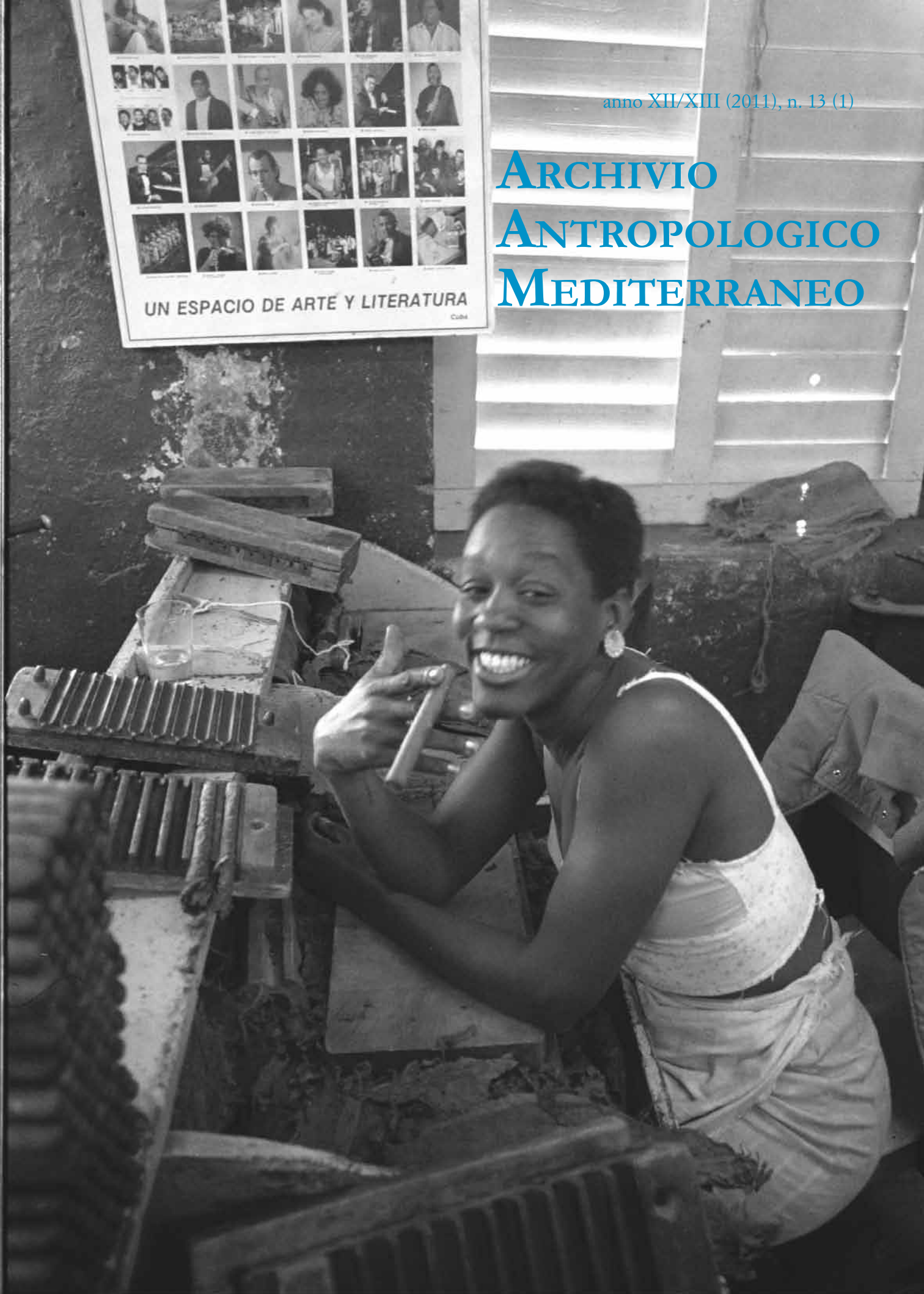


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In copertina: Foto di Nino Russo (Vinales Cuba, 1993)

Ulf Hannerz

*Operation Outreach: Anthropology and the Public in a World of Information Crowding**

Fairly recently there was a story in newsmedia in Sweden about some young *nouveaux riches* who displayed their wealth by ostentatiously pouring out champagne in the sink. At about the same time, another item described a public occasion where a feminist politician, well-known since her past as leader of the country's main postcommunist party, had set fire to 100000 kronor (some 10000 euro) in bills, to make some point dramatically. This drew widespread comment, although it may be that while few could remember exactly what the point was, the suspicion was confirmed that this was not a person to be trusted with public funds.

Anyway, both the champagne pouring and the money on fire undoubtedly drew some added attention in the media because they occurred during the summer, when good stories tend to be hard to come by. One journalist contacted me after he had heard from someone that there were North American Indians who also had public rituals of destruction, something called "potlatch". And so he asked if I would care to offer an anthropological perspective on their new occurrence in Sweden. I suggested that if he wanted to know more about potlatch he could take a look at the Wikipedia article, but apart from that I declined the invitation to comment on the Swedish politician going Kwakiutl.

If we wonder about the part of anthropology in contemporary public life and public knowledge, we may find that it is sometimes, in fact rather frequently, like that. People who have no close acquaintance with the discipline expect the anthropologists to be in control of exotic tidbits from around the world, and thus able to offer possibly entertaining, although otherwise probably rather useless, parallels, comparisons, or overviews. Perhaps some of us will then indeed try to search the global ethnographic inventory for something to say, out of a sense of public duty or seduced by the possibility of fifteen seconds of fame. Again, in this instance, I was not tempted.

1. Informing the public, and building a brand

This, however, does not mean that I take no interest in what anthropology can offer, and is understood to offer, to wider audiences. There are two sides to this. On the one hand, more altruistically, we may sense that we have knowledge and insights to offer from which other people may benefit, and which can make them better informed citizens – even better informed "citizens of the world". More narrowly, more egoistically, on the other hand, we may feel that it would be good for us if other people understood us better, valued our work more highly, gave us greater recognition. These two concerns need not be in contradiction. But at this point in time, in a volatile world which also extends into academia, we may just feel more concerned than usual with our capacity for reaching out effectively to others. As I have argued elsewhere recently, in the vocabulary of our market-oriented, still even market-celebrating era, anthropology needs to think about its brand (Hannerz 2010: 46 ff.).

