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POLISH ETHNOGRAPHY / ETHNOLOGY IN THE PERIOD OF “REAL SOCIALISM”.
FROM NON-MARXIST ORTHODOXY OF “ETHNOGRAPHISM”
TO POSTETHNOGRAPHIC PLURALISM

(Summary)

In this article I describe the convoluted history of Polish cultural and/or social ethnography/ethnology/anthropology in the period under the rule of “really existing” socialism. In the intellectual history of ethnology just after World War II, methodological pluralism, inherited from the interwar period, made its mark. Soon it was superseded by a specific orthodoxy, named here “ethnographism”, which was informed by positivist principles of research that did not require theoretical and interpretative analyses going beyond description. For at least two decades this methodology, or rather a method elevated to the status of theory, was accepted as an academic orthodoxy. However, it did not have much in common with the imposition of dialectical materialism as a normative theoretical explanation. It was thus a sort of politically unorthodox academic orthodoxy. Although in “Early Socialism” there were discussions about the methods of interpretation and the object of ethnographic research, they did not lead to changes in the paradigm of the discipline. This occurred in the period of “Late Socialism”, when the discipline, in reaction to the naive realism and empiricism of ethnography, began to search for methods of interpretation and of theory going beyond those perceived as commonsensical, positivist schemata. If we characterise the 1950s and 1960s as dominated by “ethnographism”, then the Sturm und Drang observed in the 1970s and 1980s can be seen as the birth of “postethnographic pluralism”.

Key words: Polish ethnography/ethnology, “ethnographism”, history and theory of anthropology, knowledge and power

Magdalena Zowczak

ANTHROPOLOGY, HISTORY, AND THE UKRAINIAN QUESTION. ABOUT THE
TACTICS OF THE BORDERLAND

(Summary)

There is a clear rift between actual aims and the potential of cultural anthropology, as the discipline directed at critical and reflexive study of contemporaneity, and its place in university structures and state institutions in Poland. This phenomenon is accompanied by the stereotype of ethnology and anthropology in common sense, inherited from ethnography, which in the past time was entangled in the politics of “folk”. The author discusses the reasons for the classification of anthropology as an auxiliary science of history, asks questions about scientific politics and emphasises the significance of an academic ethnographic laboratory as an original educational project.

The author describes two examples presenting her experience of cooperation with historians. One is cooperation between the historians and the anthropologist at the Expert Committee of the Ministry of Education for the improvement of history and geography textbooks. The other is the cooperation between the anthropologist and the historian during the research project on contemporary cultural practices in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. Both types of cooperation are linked by interest in the borderland, the concept which opens up a space for negotiations between anthropology and history. This concept has many meanings and is metaphorical, which could be a methodological trap. Therefore it was presented as the key category of those two specific projects. In the end the author describes her own research project as an attempt at the implementation of the critical anthropology of the borderland.

Key words: cultural anthropology, history, borderland, Polish-Ukrainian relations, scientific politics

Kacper Pobłocki

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE CITY – URBANIZATION, SPACE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

(Summary)

This paper discusses the tensions between empirical and theoretical analyses of the city. It argues that a distinction between "anthropology of the city" and "anthropology in the city" ought to be made. The former aims at understanding the city as a whole, while the latter is based upon participant observation and classic fieldwork wherein the "urban experience" is studied in a first-hand fashion. While there is a veritable anthropological tradition of studies in the urban milieu, there is not enough adequate theoretical discussion on understanding the city as a whole. The failure of the research project led by Rem Koolhaas in Nigerian Lagos is an apt example of what is called "naive urban anthropology", where the two are confused. After presenting and critiquing Koolhaas' research, this paper argues that in order to develop a more theoretical understanding of urbanization one needs to follow in the wake of urban theory devised by David Harvey and Neil Smith. It argues that most predicaments in urban theory stem from the domination of thinking within the confines of the paradigm of "absolute space". The paper gives a historical account of the emergence of absolute space, and then shows how it has been eclipsed by both relative and relational spaces. It shows how Harvey's inverted ontology, giving primacy to space and not to place, can alleviate some of the current shortcomings of urban anthropology, and how the theoretical perspective ought to be complimented with anthropological studies of the emergent new "urban ways of life" in contemporary cities.

