spirits who must be entreated, through visits and rituals, for permission to plant, harvest, build, or travel their territories. Consequently, such places have served as points of domination and resistance over the millennia – and nowhere is this truer than in Guatemala's Northern Transversal Strip, the subject of Brent K. S. Woodfill's "War in the Land of True Peace".

This strategic region with its wealth of resources – fertile soil, petroleum, and the only noncoastal salt in the Maya lowlands – is the site of some of the most sacred Maya places, and thus also the focus of some of the signal struggles for power in Maya history. In

this book Woodfill delves into archaeology, epigraphy, ethnohistory, and ethnography to write the biographies of several of these places, covering their histories from the rise of the Preclassic Maya through the spread of transnational corporations in our time. Again and again the region, known since Spanish conquest as Vera Paz, or True Peace, has seen incursion by a foreign group – including the great Maya cities of Tikal and Calakmul, the Habsburg Empire, Guatemalan military dictatorships, and contemporary corporations – seeking to expand its power. Each outsider, intentionally or not, used the Maya need for access to these places to ensure loyalty. And each time, local Maya pushed back to reclaim the sacred places for their own.

David A. Freidel: Brent K. S. Woodfill's engaging and lucid story of the Transversal, the frontier between the Guatemalan highlands, home to millions of modern Maya, and lowlands, home to the famous Classic Maya civilization, is exemplary. War in the Land of True Peace is worth reading by everyone interested in the Maya.

Robinaud, Marion: Religieuses et Amérindiens. Anthropologie d'une rencontre dans l'ouest Canadien. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2020. 237 pp. ISBN 978-2-7535-7887-6 (pbk)

Les missions d'évangélisation catholiques auprès des populations autochtones nord-américaines de l'Ouest canadien, au XIX^e siècle et au XX^e siècle, s'offrent à la recherche en sciences sociales comme un laboratoire d'expériences de la rencontre interculturelle propice à l'étude des processus d'adaptation à l'altérité. Missionnaires et missionnés s'observent, interagissent et construisent une histoire commune. Sur une toile de fond teintée de post-colonialisme, les protagonistes s'expriment au sujet de cette période de cohabitation forcée. Entre individualités et collectivités, entre mémoire et renouveau, la rencontre entre religieuses et autochtones se donne à voir. La fabrique de cet espace commun est ici abordée sous l'angle du féminin, par l'intermédiaire des mémoires féminines des missions. Cet ouvrage propose une mise en confrontation de deux cultures en contexte de missions d'évangélisation, et ce, à travers les mécanismes de rencontre dans lesquels les constructions culturelles du masculin, du féminin et de la relation entre les sexes ne sont pas étrangères.

Peters, Stefan (Hrsg.): Gewalt und Konfliktbearbeitung in Lateinamerika. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2020. 235 pp. ISBN 978-3-8487-5729-9 (pbk)

Lateinamerika gibt Rätsel auf. Hochrangige politische Vertreter feiern den Subkontinent gerne als

Friedensregion. Allerdings stehen solche Slogans in einem bemerkenswerten Kontrast zur Alltagsrealität. Die Region ist durch ein hohes Gewaltniveau gekennzeichnet und führt seit Jahren die weltweiten Gewaltstatistiken an, ist aber auch Schauplatz innovativer Mechanismen der Konfliktbearbeitung. Dieser Band möchte zur Analyse der Gleichzeitigkeit verbreiteter Gewalt und innovativen Ansätzen zur Konfliktbearbeitung beitragen. Er nimmt dafür eine interdisziplinäre Perspektive ein und beleuchtet aktuelle Dynamiken in Lateinamerika anhand verschiedener Fallbeispiele, Vergleichsstudien und konzeptioneller Arbeiten.

Skopyk, Bradley: Colonial Cataclysms. Climate, Landscape, and Memory in Mexico's Little Ice Age. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2020. 326 pp. ISBN 978-0-8165-3996-3 (hbk)

The contiguous river basins that flowed in Tlaxcala and San Juan Teotihuacan formed part of the agricultural heart of central Mexico. As the colonial project rose to a crescendo in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the indigenous farmers of central Mexico faced long-term problems standard historical treatments had attributed to drought and soil degradation set off by Old World agriculture. Instead, Bradley Skopyk argues that a global climate event called the Little Ice Age brought cold temperatures and elevated rainfall to the watersheds of Tlaxcala and Teotihuacan. With the climatic shift came cataclysmic changes: great floods, human adaptations to these deluges, and then silted wetlands and massive soil erosion.

This book chases water and soil across the colonial Mexican landscape, through the fields and towns of New Spain's Native subjects, and in and out of some of the strongest climate anomalies of the last thousand or more years. The pursuit identifies and explains the making of two unique ecological crises, the product of the interplay between climatic and anthropogenic processes. It charts how Native farmers responded to the challenges posed by these ecological rifts with creative use of plants and animals from the Old and New Worlds, environmental engineering, and conflict within and beyond the courts. With a new reading of the colonial climate and by paying close attention to land, water, and agrarian ecologies forged by farmers, Skopyk argues that colonial cataclysms – forged during a critical conjuncture of truly unprecedented proportions, a crucible of human and natural forces – unhinged the customary ways in which humans organized, thought about, and used the Mexican environment.

This book inserts climate, earth, water, and ecology as significant forces shaping colonial affairs and challenges us to rethink both the environmental consequences of Spanish imperialism and the role of Indigenous peoples in shaping them.

Cynthia Radding: (...) This researched study integrates scientific methods for data analysis with historical methods for the cultural interpretation of diverse primary sources to weave a good story.

Carballo, David M.: *Collision of Worlds. A Deep History of the Fall of Aztec Mexico and the Forging of New Spain*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. 366 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-086435-4 (hbk)

Mexico of five centuries ago was witness to one of the most momentous encounters between human societies, when a group of Spaniards led by Hernando Cortés joined forces with tens of thousands of Mesoamerican allies to topple the mighty Aztec Empire. It served as a template for the forging of much of Latin America and initiated the globalized world we inhabit today. The violent clash that culminated in the Aztec-Spanish war of 1519–21 and the new colonial order it created were millennia in the making, entwining the previously independent cultural developments of both sides of the Atlantic.

“Collision of Worlds” provides a deep history of this encounter, one that considers temporal depth in the richly layered cultures of Mexico and Spain, from their prehistories to the urban and imperial societies they built in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Leading Mesoamerican archaeologist David Carballo offers a unique perspective on these fabled events with a focus on the physical world of places and things, their similarities and differences in trans-Atlantic perspective, and their interweaving in an encounter characterized by conquest and colonialism, but also resilience on the part of Native peoples. An engrossing and sweeping account, “Collision of Worlds” debunks long-held myths and contextualizes the deep roots and enduring consequences of the Aztec-Spanish conflict as never before.

David Wengrow: In this remarkable work of comparative history and archaeology, David Carballo situates the Spanish-Mexican wars of the 16th century within a parallel account of Iberia and Mesoamerica, stretching back into humanity’s deep past.

Binford, Leigh, Lesley Gill, and Steve Striffler (eds.): *Fifty Years of Peasant Wars in Latin America*.

New York: Berghahn Books, 2020. 220 pp. ISBN 978-1-78920-561-9 (hbk)

Informed by Eric Wolf’s “Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century”, published in 1969, this book examines selected peasant struggles in seven Latin American countries during the last fifty years and suggests the continuing relevance of Wolf’s approach. The seven case studies are preceded by an introduction in which the editors assess the continuing relevance of Wolf’s political economy. The book concludes with Gavin Smith’s reflection on reading Eric Wolf as a public intellectual today.

Avi Chomsky: The book is quite unique... The concept is original and intriguing and brings together an outstanding array of scholars to pursue the questions Eric Wolf raised in different Latin American cases.