My comments here are motivated by both these kinds of interests in anthropology going public; and often there is probably no real difference in which directions they would point us, what lines of action they would lead us to pursue. I should say, too, from the beginning that I make no claim to an expertise based on a notably wide and long experience in activities of anthropological outreach. I have done my share of it, but I can identify colleagues who have committed themselves more actively and consistently to it. Apart from a general concern with the contributions and the well-being of the discipline, my interest in the potential of anthropology here draws rather more on a long-standing interest in the media and their place in contemporary life, and more specifically on the time I spent studying the work of newsmedia foreign correspondents – an endeavor I have described as "studying sideways", insofar as I thought of these journalists as being in some ways on a parallel track to that of anthropologists (Hannerz 2004). That study made me attend more to the overall nature of the flow of informa-

tion and knowledge in today's world; and consequently also to whatever place anthropology might have in that flow. I believe that will come out fairly clearly in what follows.

2. *At home and away*

My study of the foreign correspondents, from the print media as well as radio and television, but with a concentration on those who reported from Africa and Asia and the Middle East to Europe and North America, actually offered a parallel in particular with one side of anthropological reporting: that involving fieldwork away from home, in some more distant part of the world. Just as there are journalists, really a majority of them, who do their work in their own town or their own country, there are now a great many of us who do "anthropology at home". As anthropology has expanded, both in its fields of inquiry and in the number of practitioners, since the second half of the twentieth century, this has no doubt become an increasing proportion of the discipline. I think it is useful to point to this distinction at the outset, as it seems to me that the circumstances of reaching out with anthropological knowledge and points of view are rather different (although certainly not entirely so) in these situations.

Whether the anthropology we want to reach out with is from home or abroad, there is also another distinction to be made. We may be concerned with the techniques of outreach, but we must certainly also ask ourselves to what sort of anthropology we want to draw the attention of a wider public, and in what kind of anthropology that public is most likely to take an interest. I am reminded of political election campaigns where a losing party may conclude afterwards that "we didn't succeed in reaching out with our message". Which tends to be an easy way out, as it suggests only a failure of technique, rather than the voters' rejection of the message itself. We should certainly give careful consideration to the means of effective communication, but we must also have something to say.

It is one of those eminently quotable formulations of Clifford Geertz (1973: 23) that in anthropology, «small facts speak to large issues». We may pride ourselves on that, but we should also ask if it is always true. At least it may not always be obvious what is the large issue in question. Members of the public may find some of the results of anthropological research mildly interesting, edifying, amusing or memorable once they learn of it, but with a great many facts and stories competing for their attention, it is also possible that they do not take much

notice. I am not arguing for an anthropology that is sensationalist and headline-grabbing, but I wonder if we could not, some of the time, be a little more ambitious in our choices of research topics.

In the context of doing "anthropology at home", for European anthropologists, it would seem to me that there are major cleavages, and central institutions, about which we could have more to say. To begin with what is perhaps most obvious: during my time as an anthropologist, this continent has changed greatly through migration, so that ethnic and cultural diversity, interrelating with class structures which are themselves changing, now characterizes most national societies. It now seems to me that anthropologists took a more active research interest in this in earlier years, and may just possibly have retreated somewhat from this complex of issues and topics over time. If this is indeed so, there may be various reasons for it. We may have become wary of problematizing and exoticizing particular immigrant and minority groups; and these groups may in any case by now have their own spokesmen and spokeswomen, who are mostly not themselves anthropologists, and may even be inclined to be suspicious of our discipline. We may feel that there are diminishing scholarly returns in this field, so that what is now there to be done in fact mostly involves fairly small facts, speaking to similarly small issues. But then I wonder if we have not also become somewhat uneasy about a widespread, less favorable social and political climate. There are now varieties of neonationalism or xenophobia noticeable in many places, but it seems to me there is an even more widespread, and often relatively respectable, intellectual backlash against notions and practices of "multiculturalism", which we may feel uncomfortable dealing with. It seems to me that there is an important distinction to be made between cultural diversity as a fact, although a varied and shifting one, and multiculturalism as a cluster of sometimes rather clumsy policies. But it is a distinction we may need to be there making. At present I have the impression that the more intensive critical debate over multiculturalism is carried out among political philosophers. This debate is sometimes conceptually quite sophisticated – but unless the debaters are also immigrants or minority members themselves, I think it could sometimes be better grounded in subtle ethnographic realities. In quite large part, we may have left the task of reporting on this European diversity to the journalists, some of whom do a remarkably good job, but others of whom certainly do not. For one thing, it could be that a study of such journalism, and the editorial practices of covering migrant and minority affairs, might be a very desirable kind of media

anthropology.

With regard to the growth, and by now fairly durable presence, of those various nativist, neonationalist, xenophobic, more recently often specifically anti-Islamic political groupings, there certainly are now a number of anthropological studies (see e. g. Holmes 2000, Gingrich and Banks 2008, Geschiere 2009). One might only wish that they had reached more widely outside the discipline. On the other hand, I would argue that we could do more with studying the core institutions of contemporary society: in politics, economics, education, media, and welfare. For one thing there are those organizations which tended to make up the backbone of mid-twentieth century Europe, but which now appear to be in fairly widespread decline – major parties, trade unions, mainstream churches. What is happening in their internal life? There could be occasional problems of ethnographer access, but they may not be insurmountable. After all, contemporary organizations tend to celebrate transparency, so let us see if they live up to the ideal.

In this connection, I would note as an aside that there are signs of some increasing interest in ethnographic methods among political scientists. A recent edited volume on *Political Ethnography* (Schatz 2009), with most of its contributors from the political science discipline, carries the subtitle «What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power». I see no reason why we should object to the adoption of our central methods by colleagues in other disciplines, as long as they handle them well. But it may also be an indication to us that there are domains of institutional life which we are equipped to take on ourselves.

As yet another example of a current issue in European life which I think could lend itself to interesting ethnographic illumination, let me point to actually existing multilingualism. There are some strong, well-articulated points of view here. National languages are likely to have their guardians, wishing to preserve them or giving them monopoly in the widest possible range of situations. Indeed the strength of these languages in large domains of public life is a major reason why Europe as a social entity remains quite opaque to most of its inhabitants; I cannot, as a Swede, easily follow what happens in the Netherlands, or Italy, or Greece. There will quite likely also be people who argue that wide use of English as an entirely dominant world language, and developed skills in it, are necessary in “the globalized world”, not least for purposes of staying competitive. And then perhaps reasons will also be put forth for the use of migrant or minority languages as well, in particular contexts. But what language skills do people actually have, and how

do they develop them and deploy them? I would think a great many people are actually bilingual or trilingual, depending on combinations of personal background, education, work and media use and perhaps other factors as well. The point is sometimes made that people in smaller countries have a head start in picking up foreign languages, particularly English, because films, on their television screens and in their movie theaters, carry subtitles and are not dubbed. There may be other ways in which formal and informal paths to language skills cross each other in ways worth noting and investigating, although not foregrounded in official language ideologies and policies. In such areas there could be differences between countries, but probably also between classes, and generations, as well as between natives and newcomers. The topic might lend itself to comparative studies, and to collaborative work with colleagues across borders, but I believe it could quite possibly also be one in which a wider public, and perhaps policy-makers, could be interested.