Key words: anthropology of the city, anthropology in the city, urbanization, global South, relational space, urban studies, global cities

Sjaak van der Geest, Susan Reynolds Whyte

TRUST AND SCEPTICISM – CHANGING ATTITUDES
TOWARDS PHARMACEUTICALS

(Summary)

This article contrasts and discusses two views about pharmaceuticals. On the one hand there is a wide popularity of pharmaceuticals in both high income and poor societies. At the same time, however, a more sceptical and reluctant attitude towards pharmaceuticals occurs. The article reviews the reasons for the worldwide trust in drugs, and then suggests that some of the same factors may help to understand mistrust and reluctance to use them in other circumstances.

Keywords: pharmaceuticals, anthropology of pharmaceuticals, popularity, trust, scepticism, efficacy

Ewa A. Jagiełło, Noemi Modnicka

TRAPS OF THE NET – ON THE ETHICAL DIMENSION OF THE
ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ONLINE

(Summary)

Nowadays the encounter between researcher and participant in research takes place more frequently on the Internet – in a new space, which on the one hand is a complex construct of words, sounds and images, and which on the other hand is created by people interacting in various ways. This new domain, explored in many ways by anthropologists and other qualitative researchers, is taken into account, especially in foreign publications, when professional ethics is considered. In the authors' opinion, the Polish anthropological community still suffers from the lack of deeper reflection on the challenges posed by research on the Internet. The purpose of this paper is to present various approaches towards ethical issues in qualitative research on the Web and to highlight the areas of dispute that arise as a result of the adoption of different ethical positions, focusing mainly on the problems of informed consent, privacy and harm.

Key words: ethics, ethnography online, Internet, anthropological research

Mariusz Kania

CREATING INTERNET IDENTITY.
FACEBOOK AS A CREATOR OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

(Summary)

In this article the author deals with the issue of creating an Internet identity, paying particular attention to the profiles created on social networking site – Facebook. The analysis is based on two theoretical foundations, Marxism on the one hand, and on the other – the theory of artificial intelligence which was developed by computer science. Concepts formed on the basis of artificial intelligence help illustrate the form of subjectivity which is created in the network. Drawing on the vision of Marxist dialectics and alienation, the author tries to visualise the interaction occurring between the users and their avatars on Facebook, recently the most popular social networking site.

Key words: Internet, Facebook, identity, artificial intelligence, alienation, objectivisation, avatar

Maciej Kurcz

THE ANTHROPOLOGIST AND POST-WAR REALITY OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICA.
REFLECTIONS ON THE FIELDWORK IN JUBA (SOUTH SUDAN)

(Summary)

As many long lasting conflicts in Africa have come to an end the continent is developing very rapidly. These processes are mostly seen in urbanized post-war centres. The war past and the modernisation changes are responsible for the specific ephemeral climate of these places.

Juba is a “liminal” city, torn between crisis and stabilisation, war and peace, chaos and order. This situation is intensified by spontaneous urbanization processes. Juba is a city in the making; it is also a place where globalisation and trade exchange are very intensive.

This article describes the author’s reflections on the anthropological fieldwork in post-war Juba. The liminality has profound impact on the life of the people in the city, including the anthropologist during his fieldwork. The article shows how cultural phenomena characteristic of post-war African cities impact on the anthropologist and his work.

Key words: anthropology of suffering, fieldwork, narrative method, city, South Sudan, Juba

Jacek Jan Pawlik

WAX PRINT TEXTILES *PAGNE* AS CULTURAL HERITAGE
OF THE INHABITANTS OF TOGO

(Summary)

The paper discusses the role of print cloth in the life of West Africans, especially in Lomé, the capital of Togo. First, it describes the Asian and European origins of print cloth and its expansion in West Africa. While the technical production is European in origin, the symbols and ornaments are entirely African. This kind of cloth is of major importance for social life in Togo and it is highly valued. Every pattern has its name, which gives the cloth a symbolic significance. The colour of print cloth is sometimes prescribed for certain ritual and social occasions.

The second part of the paper concerns the group of textile tradeswomen, called „Nana-Benz” in Lomé. Up to the 1980s they controlled the whole trade of wax prints from Europe. The last part presents the use of textile prints in fashion.