Muttenter, Frank: *Being Ethical among Vezo People. Fisheries, Livelihoods, and Conservation in Madagascar*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020. 226 pp. ISBN 978-1-4985-9329-8 (hbk)

“Being Ethical among Vezo People” analyzes environmental change in reef ecosystems of southwest Madagascar and the impacts of global fishery markets on Vezo people’s well-being. The ethnography describes fishers’ changing perceptions of the physical environment in the context of livelihood and ritual practices and discusses their shared understandings of how Vezo persons should live.

Under new marine protected area regulations, each village is responsible for managing its octopus fishery with a temporal closure. Frank Muttenter argues that locals’ willingness to improve well-being does not commit them to a conservationist ethos. To cope with resource depletion Vezo people migrate to distant resource-rich marine frontiers, target fast growing species, and perform rituals that purport to affect their luck in fishing and marine foraging. But they doubt conservationists’ opinion that coral reef ecosystems can be managed for sustainable yield.

The richly documented, elegantly theorized, and fresh ethnographic outlook on the Vezo addresses current issues in marine ecology and conservation, small-scale fisheries, and the semiotics of rural livelihoods and human well-being, particularly its expression in ritual. It will be of strong interest to environmental scientists, Madagascar specialists, and anthropology generalists alike; particularly those who are interested in what the modes of engagement with the environment of foraging peoples can teach us about the

human condition at large, and the nature-culture debates in particular.

Webb Keane: “Being Ethical among Vezo People” is a thoughtful and original approach to one of the most pressing problems on the anthropological agenda, people’s relations to their environment and the threats it faces. It takes the anthropology of ethics into fascinating new terrain.

Bergstresser, Heinrich: Ghana. Die IV. Republik zwischen Vorbild und Mythos (1993–2018). Frankfurt: Brandes & Apsel Verlag, 2019. 255 pp. ISBN 978-3-95558-252-4 (pbk)

Ghana, *the Black Star*, gehörte zu den ersten unabhängigen Staaten Afrikas. Im Kontext der neuen Weltordnung der 1990er Jahre transformierte sich Ghana früher als andere diktatorisch und repressiv regierte Länder des Kontinents in einen demokratisch legitimierte Staat und setzte Maßstäbe. Heinrich Bergstresser schaut auf und hinter das demokratische System der IV. Republik, zeigt seine Stärken und Schwächen auf und arbeitet vor allem das politökonomische Innenleben Ghanas, aber auch die christliche und islamische Ökumene und das Verhältnis zur internationalen Gemeinschaft heraus.

Najoum, Alhassane A.: Les ruptures conjugales en Afrique subsaharienne musulmane. Analyse socio-anthropologique du *tashi*, de la répudiation et du divorce à Niamey, Niger. Paris: L’Harmattan, 2020. 321 pp. ISBN 978-2-343-20450-5 (pbk)

Ce livre traite de conflits et de ruptures conjugales en milieu urbain, et pas seulement de divorce. Il analyse les processus, les stratégies de négociations ainsi que les systèmes de règlements de ces conflits et ruptures. Pour une meilleure compréhension de ces phénomènes, outre les actions des couples en conflit, il met l’accent sur l’implication de trois institutions majeures dans les négociations de ces conflits et ruptures à Niamey: la famille, des institutions islamiques et les institutions judiciaires.

Ainsi, il fournit une interprétation rigoureuse et détaillée des stratégies des couples en conflit, et celles des institutions qui agissent pour les concilier. Dans le cadre de ces négociations, il montre comment les stratégies individuelles ou collectives, féminines et/ou masculines, associées au pouvoir et aux relations de pouvoir, influencent les attitudes et les actions des unes et des autres dans l’arène matrimoniale.

Rutert, Britta: Contested Properties. Peoples, Plants, and Politics in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2020. 349 pp. ISBN 978-3-8376-4794-5 (pbk)

This book deals with the values of medicinal plants and associated knowledge(s) in the field of bioprospecting in post-apartheid South Africa. Bioprospecting, the use of genetic or biological resources for commercial purposes, is a profit-oriented enterprise facing new challenges with the rise of human rights and biodiversity politics. This new situation has led to claims for political leverage made by indigenous communities, as well as to claims for national and local cultural identity and heritage. The picture presented here contributes to the widely discussed yet so far unresolved question of how to appropriately share benefits, and how to protect indigenous knowledge in this field.

Anata, Ambaye Ogato: Synergy of Descent, History, and Tradition. Sidama Ethnic Identification. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2019. 224 pp. ISBN 978-3-89645-918-3 (pbk)

The Sidama are found in the northeast of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Regional State (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia. The boundaries of the Sidama are the Oromia region in the north, east and southeast, the Gedeo zone in the south, and the North Omo zone in the west. The Sidamaland is the home of the Sidama people and is located about 270 kilometres south of Addis Ababa. It stretches north-south along the international all-weather road that connects Nairobi (Kenya) to Addis Ababa. The northernmost point of the Sidamaland consists of the city of Hawassa, which is both the administrative capital of the Sidama zone and the SNNPRS capital. As a broad road network project that connects Ethiopia with Kenya, the road that passes through most territories of the Sidama is being asphalted.

The strong ethnic identification of many Sidama is generally evident in Sidamaland and particularly evident in the city of Hawassa, even to the casual observer. A study of the different factors of ethnic identification is warranted to understand how the Sidama people view themselves within their ethnic group and in relation to other ethnic groups. The vibrant and distinctive sense of Sidamanness is not a recent phenomenon among the Sidama, but rather the historical continuation of asserting and reasserting a distinctive Sidama ethnic identity over time.

The Sidama define their ethnic identity using different terms and on the basis of different criteria. This study explores three commonly used criteria: descent, history, and tradition. The process of Sidama ethnic identification passed through a turbulent phase during the incorporation of the Sidama into the “modern” Ethiopian empire in the late nineteenth century. After

the incorporation of the Sidama, the government vociferously denounced and marginalized the traditional institutions of the Sidama and introduced state-sponsored institutions such as the “church” and “modern education.” This forced Sidama traditions to be practised “under the radar” and led to feelings of resistance against the administration. However, as will be argued in this study, this turbulent phase evolved into a resource among the Sidama for promoting and deepening dimensions of identification, and inextricably became a part of future discourse with regard to Sidama identification.

Priest, Chinyere Felicia: *The Conversion of Igbo to Islam. A Study of Religious Change in a Christian Heartland.* Carlisle: Langham Monographics, 2020. 200 pp. ISBN 978-1-78368-779-4 (pbk)