I do realize that our chances as practicing anthropologists of taking on these more ambitious, perhaps more demanding research topics must in the end depend on such mundane matters as what funding we can get, and what time we have at our disposal. After all, the more modest research projects which seem to make up a fairly large part of “anthropology at home” may be what we think is as much as we can handle beside a teaching load and without much in the way of research grants, but I think it is useful if we also at times think of large issues, and even large facts.

3. *The public and the distant*

With regard to “anthropology away”, those studies in more distant social and cultural milieux which for a long time have been so central to the identity of the discipline, our considerations of how to reach wider publics may in some ways be a bit different. It seems to me that “anthropology at home” has a certain advantage in that most people, after all, take a greater interest in matters reasonably close at hand rather than those which are far away, not so clearly or probably relevant to their own lives, not part of their personal experiences.

Specialists on matters which are distant and alien may often simply have knowledge which is in little demand, of limited interest to the wider audiences next to them in the terrain. My impression has been that when occasionally an anthropologist has become more of a public intellectual on a national scene, this has tended to be in countries where he

or she, and perhaps many other colleagues as well, have practiced “anthropology at home”.

We may still ask what we can do to cultivate an interest in the wider audiences in matters elsewhere, in people and places beyond boundaries. Perhaps we might feel that with globalization as one of the keywords of our times, it ought to be now so much easier to find willing readers, listeners or whatever for the kinds of stories that travelling anthropologists can tell. I would still like to think that is true, but then I am reminded that when I began my study of the foreign correspondents some fifteen years ago, I innocently assumed that this, again for reasons of growing global interconnectedness, would be an occupation with a great future. And so I was rather taken aback when one of them, a very prominent American journalist, told me, at the end of a working breakfast, that I should remember this was “a dying occupation”.

Since then, there may indeed have been more bad news than good news about the circumstances of foreign news reporting. It is expensive for a media organization to maintain any more substantial network of correspondents of its own, and so when the media become increasingly dominated by market values, and when especially the print media tend not to do so well business-wise any longer, there is a tendency to rethink the forms of foreign coverage – often to shrink it as a more active pursuit. The opportunities for fieldwork abroad by anthropologists are not governed by precisely the same constraints, but in any case it seems that an expanding curiosity about distant lands is not to be taken for granted. It might even be that some people, finding the encroachments of globalization mostly disturbing, are yet more inclined to turn inwards, and become pre-occupied with what is safely local. So we need to consider by which means we can effectively reach out to the public.

Now to quote Clifford Geertz (1984: 275) once more, it is another of his memorable formulations that anthropologists have characteristically been «merchants in astonishment»; hawking the anomalous, peddling the strange. That may have been so, and is perhaps still to an extent so. When a Swedish journalist calls on me to hear a little about something called potlatch that might be comparable to the extraordinary behavior of local brats from the world of finance, or of a sensation-seeking politician, then indeed his hope is that I will have something astonishing to purvey. Yet I am not sure that this particular business has a very promising future. Ongoing, more or less everyday globalization make people rather less astonishing. When I was a child, there were still in Sweden a handful of more or less general-purpose explorers, whose accounts of life

far away turned them into celebrities. One of them, rather more an ornithologist than an anthropologist (although his granddaughter eventually became a student in our department), wrote a bestseller with the title *My Father is a Cannibal*. The story behind this revelation was that on his expedition to highlands New Guinea, he had been ritually adopted by one family. By now, one could imagine that the response to that book title might have been more like “So what?”. Or just as likely, the good citizen of the world might feel that it is not quite politically correct to draw attention to such unfortunate feeding habits.

4. *Finding a place in the information flow*

What I am suggesting, simply enough, is that the anthropologists cannot now be so sure to be the stars of global storytelling. They have to find their place in a dense global information flow. I have referred to it elsewhere as «representational crowding» (Hannerz 2010: 107). The classic style of foreign reporting in journalism may be in uncertain times, but there are also NGOs, international business reporting, travel agencies, travel writing and indeed travel itself, lifestyle writing about food and drink, any number of web sites and blogs of diverse kinds of news and opinion, globally mobile art exhibits, and noteworthy, prize-winning fiction writers from every corner of the world, all adding their bits and pieces to a global kaleidoscope. So rather than pretending that they are alone, acting as if all these other kinds of information and imagery did not exist, anthropologists may need to seek their niche, or set of niches, in open networks of representational activity.

That may involve a rather versatile readiness to offer commentary on these other genres of communication about the world out there. Consider again the newsmedia foreign correspondents, and compare it with what anthropologists are more likely to do. In one of the more striking but recurrent varieties of their working habits, they turn into what is known in the business as “firemen”, or “parachutists”, rushing into some remote and quite possibly dangerous place where some crisis has erupted, reporting on the event, and then departing just about as quickly as they arrived; the lights go out over that place as far as world attention is concerned. Now if an academic anthropologist should take a deeper interest in that same crisis, he or she might start putting together a research proposal to be ready in time for the nearest deadline of a funding agency, wait for its deliberation and somewhat unpredictable decision-making, then plan for research leave

– and perhaps be on the spot a year or two after the parachutist journalists left.

That may by then still be a worthy undertaking. A longer-term view of both the background circumstances of a crisis and its continued consequences is probably valuable, and even the curiosity of a wider audience could possibly be aroused by the question of what happened afterwards, in the case of some still-remembered event. But the anthropologist could also respond to that crisis in another fashion, much quicker. Frequently the complementarity of anthropological knowledge to event reporting in the news may lie rather in knowledge already built up, through previous field experience in the area in question, or simply through a good overview of the relevant existing literature. The editors at the foreign news desk at home may well seek out somebody who can offer a little background knowledge of that area just struck by crisis. My impression is that such requests rather frequently go to those political scientists who have some area studies bent. That is hardly unexpected when the news story is one of politics, elections, coups, or internal wars. But my guess would be that anthropologists are frequently just about as well equipped to handle such matters competently, and are quite likely more knowledgeable when it comes to other questions about how events affect people's lives – natural disasters, epidemics, and so forth. Here it would seem that anthropologists, if they do want to be available for such commentary, need to cultivate a stronger public brand as people with regional expertise.