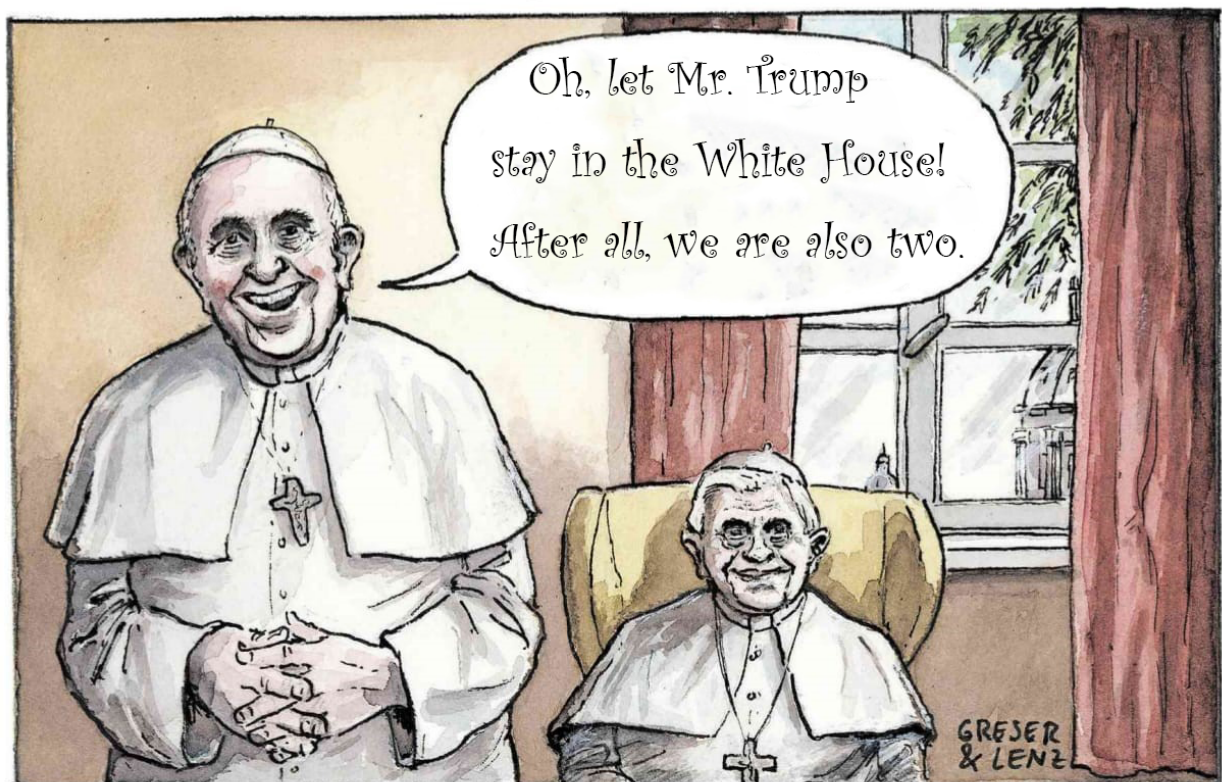
Often considered a Christian heartland in Nigeria, Igboland has recently seen a dramatic increase in Igbo Christians converting to Islam. Yet, despite this rapid change, there has been minimal research into the growth of Islam in the area and the implications this has for Christianity in the region.

Addressing this need, Dr Chinyere Felicia Priest provides a detailed exploration of Igbo converts’ reasons for conversion through skilful analysis of in-

depth ethnographic interviews with thirty converts, considering their social, religious, and familial backgrounds. This unique study sheds much-needed light on the role of intellectual factors in the conversion experiences of many newly Muslim Igbos and challenges previous ideas of monetary and social influences as primary motivations for conversion. As a result of her examination of these conversion experiences, Dr Priest calls for serious intellectual engagement of biblical doctrine within the Igbo church and highlights the need for ministers and missiologists to better disciple and equip Christians to adequately engage with Muslim objections to the gospel and give a reasoned defence of their faith. The vulnerability of many Igbo Christians will continue to result in converts to Islam unless the church heeds the lessons learned from this research and outlined in this book.

Egodi Uchendu: Chinyere Felicia Priest’s book is a must-read for scholars and students of religion in Africa and all those interested in patterns of religious change. Building on ethnographic field research in Igboland, Nigeria’s dominant Christian homeland, the author succinctly explores the reasons behind the conversion of Igbo Christians to Islam. In doing this, she leaves no one in doubt of the diverse results for religious realignments in any environment and among different people groups.

The Divine Solution



Review of Articles

(by Joachim G. Piepke, Darius Piwowarczyk, Stanisław Grodz, and Vincent Adi Gunawan)

Piwowarczyk, Darius J.: Family Transformation in the Colonial Context of German Togo. *Anthropos* 115.2020: 459–467.

While the German colonial state, in general, conformed to the precolonial spatiality, it also modified it significantly. This was accomplished by means of application of modern technology, reorganization of labor, urbanization, as well as the expansion of communication and transportation infrastructure. In short, the colonial institutions, and hence the main channels of structural and ideological transformation of local societies, were concentrated mostly in the south of the colony.

Before discussing specific mechanisms of social transformation in German Togo, it is necessary to outline what is generally referred to as “African conceptions about the human being” – that is, what was being transformed, or acted upon, by institutions of the colonial state and by missions. In order to understand the sub-Saharan notion of the human being one needs to overcome, in the first place, the dualistic dichotomy between the immaterial soul and material body typical of the Western understanding of the persona. African cultures conceptualize personhood by identifying in it a number of onto-sociological aspects, some of which cannot be precisely rendered in English. Moreover, a family group, or a clan, is regarded as a community of the living and the dead, and even those not yet born – a social unit in which the past, the present, and the future come together. Put differently, what really constitutes an African man or woman thinking in traditional ways are relations, and not the unique, individual persona as is the case in the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the West, one can often repeat the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*: “I think and therefore I exist”; an Ewe or a Fon person would say instead: “I belong to, therefore I exist.” Accordingly, the community in its multiple dimensions is the given, the principal framework of personal reference. It even extends beyond the perceptible social world, and as such it includes the world of animals, the realms of ghosts, of ancestors, and of the Divine, while the ancestors – the deceased members of the clan – constitute the bridge between the living and gods.

These local conceptions about the human being were confronted with a complex ideological system brought by Europeans that was composed of Christian, nationalist, and positivist-Darwinist components. A classical exposal of Catholic missionary ideology of that time was the book by the Catholic missiologist, Joseph Schmidlin (1876–1944), published in 1913 and entitled: “Die katholischen Missionen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten” (The Catholic Missions in the German Protectorates). In the chapter “The Question of Principles: Mission and

Colonial Institutions,” Schmidlin stated, for example, that “the colonial era of the 1870s and the 1880s was also a milestone in the history of Christian missions” and pointed to a dialectical interdependence, in fact a synthesis of missions and European administrations in the colonial field. In this context, Schmidlin emphasized the “cultural activity” of Catholic missions which he regarded as the supplementation and endorsement of economic and political dimensions of colonialism. The complementary role of missions in the colonial field, according to Schmidlin, consisted in conducting the “spiritual conquest” – that is to say, in making the subdued population *want* to obey – while the administration brings them to obedience by *coercion*. He wrote in this regard: “The mission conquers our colonies spiritually and assimilates them internally. ... The government can enforce external obedience through laws and punishment but the mental submission, indeed the securing of people’s loyalty, can only be accomplished by the mission.” In fact, the “spiritual conquest” can only be achieved by combining persuasion with disciplining, and specifically by Christianization, schooling, and “training natives for work,” which elevates the local population to a “higher cultural” level and, above all, provides colonies with properly trained indigenous personnel.

The common denominator of both missionary and government programs in German Togo (and elsewhere in Europe-dominated Africa) was, nonetheless, the issue of “progress” – the principal motif of the then dominant narrative, indeed the “first ideological mover” of the West European civilization at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Thus, for Bernhard Dernburg (1865–1937) – the director of Colonial Department in Berlin in the years 1907–1910 – who sought to harmonize the purposes of economic exploitation, efficient administration, and “progress” of indigenous populations, colonization meant “the utilization of land, its mineral resources, its flora and fauna and, above all, people for the benefit of the colonizing nation which, in return, commits itself to giving its higher culture, its moral conceptions, and its better technology.”