There may be opportunities, too, for expanding the space for anthropological knowledge in the public eye by attending to the news flow. My foreign correspondent informants, sometimes a bit frustrated by the fact that the news business became too focused on hard news, particular dramatic events, at the expense of longer-term but at least as important processes, or other kinds of feature stories, looked for “pegs” – events on which one could hang these other kinds of reporting. Anthropologists, too, could look for pegs, ways of linking what is in the news to their kinds of more durable expertise.

5. *Versatile commentators*

That regional specialist brand, however, may well involve more than background knowledge to fit with hard news reporting. I suspect, for example, that many of us do follow the creative writing coming out of our field regions – fiction, reportage or whatever – and may indeed be quite knowledgeable about it. So possibly we would be capa-

ble of occasional commentary in this area as well. One example is near at hand: just as I was preparing this talk, it was announced that the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa had been awarded this year's Nobel Prize in literature. I am not a Latin Americanist, and have no particular insight into the local, national or regional background of Vargas Llosa's writing, although I have enjoyed reading a fair amount of it. But learning of the award, I remembered particularly one novel, *El Hablador* (*The Storyteller* in English translation, 1990). This is a book focusing on a mysterious storyteller of the Machiguenga people, deep in the Amazon forest – who turns out to be most likely a lost anthropology student, gone native. Here, if anywhere, there would seem to be a chance for anthropologists with Amazonian experience to let their voices be heard, discussing a writer telling a story about someone like them, and about the kind of people they themselves tell stories about – another intriguing instance of studying sideways.

I could imagine, too, that anthropologists could occasionally try their hand at writing for tourists and travellers, offering useful advice on how to get to, and move about and enjoy themselves in, those areas probably off the beaten track where such amateur explorers might not usually go – rather than just hoping (probably in vain in the long run) that they will forever have their fields entirely to themselves. Or they might share their recipes and their culinary experiences from the field with interested audiences at home, contextualizing it all in ways which allow some suitable ethnography to be added as spice. There are experiments in “writing culture” waiting in such genres as well.

So these, possibly, could be ways of trying to attract members of a wider public to the kind of knowledge that we as anthropologists have of other parts of the world, and the people who live there. We may or may not be ready to try them. Rather too frequently for comfort, I hear colleagues who are reluctant to try to exhibit their knowledge in unorthodox, user-friendly ways because they sense that their academic colleagues will not approve, that such efforts will eventually be held against them, in contempt. Yes, there may be bad ways of reaching out with anthropology. But I would think that we have not yet found all the good ways. The point is not so much to suggest that we establish ourselves specifically as literary critics or tourist guides or cuisine consultants, but to identify our potential of collective versatility in commenting on some variety of things that people want to learn about.

So whether we do our anthropology at home or abroad, there would appear to be things that we know, or could ambitiously learn more about, that

could interest a wider public if it finds out about them. Then, however, there is also the big question of just how we can best reach the wider audiences, what can be effective channels. No doubt there is room for experimentation here, not least in view of the continuously changing modes of electronic media use in our times. Yet I still like print. I have liked to find that at least a handful of colleagues, in different countries, have established themselves over different periods as regular public commentators, sometimes as columnists, in the national press. Margaret Mead was certainly an early and famous example, with her column in *Redbook*, a magazine aimed at a general readership among American women. In much more recent times, I have come across regular work of newspaper commentary by Lodewijk Brunt in the Netherlands, Dan Rabinowitz in Israel and Andre Gingrich in Austria. Arne Martin Klausen may have been the pioneer among several Norwegian anthropologists engaging in this kind of journalism (cf Eriksen 2006: 69 ff.). For a brief period, I dabbled in it myself, in a rather shortlived Swedish financial daily with a remarkably ambitious “culture page”. So I wrote about the growing importance of diasporas, and about Brazilian cities, and about the mobile “symbolic analyst” elites of world cities, and about the two halves of Berlin coming together in the early 1990s, after the Wall had crumbled, and about various other things. I also had some colleagues with this kind of experience come together in a panel at one meeting of EASA (the European Association of Social Anthropologists), and it was a session which drew a considerable audience. I had in fact hoped to move on with it to an edited publication, but then other demands came in its way.

I am sure there are a number of ways, technically and organizationally, to handle such outreach. No doubt many will now be attracted by the possibilities of using electronic rather than print media, and certainly there are great possibilities here. But one reason why I am a bit of two minds is that in this world of information crowding, such efforts may risk being less effective than we would wish them to be. It is easy to create a new website, a new blog, but it can turn out to be a form of personal or collective narcissism rather than an successful tool of communication. On the basis of my own somewhat haphazard experience as an Internet information consumer, I would believe at least a little more in the power of e-mail lists. Certainly some of the variety of things that may be coming in through our e-mail may leave us cold. I do not know exactly how I ended up on the receiving end for the *Circassian World Newsletter* and the *Mumbai Theatre Guide*. But at least the messages that we allow to enter our

in-box are there, and when there is time we may be curious enough to click and see what is there. And if one can match the contents of messages well enough with recipients, rather than routinely dish-ing out everything to everybody, the chance of their actual attention to messages is likely to grow.

6. *Helpers in outreach*

With regard to organization, are there people who can help us reach out, or what can we do to get together around such endeavors? I do not think we should give up on journalists. Some number of them may cling to that notion of anthropologists as global curio experts, knowing strange and wonderful things about potlatch and polygamy and tribes and tattoos and cannibalism. But then among the large numbers of young people who pass through undergraduate anthropology courses in our universities, year after year, some do turn into journalists; some of them may actually *be* journalists. So they could be our likely allies in their future work. I would add that it seems to me that the genre of “science journalism”, as practiced in more upscale newspapers and magazines, usually turns out to be mostly about the natural sciences and medicine. That is perhaps what one would expect, insofar as this is where the hard news of discoveries and inventions may most often be found. But I would like to see more journalists trying out operating as knowledge brokers between academic anthropology and the public, turning the departments, conferences and journals of the discipline into a part of their regular beat.