The correctional settlements (*Besserungssiedlungen*) were quintessential examples of the disciplinary practices in German Togo. One of them was located on the Chra River, about 125 kilometers north of Lome, and the other – Djabotaure near Blita – on the northern frontier, in the district Sokode-Bassari. The Chra colony was founded in 1902. Individuals sent to that settlement were people “with a criminal past,” or rather those whom the local administration classified as such. In 1907, for instance, the station officer responsible for the district of Sansane-Mangu, First Lieutenant Adolf

Mellin, sent nine “habitual vagabonds” to Chra who had already been convicted previously but who were still seen as “harmful” to society. Interestingly, the convicts were mostly people representing the ethnic groups from the “unpacified” northern frontier, in particular the Konkomba. The settlement was envisioned as a “model African village” (according to colonial standards), and, indeed, by the year 1910 it had acquired the aspect presented the sight of a flourishing native village with vibrant traffic and commercial exchange. By the year 1909, the total number of inhabitants of the Chra station reached 258 individuals, including 84 men, 83 women, and 91 children.

The correctional colony in Chra was also a site of cultural exchange – the melting pot where a new, “Togolese” colonial culture began to take form. For example, convicts initially erected houses in their own, ethnic-specific styles. After some time, however, a new type of architecture emerged that was inspired primarily by local Ewe craftsmen, some of them perhaps trained at the SVD mission workshop located in Atakpame. Another important factor contributing to the process of cultural “leveling,” was intermarriage, although “a few Moslem families from the district Sansane-Mangu [were] too proud to give their daughters as wives to men from [other] tribes.” Finally, the authorities also intended to unify the settlers linguistically by promoting Ewe as the main language of communication. It was hoped that the mission school and the contact with “more civilized” neighbors would help to establish Ewe as the lingua franca in Chra. The intended “final product” of disciplining in correctional settlements was to be a “diligent farmer” competent in modern agricultural techniques and producing cash crops for the German market. This process was facilitated by the fact that a large number of convicts were individuals whose bonds to their communities of origin had already been loosened, and who had already lived in the interstice between their indigenous cultural universe and the emerging colonial society.

What missionaries expected from the Togolese was, if possible, a complete adoption of cultural codes that were, by and large, distinctive for subordinated sectors of German society. This process was discursively euphemized as cultural “advancement,” ontological betterment in this life, and a way to win salvation hereafter. The principal two mechanisms applied in the process were schooling and religious rituals.

The training of Togolese girls at schools operated by the SVD and SSpS in Lome and Anecho was based on the ideological principles presented above. For instance, Fr. Bücking wrote in 1901: “Besides the teaching of writing and reading, the emphasis is placed on the acquisition of religious knowledge, as well as on the introduction of girls into the necessary practical housework skills, with the purpose of laying the foundation for good, monogamous, Christian families.” Obviously,

talking about the “necessary practical skills,” Bücking disregarded multiple competences that the children had already acquired in the process of socialization in their families and communities. Instead, the missionary education was to give them the knowledge and habits that were “necessary for living” in the “piece of Germany” that was emerging in Togo. Moreover, the transmission and inculcation of such skills and habits were seen as the elevation of “deeply degraded” African women, as Fr. Schönig put it, to a higher Kultur, and hence to a “higher ontological status.” Another SVD missionary, while praising, “in general,” the diligence and industriousness of native women from the area of Porto Seguro, viewed them as “driven by natural instincts” and “frivolous,” and therefore barely capable of creating a family characterized by “Christian values and probity.” The reason for that, the author suggested, was not so much of biological but rather of cultural nature: “The fetish had kept them under control from their childhood on.”

Missionaries also put emphasis on training future native Catholic teachers, and these were, almost exclusively, men. In order to ensure a thorough “reform” of their habits, the candidates (aged 12–14) were to be placed under the regime of a boarding school (*Internatsschule*) for a period of 7–9 years, and hence largely separated from their family and native cultural environment. During their Internat formation, the candidates remained under strict control of the mission superior: he had to hold periodical conferences for them, evaluate their performance, and address all professional and moral issues that may have concerned them. As part of the colonial program of “training Negroes for work,” they were also expected to establish and tend their own gardens in order to generate “a little income.”

Religious and political (e.g. national) rituals play an important, although subsidiary role in that process, in the sense that they inculcate in people the symbolic, intellectual, emotional, and bodily “correctness” determined by dominant narratives. Similarly, the Catholic rituals – as a set of prescribed and controlled gestures performed within the institutional framework of the SVD-mission in German Togo – were to instill in African participants the behavior expected from members of the colonial polity, and – consequently – to establish new loyalties that separated neophytes from their traditional, non-Christian social and cultural settings. These included the individual “rites of passage” (baptism, the first communion, and confirmation) as well as the annual rituals that “re-segmented” and redefined astronomical time in terms of the Catholic ritual calendar (e.g. Christmas and Corpus Christi).

Baptism was to mark a radical break of neophytes with their “pagan” environment. Indeed, the baptized girls ritually became “new persons,” with “new souls and bodies,” which was symbolized by their white dresses and new, baptismal names that they were given during the ceremony. In the final exhortation, the priest

urged the neophytes to persevere in the Catholic faith and prayed for their families, “some of them still pagan,” so that they do not “interfere” with that process.

While the government of German Togo introduced certain civic celebrations that were based on national symbolism, e.g. the Emperor’s Birthday, the missionaries used their institutional and symbolic resources to transform indigenous conceptions of time according to the Christian ritual calendar. The SVD-missionaries and the SSPS-sisters left several interesting descriptions of such celebrations. At least two “disciplinary” or culture-transforming aspects of those annual events can be extracted from those accounts: their European, if not German symbolic content that was to be adopted by the Togolese; and certain ritualized drill to which the participants, in particular children, were submitted. The disciplinary aspect of Christmas manifested itself in the practice of “ranking” and “bodily drill/reform” of school children. The SSPS-sisters who operated a school for girls in Lome, for instance, prepared and distributed among their students about one hundred gifts – such as European clothing, toys, and school supplies – not only to give girls Christmas joy but also to reward their docility as the sisters understood it: “O happy those who excelled in school attendance and diligence”, – wrote one of them, – “because they were honored accordingly.” In this way, however, the traditional large family as the principal reference group for an individual was being substituted by the Christian community of believers, and the collectivist attitudes with reference to the large family or clan were gradually being replaced by individualistic competitiveness.

Kamal, Noura: Nablus under Siege. Religiosity and the Creation of Resilience. *Anthropos* 115.2020: 417–431.

Ever since the Six-Day War of 1967, the Palestinian city of Nablus has experienced great suffering due to several severe attacks and occupation by Israeli forces. The peak of the violence was in 2002 when Israeli forces invaded Nablus and imposed a curfew for three months (June–October). This period became known as “the long siege” and it followed “the short siege” of April that year when all Palestinian cities were under direct occupation. The suffering that people faced during this period took on different dimensions – most notably immobility – as a result of the continuous siege and the constant threat of being shot at if one attempted to leave one’s home. The violent practices and strict closures of the city not only affected living conditions and led to deteriorating economic conditions, but also had an impact on the psychological well-being of the inhabitants in everyday life.

It was observable that people did not take any visible actions during the short siege: they were trapped in their homes simply waiting for tomorrow, and when

tomorrow came they waited for the next day. In other words, the inhabitants of Nablus were not able to leave their houses because they had no idea how to deal with a curfew which was imposed on them so suddenly. Breaking the curfew meant putting their lives under threat. They could not go to school, university, work, or socialize with their families and acquaintances. People were confined to their homes, watching the news on television, or listening to it on the radio. Social media did not have the strong influence it has today, and there were no Facebook, Twitter, or similar communication platforms. People were deprived of any space that allowed them to interact with each other, due to the curfew and the physical presence of the military everywhere inside the city. Formal institutions such as the Palestinian Medical Relief Society and the Palestine Red Crescent Society took a leading role in providing the people with what they needed, such as food, medicine, and women’s and children’s needs.