We could also look for allies within the organization of our universities – although with mixed results. Some years ago, I found myself on the podium at one Swedish university, about to offer a public lecture – that year had been proclaimed a “year of diversity”, so social and cultural diversity was my topic. A woman who was going to offer some initial remarks introduced herself to me as the newly appointed information officer of the university. Her previous experience, she mentioned, was in the hotel business, so arriving in the academic world, she said, was “coming in from reality”. And afterwards, she seemed pleasantly surprised that what I had said actually seemed to have to do with reality, as she defined it. This person may well have had some skills useful to her new employer, but it seemed to me that someone in a key position to tell the public about what the university was doing, what kinds of knowledge were being produced there, could well have had more experience of scholarly activities, and a more positive attitude. I wondered what the

university had really thought of when it hired her.

Sometimes, certainly, we can also have happier experiences of what the staff in such corners of our home institutions is able and willing to do for us. Even if such openings should be investigated and used, however, I suspect that we had better think about what we can do for ourselves, together. Some of us may well cultivate, or just stumble into, the kinds of contacts and networks useful for our personal outreach projects. For more of us, it would probably help if within the internal diversity of our discipline, and within its division of labor, some colleagues would have a special mandate to look out over the field, think about the interests, activities and research results that might have particular potential for seizing the attention of wider audiences, and feeding the news of it in an appropriate form through the right channels. This is probably best done at a local or national level, for language reasons and because to newpeople and the public, the source at home has some added value. Perhaps in the corridor talk or in the coffee rooms of departments, such possibilities could at least be raised in a tentative form. Or national associations of anthropologists could ask themselves what they can do. But then certainly, a continued exchange of experiences and ideas about outreach operations in the international organizations and networks of colleagues will most likely also be a very useful resource.

Note

* This paper was presented at the workshop «Anthropology and/in Publicity» in Ravenstein, the Netherlands, organized by Henk Driessen and Martijn de Koning of Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, on November 4-5, 2010, and at the workshop “Apology for Anthropology, or the Anthropologist’s Craft”, organized by Gabriella D’Agostino and Vincenzo Matera at Università di Palermo, Italy, on December 3, 2010. I am grateful for the hospitality of the organizers of both conferences, and for the thoughtful responses of the respective audiences.

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Abstracts

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Le scienze umane e sociali. Uno sguardo retrospettivo

L'autore ripercorre il proprio rapporto con le scienze umane e sociali durante un cinquantennio (1960-2010). Richiamando il lavoro di Claude Lévi-Strauss e il suo modello teorico che assimila le scienze umane alle scienze esatte, eliminando ogni traccia di soggettività, l'articolo pone a confronto il contributo di Germaine Tillion che, negli stessi anni, affermava l'impossibilità di eliminare l'esperienza personale dello studioso dai risultati del proprio lavoro. Un approccio pluralista alle discipline umanistiche è la raccomandazione che l'Autore ci consegna nelle conclusioni.

Parole chiave: Oggettività; Soggettività; Conoscenza letteraria; Scienze Umane/Scienze naturali; Pluralismo metodologico

Human and Social Sciences. A retrospection

The author describes his contacts with the social and human sciences during the last 50 years (1960-2010). His first major encounter is with the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who recommended the assimilation of the humanities to the exact sciences and the elimination of all traces of subjectivity. This attitude is compared with the contribution of Germaine Tillion who defends the impossibility to eliminate the personal experience of the scholar from the results of his work. In conclusion, the author recommends a pluralistic approach to the humanities and the social sciences.

Key words: Objectivity; Subjectivity; Literary knowledge; Human and Natural Sciences; Methodological Pluralism

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Operation Outreach: Anthropology and the Public in a World of Information Crowding

Fairly recently there was a story in newsmedia in Sweden about some young *nouveaux riches* who displayed their wealth by ostentatiously pouring out champagne in the sink. At about the same time, another item described a public occasion where a feminist politician, well-known since her past as leader of the country's main postcommunist party, had set fire to 100000 kronor (some 10000 euro) in bills, to make some point dramatically. This drew widespread comment, although it may be that while few could remember exactly what the point was, the suspicion was confirmed that this was not a person to be trusted with public funds.

Anyway, both the champagne pouring and the money on fire undoubtedly drew some added attention in the media because they occurred during the summer, when good stories tend to be hard to come by. One journalist contacted me after he had heard from someone that there were North American Indians who also had public rituals of destruction, something called "potlatch". And so he asked if I would care to offer an anthropological perspective on their new occurrence in Sweden. I suggested that if he wanted to know more about potlatch he could take a look at the Wikipedia article, but apart from that I declined the invitation to comment on the Swedish politician going Kwakiutl.

If we wonder about the part of anthropology in contemporary public life and public knowledge, we may find that it is sometimes, in fact rather frequently, like that. People who have no close acquaintance with the discipline expect the anthropologists to be in control of exotic tidbits from around the world, and thus able to offer possibly entertaining, although otherwise probably rather useless, parallels, comparisons, or overviews. Perhaps some of us will then indeed try to search the global ethnographic inventory for something to say, out of a sense of public duty or seduced by the possibility of fifteen seconds of fame. Again, in this instance, I was not tempted.

Key words: Branding; Commentary; Journalism; Politics; Multilingualism

Eccessi di azione: il ruolo pubblico dell'antropologia in un mondo sommerso dalle notizie

Di recente è circolata nei media svedesi la storia di alcuni giovani arricchiti che fanno mostra della loro ricchezza gettando champagne nel lavandino. Più o meno nello stesso periodo un'altra voce descriveva un'occasione pubblica durante la quale una femminista, nota per il suo passato come leader del principale partito postcomunista della nazione, aveva dato fuoco a 100.000 corone (circa 10.000 euro) in contanti, per rendere spettacolari alcuni punti del suo discorso. Ciò ha prodotto una vasta eco, sebbene alla fine abbia trovato comunque conferma il sospetto che non si trattasse di una persona affidabile per la gestione di fondi pubblici.

In ogni caso, sia lo spreco di champagne sia il denaro bruciato, senza dubbio ottennero una particolare attenzione da parte dei media perché entrambi i fatti capitano in estate, quando le buone storie da raccontare scarseggiano. Un giornalista mi contattò dopo che aveva sentito da qualcuno che c'erano degli Indiani nordamericani che praticavano anch'essi dei rituali pubblici di distruzione, qualcosa chiamato "potlach". E quindi mi chiese se mi interessasse fornire una prospettiva antropologica sulla nuova comparsa di questi rituali in Svezia. Suggesti che avrebbe potuto sapere qualcosa in più sul potlach, nel caso avesse questo desiderio, dando una semplice occhiata all'articolo di Wikipedia, e a parte questo declinai l'invito a commentare i politici svedesi mutanti Kwakiutl.