The main reason for the Israeli army operation’s focus on the old city is the latter’s historical importance. It is one of the most famous and oldest cities in Palestine. During the siege, the inhabitants of the old city suffered more than other neighborhoods of Nablus, because the Israeli military concentrated their attacks on the old city and tried to erase its history by destroying its old buildings. The way that the Israeli army attacked the old city led to its separation from the wider urban environment. In addition, the old city is the place where most inhabitants started their lives in Nablus. Later on, especially since the First Intifada, they started moving to suburbs outside the old city, mainly due to the violence the city had witnessed. When searching for the people’s origins outside the old city and their ancestries, it becomes clear that they all have roots there, and many houses are still named after their families.

Religious beliefs played a vital role in creating the social safety net for people to cope with the tragedy they faced. Religion makes it easier to withstand loss and perhaps even defy suffering. In addition, it contributes to the formation of kinship ties that in turn also make it easier to not only defy the siege but also to withstand loss and sorrow. Most importantly, there is a pre-existing religious context into which people are socialized that has contributed to the idea of religion becoming a pillar of resilience. Kinship and neighborhood have long been, and still are, vital influences on social, economic, and political relationships in Nablus. Traditional practices and religious beliefs served to strengthen the kinship and neighborhood relations, which facilitated the emergence of survival strategies that people developed in order to continue their lives during the hard times.

Except for the small Christian and Samaritan communities, which together numbered no more than 750 people, who mostly live in the Rafidia area, virtually all the inhabitants were Sunni Muslims. The largest minority was Christians; most worked as artisans and

merchants. Most of the Christians were Greek Orthodox. Amal, a 36-year-old unmarried woman living in the eastern area of the old city, described the loss of her brother this way:

I had a brother who was sixteen years old. He left school and was an employee in a tailor's shop. I remember the day when he was killed. He left the house at eight o'clock, and while he was going to work, he heard the sounds of bullets and saw tires set on fire, the soldiers were hidden everywhere ... While he was at Al-Baik gate going to Al-Khan to get to the center of the city, there was silence in the street. He did not recognize that the Israeli soldiers were hidden up on the roof of one of the buildings ... Suddenly a sniper shot him and he fell to the ground ... The neighbors tried to help and dragged him under cover to rescue him; he was covered in blood ... I was at my work, I felt that something bad had happened, but I did not expect that my brother had been killed ... I did not know anything until the evening ... I went to my aunt's house and I was listening to the local news, they said that an anonymous young man had been killed that morning. I kept praying for his family; for God to support them with patience and comfort them ... Then my neighbor called to tell me that my brother was at the hospital in a critical condition. She did not tell me that he was dead ... I found all my family at the hospital ... the soldiers had left him on the ground until there was no more blood in his body.

After Amal told this, there were a few seconds of silence. It was not an easy moment for her, knowing that she had lost him forever, but still relieving herself by sharing this story born out of deep grief. The religious aspect was clearly vital in comforting her and helping her to heal her psychological wounds. After she told her brother's story, she ended by saying: "This is God's will." Her relationship with God helped her to accept what she had experienced in life. The days during the short siege, where facing death was a daily reality, were simply too hard to handle otherwise. The constant violence that Nablus city faced and the pattern of death and destruction which became the theme of 2002 turned Amal's fear into an element of religious belief. What was striking was how, with each memory, she mentioned God and her acceptance of his will. Amal finds a way of seeing the past in a new perspective by accepting God's judgment.

Like many others, Amal went back to work during the long siege, ignoring the presence of the military. She found that she had no choice over this and believed that God had power over her life:

I worked during the siege. I used to sneak through to reach my work. I did not care about my life. I did not care anymore. Destruction and death were everywhere. I felt that life was not important anymore. At

least I tried to live and enjoy each day instead of waiting for death.

Revealing hidden grief therefore became a way of understanding how people's actions can be directed down specific paths, sometimes without even noticing that they are following ways they would not have even considered under ordinary circumstances. Getting used to the ubiquity of death and finding the courage to break the siege after submitting oneself to God's will became a pattern of life for many people. The remarkable aspect is that Amal not only broke the siege because of her trust of God, but her grief and necessity to work also led her to worry less for her own safety.

Religious practices such as reading the Quran and praying, show how people created a psychological sphere for themselves, which helped them to keep living as normally as possible and find their way of resilience. Relying on spiritual aspects and believing that there is a greater power than that of human destructiveness gave those people the courage to break the siege and move around the occupied city, despite the very real and ever-present fear that accompanied any such movements.

Oesterdiekhoff, Georg W.: Belief in Metamorphosis. *Developmental Psychology as Theoretical Foundation of Cultural Anthropology. Anthropos* 115.2020: 371–387.

Premodern societies all around the world, both hunting-gathering and agrarian cultures, have strongly believed that inanimate objects and living beings sometimes change their appearance by transforming themselves into other natural kinds: things, plants, animals, and humans are believed to be able to transform their body and essence to that of any another natural kind – humans can become animals, plants can become humans, animals can transform into stones, and deceased persons can appear as stars in the sky. The belief in metamorphosis manifests itself in very different ways. One of them is the notion that women can give birth to crocodiles or birds. Or sorcerers and shamans are believed to be able to transform themselves into beasts of all kind. Conversely, animals are believed to be able to take form of humans.

The belief in metamorphosis also played a crucial part in the ancient worldview and metaphysics. Archaic creation myths all around the globe assumed that the cosmos came into being by the transformation of first humans into all parts and elements of the universe. Ancient peoples also cared for the maintenance of the cosmic order by regular (annual) repetitions of the creation event, during which they replicated the part of the first humans. Correspondingly, deceased persons believed to reappear not only as grandchildren but also as animals and plants, thus repeating the action of first humans *in illo tempore*.

How can we explain that ancient belief in the possibility of transformations? Why is it not common in modern societies? Developmental psychology demonstrated that in modern societies only preschool children believe in metamorphoses. Empirical test procedures described in detail metamorphic beliefs of preschoolers. Blurred conceptual borders between different natural kinds is typical for the preoperational stage – the psychological phase of younger children. The third stage of human development, the concrete operational stage, is devoid of any belief in metaphoric transformations. Modern humans usually stay on the formal operational stage, which usually comes into existence at the age of 12 and unfolds gradually until the age of 25. At this stage, the belief in metamorphosis is psychological no longer possible. Here, the author argues that ancient peoples believed in metamorphosis because – by and large – they stood on the preoperational stage, while modern societies function on the concrete and formal operational stages. To put it otherwise, the belief in metamorphosis did not exist due to freely chosen worldviews and philosophical speculations, but it came to existence in consequence of the psychological stage of development that early humankind had achieved. Cultural evolutionism seemed to be closer to these insights than the more recent theoretical orientations in cultural anthropology, including cultural relativism.

Haynes, Naomi: The Expansive Present: A New Model of Christian Time. *Current Anthropology* 61/1.2020: 57–65.

[Comments by: Jon Bialecki (University of Edinburg), Simon Coleman (University of Toronto), Girish Daswani (University of Toronto Scarborough), Chammah J. Kaunda (Yonsei University, Seoul), Matthew Tomlinson (University of Oslo), Joseph Webster (Queen’s University Belfast), 65–72. Reply: 72–74, bibliography 74–76.]

Haynes engages in a debate concerning the theory of anthropology of Christianity. In doing so, she draws on her ethnographic data collected in Zambia. Anthropologists studying Christian communities in various parts of the world have developed categories that help them to analyse the data they gathered. They analyse in what way Christianity changes the people and their lives (culture), where one can observe a break with the past and where things keep continuing as they were, where (and to what extent) modification of the old (and/or the new) system occurs. Rupture and continuity have become some of the key concepts used by them. Haynes does not question the importance of the rupture category. However, she discovered that the Pentecostal Christians in the Zambian part of the Copperbelt, whom she had studied since 2006, do not “fit easily into the established frameworks of a break with the past or an expected break in the future.” In order to understand the experience of these Christians, she had developed “a new model of Christian time that is not defined by

ruptures with the past or the future but instead situated in an expansive present.” She admitted having coined the latter term herself. Her informants did not use it. In addition, she is not solely focused on the category that she tries to develop but also looks in what way her argument for the use of the “expansive present” category can/could be used beyond the field of anthropology of Christianity.