Se ci interrogassimo sul ruolo dell'antropologia nella vita pubblica contemporanea, potremmo scoprire che consiste a volte, di fatto direi piuttosto frequentemente, in qualcosa del genere. Gente che non ha familiarità con la disciplina si aspetta che gli antropologi padroneggino "bocconcini" esotici un po' di tutto il mondo, e per questo siano in grado di offrire una possibilità di intrattenimento, probabilmente non molto utile, magari qualche parallelismo, qualche confronto, o una visione d'insieme. Forse alcuni di noi tenteranno allora di esplorare l'inventario etnografico globale per avere qualcosa da dire, in risposta a un senso del dovere pubblico o sedotti dalla possibilità di quindici secondi di gloria. Per quanto mi riguarda, almeno in quel caso, non mi venne la tentazione.

Parole chiave: marchio; commento; giornalismo; politica; multilinguismo

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Cultural Journalism and Anthropology: A Tale of two Translations

Already Evans-Pritchard identified anthropology in terms of cultural translation, a notion which has been influential in the discipline, as well as debated. The debate has generated insights into issues of interpretation, understanding and authenticity. When I study the transnational dance world, or the world of contemporary Irish writers, I translate these settings with their concerns into academic conceptualizations. This is what I was trained to do. But during my fieldwork in the dance world, one dancer after another kept asking me "So you're a writer – why don't you write about us in the paper?" The people I was studying seemed to suggest that I should make myself useful by writing about them in the newspaper, and also, they told me, in dance magazines, international and Swedish ones. In order to give something back to the people that had allowed me access to the closed world of ballet, I thus set out on my first piece of cultural journalism for Svenska Dagbladet, a Swedish daily. This entailed a different type of translation. Now I had to make my anthropological findings not only accessible but also attractive to a wider readership familiar with the arts, but not necessarily with anthropology. The purpose of this article is to explore the process of writing cultural journalism drawing on anthropological research.

Keywords: Cultural journalism; Cultural translation; Creative writing; Travel; Transnational

Antropologia e giornalismo culturale. Storia di due traduzioni

Già Evans-Pritchard intese l'antropologia in termini di traduzione culturale, una nozione che ha esercitato molta influenza sulla disciplina e anche molto discussa. Il dibattito ha prodotto una particolare sensibilità per i temi dell'interpretazione, della comprensione e dell'autenticità. Nello studiare il mondo transnazionale della danza, o quello degli scrittori irlandesi contemporanei, traduco questi ambiti e le loro problematiche nei termini delle concettualizzazioni accademiche. È ciò che la mia formazione mi spinge a fare. Tuttavia, nel corso del mio lavoro di campo sul mondo della danza, molti iniziarono a chiedermi "dunque sei una scrittrice – perché allora non scrivi un bell'articolo su di noi?" Le persone che studiavo sembravano suggerirmi che avrei potuto rendermi utile scrivendo di loro sul giornale e anche, mi dissero, su riviste specializzate, internazionali e svedesi. Allora, per ricambiare le persone che mi avevano permesso di

entrare nel mondo chiuso del balletto, mi accinsi a scrivere il mio primo pezzo di “giornalismo culturale” per la *Svenska Dagbladet*, un quotidiano svedese. Questo mi impegnò in un tipo diverso di traduzione. Avevo il compito di rendere le mie scoperte antropologiche non solo accessibili ma anche attraenti per un più ampio pubblico di lettori dotato di una certa familiarità con l’arte, ma non necessariamente con l’antropologia. In questo articolo esamino il processo che a partire da una ricerca antropologica porta a fare del “giornalismo culturale”.

Parole chiave: Giornalismo culturale; Traduzione culturale; Scrittura creativa; Viaggio; Transnazionale

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Cultural Exclusion: Migrant Minorities and the Law in the UK

Study of the discrimination which affects migrants and their descendants in contemporary Europe has focused principally on social and economic exclusion and its consequences for integration. The concept of ‘cultural exclusion’, which refers to the way in which institutions and their personnel may fail to take into account the religion and ‘culture’ (in the anthropological sense) of migrants and their descendants when resources and rights are accessed and allocated, broadens the notion of social exclusion in a manner that speaks directly to the work of anthropologists. Building on the UNDP’s concept of ‘cultural liberty’, the paper explores immigrant and ethnic minority cultural and religious exclusion specifically in the context of encounters with the law and legal processes in the UK, and examines how far the law and those operating in its shadow could or should make room for, ‘other’ values, meanings and practices.

Key words: Cultural exclusion; Ethnic minorities; Religion; Law; UK

L’esclusione culturale: minoranze migratorie e Diritto nel Regno Unito

Lo studio della discriminazione che colpisce i migranti e i loro discendenti nell’Europa contemporanea si è concentrato soprattutto sull’esclusione economica e sociale e sulle sue conseguenze per l’integrazione. Il concetto di ‘esclusione culturale’, che si riferisce al modo in cui le istituzioni, e il loro personale, nel garantire accesso e nell’allocare risorse e diritti, possono non tenere in conto la religione e la ‘cultura’ (in senso antropologico) dei migranti e dei loro discendenti, allarga la nozione di esclusione sociale in una maniera che si rivolge direttamente al lavoro degli antropologi. Basandosi sul concetto di ‘libertà culturale’ adottato dall’UNDP, lo scritto esplora l’esclusione culturale e religiosa delle minoranze etniche costituite dagli immigrati nel contesto specifico dei rapporti con la legge e i procedimenti legali nel Regno Unito, ed esamina fino a che punto la legge e i funzionari pubblici incaricati di applicarla potrebbero o dovrebbero lasciar spazio a valori, significati e pratiche ‘altre’.

Parole chiave: esclusione culturale, minoranze etniche, religione, diritto, UK.

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Il desiderio del selvatico. La Wilderness come categoria antropologica dell'immaginario

Nel quadro della riflessione contemporanea sul paesaggio il concetto di *Wilderness* si configura come categoria antropologica originaria, come paradigma primario di pensiero che interseca gli strati biologici e culturali nella percezione e nella rappresentazione del rapporto uomo/ambiente. Il moderno interesse per il selvatico che trasversalmente coinvolge le nuove istanze dell'ecologia umana, dell'etnoecologia, dell'ecocritica, della letteratura e dell'arte, mette in discussione le dialettiche consolidate del modello culturale antropocentrico, esplorando il legame con l'alterità dell'elemento naturale nella costruzione della strategie di sopravvivenza ambientale, delle competenze ecologiche e della definizione sociale.

Parole chiave: *Wilderness*; Antropologia del paesaggio; Scrittura della natura; Ecologia umana; Anarchismo verde.

The Desire for the Wild. Wilderness as an Anthropological Category of Imagination

In the context of contemporary reflection on the landscape, the Wilderness concept takes the form of original anthropological category, as the primary paradigm of thought that crosses cultural and biological layers in the perception and representation of the relationship between man and environment. The modern interest for the wild what involve crosswise new instances of human ecology, ethnoecology, ecocriticism, literature and art, to rise a questions the consolidated dilectic of anthropocentric cultural model, exploring the connection with the otherness of the natural element in the construction of environmental survival strategies, ecological competences and social definition.

Key words: *Wilderness*; *Landscapes Anthropology*; *Nature writing*; *Human Ecology*; *Green Anarchy*.

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Blessed be the Good Soldier: Cinema, Media and the Manufacturing of Nationhood in Post 9/11 Italy

This article addresses the contemporary wave of nationalism in Italy looking upon one of its pivotal figures, i.e. the soldier. Focussing primarily on post-war cinema and contemporary media reports regarding Italian soldiers in foreign missions of war (but offering also glimpses on schoolbooks from the fascist era) the article will offer an exploration of the continuities and discontinuities in the representation of the Italian soldier across history in Italian popular culture suggesting how, in line with the self-representation of the Good Italian, the soldier has always been presented as a good human being, one inevitably detached from historical responsibilities.

Key words: *Cinema*; *Representation*; *Nationalism*; *Soldiers*; *Contemporary Italy*.

"I nostri (bravi) ragazzi". Cinema, media e costruzione del senso di appartenenza nazionale nell'Italia del 'dopo 11 settembre'.

Questo articolo analizza la rappresentazione del soldato nella cultura popolare italiana. Mettendone a fuoco la centralità nella costruzione contemporanea del senso di appartenenza nazionale, l'articolo evidenzia continuità e discontinuità nella rappresentazione del soldato in contesti diversi, con particolare attenzione al cinema del Dopoguerra e ai dibattiti mediatici a proposito del coinvolgimento italiano nelle missioni di "pace" all'estero. Attraverso l'analisi di alcuni passi tratti da libri scolastici dell'epoca fascista, l'articolo suggerisce inoltre come la cultura popolare italiana sia stata capace di tenere in vita un'immagine coerente del soldato italiano, rappresentandolo principalmente come un "soldato buono". Nonostante sia generalmente dipinto come un individuo mosso da amore e altruismo, talvolta gli si riconoscono tratti di egoismo, opportunismo e pigrizia. L'insieme di tutte queste caratteristiche, per quanto apparentemente incoerenti tra di loro, ottiene l'effetto di attenuare ogni forma di responsabilità storica.

Parole chiave: *Cinema*; *Rappresentazione*; *Nazionalismo*; *Soldati*; *Italia contemporanea*.

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Turismo e immaginari migratori. Esperienze dell'Altrove nel Senegal urbano

Le rappresentazioni dell'Altrove sono un'angolazione peculiare per capire le aspirazioni al viaggiare di molti africani; questo fattore assume un ruolo centrale nelle esperienze individuali e collettive, diventando un elemento significativo che apre spazi di definizione del sé. Finora, un interesse minore è stato rivolto verso le varie forme e gli ambiti, non solo geografici, in cui l'Altrove è rappresentato, assunto di solito come l'espressione di un universalismo occidentale, nutrito da immagini e modelli culturalmente globalizzati. Al contrario, questo contributo sottolinea come l'idea di Altrove si costruisce storicamente in un contesto locale, facendo luce su come alcuni aspetti culturali locali producono uno specifico senso di spazialità, favorendo la formazione della frontiera tra 'qui' e 'là'. Volgendo lo sguardo alle aree urbane di *M'bour-Saly*, si osserva il ruolo svolto dai processi turistici e in quale misura essi diano significato alle immagini, alle narrazioni e alle pratiche attraverso cui gli individui esprimono il loro 'desiderio dell'Altrove'. Si problematizza l'idea *naïf* di un'Europa collettivamente percepita come uno stereotipato ed omogeneo El Dorado: la sua percezione sembra piuttosto legata alle esperienze soggettive e locali dei singoli.

Parole chiave: Senegal; Turismo; Migrazione; Altrove; Immaginario.

Tourism and Migratory imaginaries. Experiences of Elsewhere in Urban Senegal

Representations of the 'Elsewhere' is as peculiar field to understand the aspirations to travel of many African people; this factor assumes a pivotal role in individual and collective experiences, becoming a meaningful device that opens up spaces of self-definition. So far, a minor interest is devoted to styles and arenas where the Elsewhere is represented, often assumed as the expression of culturally globalised images and models of a Western universalism. Conversely, this contribute underlines how the 'idea of Elsewhere' is constructed historically within a local context, shedding light on how some cultural local aspects produce a specific sense of spatiality, fostering the formation of the frontier between 'here' and 'there'. Looking at the urban areas of M'bour-Saly, I show the role played by the touristic processes and to what extent they give meaning to images, narrations and practices through which people express their 'desire of Elsewhere'. The work aims to problematise the naïf idea of Europe, collectively perceived as a stereotypical and homogeneous El Dorado: its perception seems rather to be linked to the subjective local experiences of individuals.

Key words: Senegal; Tourism; Migration; Elsewhere; Imaginary

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La cura dell'uchimvi. Nota sulla medicina tradizionale tra i Wabebe della Tanzania

In questo articolo collego i concetti dell'eziologia e della cura delle malattie tra i Wabehe, una popolazione della Tanzania centro-meridionale, alla loro cosmologia. In questo sistema medico tradizionale, il ruolo di terapeuta è svolto dai *waganga wa kienyeji* (letteralmente: "dottori del villaggio"). Dopo aver analizzato il rito di cura dell'*uchimvi* (lett. "malocchio"), nell'ultima parte descrivo come, negli ultimi anni, i sintomi dell'HIV/AIDS siano stati assimilati e trattati dai *waganga* come casi di *uchimvi*. Essi, con il rito di cura del *uchimvi*, aiutano i loro pazienti ad averne una prima conoscenza e, infine, a 'com-prendere' l'HIV/AIDS.