She sums her argument in the following words: “The Pentecostal relationship to the Bible transforms the past into an expansive present, while also short-circuiting the future – perhaps not bringing it into the present, but at the very least bringing it close enough to touch in the expectation of blessings that are just about to arrive. ... Pentecostal time is therefore not “punctuated, not broken up into epochs or dispensations. Rather, it is relived cyclically in the ongoing repetition of the biblical narrative as it is read by believers – not as a long story of humanity that culminates with the end of time but rather as the specific stories of individual people whose lives are blessed as a result of their commitment to God.” (p. 63).

She goes on arguing that the Pentecostal “expansive present” is/can be taken also as a critique of the other Christian concepts of time and a critique of ... capitalism.

Her article is followed by six short responses from the top specialists in the field of anthropology of Christianity, to which she briefly responds. There is no place to introduce all of them here but let me draw your attention to just two of them. Chammah J. Kaunda (a Zambian scholar working presently at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea) is very critical of Haynes’ proposal. He indicated that her so-called “new Christian concept of time” was neither new (she had admitted knowing it in the article and in her reply), nor “Christian” per se as it draws heavily on the African traditional experience (or the concept) of time. He rightly points out that after John S. Mbiti († 2019) raised the topic of the “African concept of time” in the late 1960s, the issue has been praised, criticised, discussed, (re-)interpreted, etc. in many ways. He criticises Haynes for virtually ignoring that discussion (i.e., admitting the abundance of literature on the matter but leaving it completely aside). He indicates that “Harvey Cox (1994) argues that any adequate entrance into religious consciousness of Pentecostalism must bear in mind that Pentecostalism always adopts and transforms at least certain elements of pre-existing cultural elements of the context that retain a strong grip on their religious subconscious. If we were to employ Cox’s argument as analytical tool to interrogate Haynes’s argument, besides methodological weakness with a nearly suppressed empirical voice, perhaps one other major weakness lies in explicit utilization of the Western category without engaging either African concepts of time or of scholarship. This raises a question of appropriateness of the analytical technique used to analyse the Pentecostal notion of time. It appears that Haynes is reading too much into the data. How can such scholarship fully and adequately grasp and analyse an African informed concept of time?” (p. 69).

The second comment I want to highlight here comes from Girish Daswani (University of Toronto Scarborough in Canada) who had researched Pentecostal Christians in Ghana. Considering pros and cons of Haynes' proposal, he suggests, "that rather than a new model of Christian time, we should seriously consider Haynes's proposed shift away from rupture by building on an ever-expanding literature that engages with the ways that Christians work in and move between distinct models of time. The need for another model seems less relevant if we consider the *longue durée* and the moments when people's narratives move with their changing experiences and structural predicaments over time." (pp. 67–68).

Denham, Aaron R.: Of House or Bush. The Cultural Psychodynamics of Infanticide in Northern Ghana. *Current Anthropology* 61/1.2020: 77–88.

[Comments by: Ute Eickelkamp (University of Sydney), Kevin P. Groark (Macquarie University, Sydney), Douglas Hollan (University of California, Los Angeles), Allen W. Johnson (University of California, Los Angeles), Nichola Khan (University of Brighton, UK), Robert A. Paul (Emory University, Atlanta), Daniela F. Sieff (independent researcher, UK), 88–95. Reply: 95–98, bibliography 98–99.]

"In northern Ghana, the Nankani people describe how disabled or ill children and those whose births coincide with tragic events are spirit children sent from the bush to cause misfortune and destroy the family. Upon identification, some spirit children are subject to infanticide. People often describe spirit children as wanting to kill the same-sex parent to take over the house. Based on discourse alone, one might explain the spirit child in terms of a presumed underlying oedipal dynamic, but such an analysis is partial. When we interpret the spirit child from the bifocal vision of cultural psychodynamics, which links cultural phenomenology and psychodynamic paradigms, we gain a complex understanding of the interactions between Nankani cultural models, moral imaginations, family relations, and parental ambivalence. I interpret families' perceptions of danger and their feelings of fear and hostility toward children and refer to infant alterity, narcissistic injury, scapegoating, and projective processes that link individual sentiments and decision-making with their cultural and material contexts. Cultural psychodynamics illuminates Nankani conceptions of child development, morality, and parental psychologies and offers insights into how and why some parents kill their children." (Article's abstract.)

Eickelkamp aptly summarized Denham's article: "Arguably, understanding rather than judgment continues to underpin the ethos of anthropology across our diverse theoretical orientations. Aaron Denham's exegesis of infanticide in a northern Ghanaian community seems to do just this: offer a cultural explanation of a practice, which under the gaze of an international moral community could be identified as a violation of human rights. In making his case for cultural difference within a universal human situation – of needing to cope in one

way or another with the love and hate of oedipal conflict – Denham employs a framework that he calls, following Kevin Groark, 'cultural psychodynamics.' The result is a highly insightful yet troubling interpretation of the destruction of 'spirit children' in a Nankani community." (p. 88).

Responding to Eickelkamp's further comments, Denham remarked: "Eickelkamp, citing Amenga-Etego, comments how the spirit-child practice 'is the sole prerogative of men.' This remark is common to NGO discourse and does not reflect what happens in practice. While men play a significant role in spirit-child cases and family decision-making, mothers often bring the first accusations to the men and support the diagnosis (see Denham 2017). But what is at stake if a mother does not believe in spirits and refuses to give up her spirit child despite pressures from her family? Less than I imagined. She can hide the child with another woman or flee and hope that the child's condition changes and the tension in the house abates before her return. The family will be mad, but they cannot do much because of her kinship status as an outsider. Maria, the mother of Esther, a child disabled by meningitis, refused to accept her husband's family's diagnosis and avoided their attempts to poison Esther. Yet she remained within the household and continued as a member of the family. Tensions were thick, and family members feared and avoided Esther until she later died of complications from her condition.

There have always been clans that do not believe in spirit children because no one in their clan has ever given birth to one – spirit children need to run in the family. As the region develops, more people reject the diagnosis. Many people say that spirits are imagined and that such beliefs are not modern or are against progress and development. Despite inadequate medical and disability services, families today do what they can to care for those who might otherwise have been spirit children, and many of these children, like Esther, now die because of their conditions, not the concoction." (pp. 95–96).

Tilghman, Laura M.: The Dead Are Dead/Ancestors Never Die: Migrants, Rural Linkages, and Religious Change in Northeastern Madagascar. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 48.2018: 347–375.

"This manuscript explores the dynamic between religion and rural-urban linkages in northeastern Madagascar. I find that church leaders have coalesced around two competing narratives of ancestors. Catholic churches see some types of migrant linkages (e.g., burial in the rural family tomb and participation in rural ancestral rituals) as being in line with Christian beliefs, while Protestant churches see these same activities as morally questionable or potentially satanic. To some degree Protestant migrants exert agency in the face of these religious teachings, and do not view their religion as an impediment to maintaining rural connections. However, quantitative analysis of rural-urban linkage behaviour over a twelve-month period shows that Protestants have

weaker rural ties compared to Catholics, even for behaviours that are not the focus of religious prohibitions. I offer several explanations for this finding. Protestant migrants are less motivated to invest in all types of rural linkages due to family conflicts after conversion, uncertainty about burial in the rural family tomb, reduced opportunities to develop affective ties with kin, and economic motivations to reduce rural demands on their urban wages.” (Article’s abstract.)

Kingsbury, Kate: Staging Touba: The Performance of Piety. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 48.2020: 312–346.

“Touba, in Senegal, is the equivalent to Mecca for Sufi Mouride Muslims, who embark on an annual pilgrimage called *Le Grand Magal* to celebrate the founder of their faith, Cheikh Amadou Bamba. When devotees describe their sacred city they frequently compare Touba to heaven, juxtaposing it to the materiality and chaos of other Senegalese cities, as though it was distinct from these lieux. Yet Touba shares many similarities in terms of its economic importance with other metropolises. Mourides despite presenting themselves as a united religious community, have differences of opinion and even praxis. This paper explores the imagination of Touba and the Mouride order by Mourides, positing that the sacred sites of Touba comprise a stage for the performance of piety and the generation of a particular Mouride ontology through which they see Touba, their order and the world.” (Article’s abstract.)

Loprena, Christopher A.: Adjudicating Indigeneity. Anthropological Testimony in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. *American Anthropologist* 122/3.2020: 595–606.

In 2014, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights heard two cases concerning the alleged complicity of Honduran state institutions in the violation of Garifuna communal property rights. Garifuna, a people of mixed Arawak, Carib, and African descent, are one of nine officially recognized “ethnic groups” in Honduras. Yet the state has repeatedly denied their status as a pueblo originario – people native to Honduras – thus calling into question the lawfulness of their claims to national territory. The author draws on his experience serving as an expert witness to analyze the role of cultural evidence in the legitimization of Garifuna rights claims, and how specifically ethnographic treatments of Indigenous cultural practices are circumscribed within dominant juridical interpretive frameworks and modes of recognition. The judgment, issued in October 2015, repeatedly deployed anthropological concepts and insights to bind indigenous subjectivity to the land, thereby deepening essentialized notions of Garifuna ethnic and racial difference. This article probes the challenges of presenting cultural evidence in a court of law and the limited political potential of witnessing, which, he argues,

stem from the ways in which anthropological and legal ways of knowing coarticulate.

The Garifuna arrived on the Caribbean coast of Honduras in 1797 after British colonial forces expelled them from the island of St. Vincent in the Lesser Antilles. As they are officially recognized by the Honduran state as an “ethnic group,” they are also protected by international legal norms pertaining to the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. Yet the state has repeatedly denied their status, thus calling into question the lawfulness of their claims to national territory and to a legitimate indigenous identity.

Increasingly, however, judges and lawyers rely on anthropologists to provide cultural evidence in the adjudication of indigenous rights. Indeed, anthropological testimony is now common procedural practice within Inter-American Court hearings pertaining to indigenous territorial rights, the trajectory of which can be traced back to *Awes Tingni v. Nicaragua* in 2001. This landmark case established that the right to property, enshrined in Article 21 of the American Convention on Human Rights, should also apply to the protection of customary land and resource-tenure rights of indigenous peoples.

This framework has produced significant legal openings for the defense of indigenous rights to territory within member, states of the Organization of American States, but it has also generated new cultural mandates insofar as it necessitates that indigenous peoples articulate their legal claims on the basis of cultural difference and an intrinsic relationship to the land. Rights are contingent on notions of an “authentic” cultural subject, which must be verified and included as evidence within the Court. Several authors highlight the risks inherent to this mode of recognition, which encourages subaltern subjects to identify with the “impossible object of an authentic self-identity” in order to attain rights. Much of the scholarly debate concerning the role of anthropologists as experts hinges on the epistemological divide between the law and anthropology, in particular as it relates to competing conceptualizations of culture and the ethical and political contradictions that emerge from this mode of anthropological engagement. Conversely, the author starts from the premise that anthropology and the law are both anchored in positivist modes of knowledge production. It is precisely the epistemological commensurability between these two knowledge fields that creates the condition of possibility for anthropologists to be legible as experts in courts of law.

Mezzenzana, Francesca: Between Will and Thought: Individualism and Social Responsiveness in Amazonian Child Rearing. *American Anthropologist* 122/3.2020: 540–553.

This article provides an ethnographic account of how moral dispositions toward independence and social responsiveness are forged during infancy and toddlerhood

among the Runa, an Indigenous people in the Ecuadorian Amazon. It shows how two local concepts, *munay* (will) and *yuyay* (thought) shape children's early experiences of the self and the self in relation to others. In particular, it argues that, unlike middle-class Anglo-Americans who repute paternal responsiveness to be necessary for a "healthy" child development, Runa adults strategically chose not to respond to children's will in order to make them "thoughtful." Such a state of thoughtfulness emerges from socialization practices that stress a child's unique will while at the same time forcefully encouraging the development of social responsiveness.

Among the Runa of the region of Pastaza, in the Ecuadorian Amazon, five- or six-year-old boys and girls routinely take care of infants and are responsible for helping in a wide range of domestic tasks, such as cooking, fishing, washing clothes, and so on. From a very early age, these children are self-sufficient. The most striking thing about Runa children, however, is not so much the fact that as youngsters they are already capable of skinning a spotted paca or lighting a fire with drenched wood but rather that they often do so without being asked to do so. Many times one can see children helping others – related and unrelated people – to prepare food, fetch water, and so forth without ever being asked for assistance. Equally common is seeing very young children coming forward to soothe, comfort, feed, or entertain a fussy toddler/infant, often giving up their own things or food to meet the baby's desires.

How do Runa children develop such responsiveness to others? This article attempts to answer these questions through an ethnographic account of how moral dispositions toward independence and social responsiveness are forged during infancy and toddlerhood. Drawing on anthropological and psychological research on the developmental trajectory of individualism, responsibility, and autonomy, the author shows how, among the Runa people of the Ecuadorian Amazon, the local concept of "will" and "thought" shape children's early experiences of the self and the self in relation to others. Nonetheless, such behavior seemed to pose questions in relation to another striking feature of local child-rearing practices and, more generally, of Runa social life, namely – the moral imperative to respect each person's individuality and independence. Like many other Indigenous Amazonian peoples, the Runa display an "obstinate individualism," which manifests in a generalized dislike for authoritative power and coercion and in a strong emphasis on independence and autonomy. In everyday interactions, people hardly attempt to change someone else's mind but rather prefer to verbally articulate their lack of approval in the absence of the concerned person. Runa people are also extremely proud of their own practices of self-sufficiency and consider their material and emotional independence a virtuous trait. From hunting to making pottery, the Runa staunchly defend the uniqueness of their way of doing things; it is rare for someone to ask or offer advice on

other people's work. In instances where someone is in the predicament of having to ask for help from outside their own close family, their requests are made with some shyness or take the shape of formal requests. While being able to exert one's choice and will without any interference is considered a fundamental moral virtue, equally important is the capacity for living well with others.

García Garagarza, Leon: The Tecolotl and the Chiquatli. Omens of Death and Transspecies Dialogues in the Aztec World. *Ethnohistory* 67/3.2020: 455–479.

This essay examines some instances of interspecific dialogues between owls and human beings recorded in Nahuatl-language sources from the sixteenth century. Since ancient times, owls have been considered omens of death in Mexico. This article analyzes the cultural and linguistic context of this belief among the contact period Nahuas: the import of *tezahuitl* (omens) in the animistic world-view of the Aztecs, as well as the characteristic semantic pair *in tecolotl*, *in chiquatli* ("the owl, the barn owl") to signify the lethal activities of the most representative messengers of the Lords of Death and Destiny, Mictlantecuhtli and Tezcatlipoca. Moreover, the essay shows how the ancient Nahuas considered the intelligibility of animal languages and engaged in active dialogues with the animal representatives of the gods, a form of communication that encompassed both the private and public spheres, as in these dialogues matters of disease, pollution, and warfare came into consideration.