Parole chiave: Wabehe; Antropologia medica; Rituali terapeutici; Curatori tradizionali; HIV/AIDS e medicina tradizionale

The cure of uchimvi. A note on traditional medical system among Wabebe (Tanzania)

In this article I link concepts of health disorder's etiology and therapy among the Wabebe's, a people living in the south and central part of Tanzania, to their cosmology. In their traditional medical system, people affected by health disorder's are treated by the waganga wa kienyeji, "the village doctors". After focusing on the rite of treatment of uchimvi ("evil eye"), in the last pages I describe the way HIV/AIDS is conceived and treated by the waganga as occurrences of uchimvi. By this way of interpreting this disease, waganga so help their patients to have a former knowledge of it and, finally, to 'understand' the HIV/AIDS.

Key words: Wabebe; Medical anthropology; Therapeutic rituals; Traditional curers; HIV/AIDS and traditional medical systems.

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Concezioni dei luoghi e figure dell'alterità: il mare tra i Wayuu. Seconda parte.

Tra i Wayuu, una popolazione indigena sudamericana che ha adottato l'allevamento di bestiame nel secolo XVII, il mare ha valenze simboliche differenti, che oscillano tra due poli opposti. Nel primo, esso è rappresentato come un luogo destinato a restare sotto il dominio del 'mondo altro', associato con la morte e le malattie; nel secondo esso diventa un luogo addomesticabile e appropriabile. In questa seconda parte, esamino dapprima i modi in cui il mare compare nei miti cosmogonici, e del suo rapporto con l'immagine dei Bianchi; successivamente analizzo il legame tra la credenza secondo cui gli animali marini sono gli animali domestici di Pulowi, la signora del 'mondo altro', e quella che il bestiame abbia un'origine marina.

Parole chiave: Wayuu; indigeni sudamericani; dicotomia selvaggio/domestico; alterità; sistemi di classificazione.

Images of places and figures of Alterity: the sea among the Wayuu. Second part.

Among the Wayuu, a South-American indigenous people which adopted cattle-rearing since the XVIIth Century, the sea can assume different symbolic values, which sway between two opposite polarities. According to the first one, it is a place which will always be under the mastery of the 'otherworld', linked with death and sickness; according to the second one, it can become a place to be domesticated and appropriated. In the second part of this paper, I first describe the ways the sea appears in the cosmogonical myths and its relationship with the image of the Whitemen; afterwards, I study the link between the belief that sea animals are the cattle of Pulowi, the Master of the 'Otherworld', and the belief that cattle come from the sea.

Key words: Wayuu; South American Indians; wild/domesticated dichotomy; alterity; systems of classification.

Don Chisciotte innamorato

Il significato dell'opera di Cervantes non è ancora stato inteso nella sua pienezza. Non è la vicenda di un cavaliere ideale, come ha letto la critica romantica, neppure il rifiuto del mondo della cavalleria né una sua parodia. Il suo senso ultimo si sostanzia e si esprime nell'amore per Dulcinea che, sebbene figura centrale della narrazione, nella realtà non esiste. In questo suo non esserci, infatti, si occulta quanto Cervantes ha voluto dirci. Il disagio di Don Chisciotte non consiste nell'impossibilità di vivere come un vero cavaliere, ma nel fatto che la realtà nella quale si riconosce non esiste. Non diversamente da Dulcinea, è un parto della sua fantasia, del suo bisogno di inventarsi un mondo altro rispetto a quello che ha sperimentato e patito.

Parole chiave: Cervantes; Don Chisciotte; Cavaliere; Realtà/Fantasia; Follia

Don Quixote in love

The meaning of Cervantes' work has not been completely assessed in all its complexity. It is neither the story of an ideal knight, as the romantic critics would say, nor the denial of the cavalry world, nor even his parody. Its ultimate meaning is expressed in Don Quixote's love for Dulcinea. Although she is the central character of the narration, she does not exist in reality. The non-existence of Dulcinea points at Cervantes' hidden message. Don Quixote's unease does not consist in the impossibility to live as a real knight, but in the fact that his reality does not exist. Like Dulcinea, his reality is a product of his fantasy, of his need to invent another dimension different from that he has experimented and suffered.

Key words: Cervantes; Don Quixote; Knight; Reality/Fantasy; madness

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Stabat Mater di tradizione orale in Sicilia

I comportamenti musicali svolgono tuttora un ruolo fondamentale entro i contesti celebrativi della Settimana Santa in Sicilia. Suoni strumentali (inni e marce dei complessi bandistici, segnali prodotti con trombe, tamburi, crepitacoli ecc.) e soprattutto canti tradizionali – in siciliano, latino e italiano – marcano le azioni rituali connesse alla rievocazione della passione e morte del Cristo, con stili e modalità esecutive ampiamente variabili. Lo *Stabat Mater* è uno tra i canti che più frequentemente ricorre nei riti pasquali di numerosi centri dell'Isola. A causa della sua nota origine "letteraria", questo testo assume un valore emblematico come attestazione del legame tra ambienti popolari e ambienti colti nella formazione dei repertori musicali cosiddetti paraliturgici. Questo contributo offre una panoramica generale sulla presenza dello *Stabat Mater* nella tradizione etnomusicale siciliana, analizzando alcune esecuzioni del canto e delineando i contesti socio-culturali in cui da secoli se ne tramanda la pratica, spesso a opera di cantori associati a confraternite laicali o ad ambienti parrocchiali.

Parole chiave: Stabat Mater; Oralità; Settimana Santa; Paraliturgia; Sicilia

Stabat Mater of oral tradition in Sicily

Musical behaviours still provide an important role during Holy-Week Sicilian celebrations. Instrumental sounds (hymns and marches of band ensembles, signals performed by trumpets, drums, crepitacols, etc.) and traditional song – in the Sicilian dialect or in Latin and Italian – mark the ritual actions that traditionally evoke the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The Stabat Mater is often sung in Easter rites of several Sicilian villages. For its "literary" origin this text has an emblematic value to show the connection between "high" and folk contexts in the creation of paraliturgic repertoire. This contribution offers a general view of the presence of Stabat Mater in ethnomusical Sicilian tradition, analyzing some of the musical performances, and delineating the socio-cultural contexts in which for several centuries the practice has been transmitted, often by singers associated with laical Confraternities or with parishes.

Key words: Stabat Mater; Oral tradition; Holy-week; Paraliturgy; Sicily