Omens played a significant role in the social imaginary of ancient Mexico. Their manifestations – as meteors, atmospheric phenomena, ghostly apparitions, and, most often, as animals – had a considerable impact both in the private and in the collective spheres. In that sense, an analysis of the interpretation of the owls as omens in book 5 of the Florentine Codex and in the parallel historical chronicles of Duran and Alvarado Tezozomoc shows us how the semantics of *tezahuitl* omens affected the ancient Mexicans: on a personal level, on a household level, and in the conduct of war – an eminently collective level.

The *chiquatli* and the *tecolotl*, two local species of birds, formed a semantic pair in the theological economy of ancient Mexico. Acting as bird omens (*tezahuitomeh*) of the Lords of Mictlan, the *tecolotl* and the *chiquatli* engaged in interspecies dialogues with their human interlocutors, who interpreted the birds' calls as halting words of their own human language and correspondingly employed verbal strategies to deflect the destructive intent of the omens. This characteristic extended to other creatures, as soon as they were identified as intelligible messengers of the gods. The colonial chronicles provide us with the clues to identify particular species of *tezahuitl* omens, even though the documents written by Spanish authors often miss these

semantic signals. The episodes about owls as *tetzahuil* omens reflect the specular relationship between the divine and the earthly spheres, both mediated by a common language. *Tetzahuil* omens not only reflected the fears of the people of an uncertain world ruled by capricious gods but, moreover, also prompted articulate responses through which people engaged in effective action to deflect disaster in the domestic sphere and in the conduct of international war. Rather than reflecting a superstitious cultural weakness, the inordinate attention that *tetzahuil* omens elicited in indigenous Mexico makes evident the intimate link between its peoples and a living, communicative world.

Ariel de Vidas Anath: Collaborative Anthropology, Work, and Textual Reception in a Mexican Nahua Village. *American Ethnologist* 47/3.2020: 289–302

Since the 1980s, anthropologists have been valorizing the notion of working together with their research participants to produce knowledge. But what happens when the anthropologist's notion of collaboration differs radically from that of the people with whom he or she wishes to collaborate? Ariel de Vidas' initial attempt at such collaboration with indigenous Nahua people in a Mexican village seemed to fail miserably, yet, over time, the situation changed. Reflecting on the misunderstandings surrounding the discussions on the first drafts of his book about the village provides a glimpse of the cultural context in which the interaction was forged. It raises questions about literacy, the authority of knowledge, and interlocutors' views of social relationships. In particular, an understanding of the local notion of work proved crucial to grasping the evolution of these exchanges. The latter reveal Nahua ontologies as well as the anthropologist's own.

In reading de Vidas' texts, the inhabitants of the village did not challenge the researcher's having the last word in developing the final product. This collaborative experience, then, did not take the form of a formal partnership with activists familiar with the canonical forms of ethnographic writing. It was instead a partnership between people of different statuses, an anthropologist and people who were literate but overall not well read. In this case, it was the villagers' epistemology of the anthropological account that became an ethnographic situation worthy of analysis. As several authors remind us, friendship, familiarity, and connivance with certain people in the field often create the illusion of reduced social distance, but then some situations – even trivial ones – can highlight the observer's own alterity. At first, this may well entail a personal crisis for the observer, but eventually it results in ethnographic insight. Asked to do something that did not match their skills, Ariel de Vidas' interlocutors declined her invitation to encroach on his sphere of knowledge and authority over the book on their own society, repeating relentlessly, "You know what should be in the book." In other words, *that's your job, not ours*.

In other words, in that Nahuatl village work is not considered interchangeable since it is closely linked to one's own strength. Its value stems from its potential to set in motion social relationships and a positive outcome. Work cannot therefore be seen as merely labor disconnected from its social and cosmic environment. The anthropologist's contribution to the water project as a social actor in the village, as well as other reactions to his authoritative status as a writer, led him to link these remarks to the local notion of work, based on the villagers' forms of social relations and the circulation of effort and strength. The native value of work, which organizes the social and symbolic world, revealed the structural integration of the anthropologist and her text into a social network that included discontinuities; above all, however, the local value of work made it possible to observe the expression of this concept, which lies at the heart of a system of exchange of forces, not only in ritual spheres but also in secular ones. This system is characterized by an "exchange aesthetic" between different kinds of work and skills. This aesthetic locally integrates alterity into a hierarchical whole, one in which "everyone is given a place that must match if not always one's expectations, at least what is expected from them." The books (a dominant value) and the faucets that the anthropologist brought to the village certainly expressed a position of competent power, and therefore a position of strength capable of generating action and exchanges according to the local worldview.

If we consider the Nahua concept of work as a specific form of relationship with others, what initially appeared to be a refusal to collaborate in the anthropologist's domain, on her own terms, may well be understood, through the participation of her interlocutors, as a local mode of collaboration. Coproducing knowledge was ultimately not what was at stake in this collaboration. Instead, interactions were implemented within different settings – private, public, and outside the community – and these settings made it possible to examine the variable adjustments related to the notion of work according to the actors' positions. Within the intra-community sphere, chronicling the history and cultural practices of the villagers was Ariel de Vidas' assigned task, and according to the *tekil* value, the contents of her chronicle were therefore uncontested. In the sphere outside the community, the villagers appropriated this chronicle as an emblematic "book," as a political asset necessary to transform their cultural practices into *cultura indígena*; in accordance with the patrimonial language introduced by the state. Focusing the analysis on distinct interlocutors' views, aims, and ways of approaching the reading of the ethnographic texts in the field sheds light on the local modes of (re)appropriation of knowledge and memory – their evolving expressions and adaptive means of transmission. In other words, it showed the variety of positions from which cultural identifications can be expressed. These reactions challenged the ethical, political, and epistemological

injunctions to engage in collaborative ethnography. That the (future) book was unhesitatingly embraced – contrary to reported cases in which ethnographic texts shown to interlocutors provoked feelings of betrayal – might be accounted for by the absence of ethnopolitical activists or writers whose agendas could intersect with the contents of the chapters. Furthermore, unlike negative experiences of other authors, the texts did not deal with ongoing, politically sensitive issues, and they were not perceived as a violation of any individual or collective image. Most of these case studies were conducted in North America and Europe, where interactions between researchers and participants are probably conditioned more by class relations than by intercultural configurations in a postcolonial context. In the village under study, however, after the land struggle of the 1970s, ethnic identification is nurtured through the ritual practices held inside the community. The hegemony of the mestizo world is nevertheless acknowledged by embracing the ideology of Spanish literacy, which is considered to provide social leverage. Ariel de Vidas' presence as an outsider, holding power, undoubtedly, but not fitting into any local class or ethnic categories, ultimately made it possible for the villagers to reinforce their collective image, which integrated a vision of identity. Thus, this collaborative experience not only showed the heuristic

relevance of submitting the anthropological texts to a reading by participants, but it also illustrated how the modalities of collaboration and their outcomes stem from the character of each field site and the local terms of collaboration.

What initially appeared to be a gap between Ariel de Vidas' interest in collaboration and that of her interlocutors turned out to illustrate the epistemological application of ethnographic reflexivity to intersubjective relations in the field. Sharing the journey of the ethnographic experience – with all the doubts, misunderstandings, false leads, and ambiguous situations that accompany it – allowed the author to underline its main issues. This approach concerns the specific conditions of the investigation, the human relations in which it is rooted, the results anthropologists can draw from it, and the social effects they produce in the process. Therefore, an ethnography of collaboration makes it possible to understand the implicit kind of collaboration between partners. In this account, collaboration consisted in the interlocutors and the anthropologist constantly exchanging efforts. In doing so, they aimed to skillfully (or dumsily?) reach out to each other in order to efficiently activate their system of social relations and to maintain the working of their world.

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