Key words: West Africa, Togo, wax print textiles, tradition, heritage, commercialisation, fashion

Anna Urbańska-Szymoszyn

GLOBALISATION AND GLOCALISATION OF THE BON RELIGION
AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE LIGMINCHA COMMUNITY
IN THE UNITED STATES AND POLAND

(Summary)

The article discusses the Tibetan bon religion, which is becoming popular in the West. Differences and similarities of two bon communities established by Tenzin Wangyal from Tibet are discussed – the Ligmincha Institute in the United States of America and Garuda Association in Poland. They are the result of the globalisation of the bon religion and different processes of its glocalisation in different socio-cultural contexts. The problems discussed are connected with the transcultural character of broadly understood Buddhism, including the Tibetan bon religion, and the appearance and development of this new religious movement in Western culture and society. The author analyses the organisation and functioning of the Ligmincha communities, their relations with the religious motherland and trans-Buddhism as a cultural phenomenon. The article is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Poland, India and the United States.

Key words: bon, new religious movements, New Age, trans-Buddhism, globalisation, glocalisation

Janina Hajduk-Nijakowska

FOLKLORISTIC SOURCES OF THE MYTH OF SAVIOUR
IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURE

(Summary)

The author describes a phenomenon present in contemporary culture, namely stories of heroes who survived their death and live somewhere awaiting “the right time to come back” to fight for freedom, faith and justice. The article has been inspired by the words of historian Manuel Rosa that Columbus’ father was Vladislav III, who was not killed in 1444 as thought. Instead, he went into exile to Madeira, married a Portuguese noblewoman, and fathered Columbus.

The belief that one can survive one’s death has for centuries been connected with the cult of heroes and continues to be popular today. They often use the old motif of the sleeping knights and are connected with different historical or fictitious figures. Such beliefs have been common because of people’s similar experiences and expectations. The article discusses the presence of King Vladislav III in the Slavic folklore and the process of his mythisation, and describes similar stories existing in the modern history of Morocco (Sultan Mohammed V), Chechnya (Shamil Basayev) and Poland (Lech Kaczyński). The archetype of a mythical hero, who watches over the orphaned nation and, should such need arise, will return, has also been revealed in the mythisation and sacralisation of John Paul II.

It appears that the power of mythologisation of heroes has no borders. The belief that a divinised idol lives is shared by the fans of the heroes of popular culture (Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson). Modern myths use well known motifs and stereotypes, which function in other combinations but which, however, are reminiscent of ancient times.

Key words: folklore stores, sleeping knights, the myth of saviour, King Vladislav III, Sultan Mohammed V, John Paul II, Shamil Basayev, Lech Kaczyński, Michael Jackson

Anna Kapusta, Agnieszka Poźniak

“THE MOST HOLY HEAD OF JESUS”.
FROM METONIMIC SCRIPT TO METAPHORICAL BIOGRAPHY

(Summary)

This article aims to reconstruct individual female biography as a way of manifesting late-modern spirituality. The case of contemporary myth creation is an example showing how individual religious experience in a specific social context helps build biographic cohesion and how it transforms into metaphorical narration. The authors used the data collected in Rybno in Mazovia as material for analysis. They analyse the biography of one of the inhabitants of Rybno, a person who is extremely strongly emotionally associated with the local monastic congregation which aims to spread the cult of Divine Mercy. The authors based their analysis on two sources, i.e. a free interview conducted with the woman and the texts of the prayers to the “Most Holy Head of Jesus”.

Key words: biography, spirituality, metaphor, metonymy, prayer, narration, *sacrum*

Anna Piechnik-Dębiec

“A MILK WITCH” AS DESCRIBED BY THE INHABITANTS
OF THE CIEŻKOWICKO-ROŻNOWSKIE FOOTHILLS AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

(Summary)

The article is about the knowledge of the oldest generation of the rural population about witches and related magical beliefs. The text is based on ethnographic-linguistic fieldwork conducted by the author in 2005-2011 in the Ciężkowicko-Rożnowskie Foothills (Małopolska). In the past it was believed that witches could cast spells and, primarily, spoil cow's milk. The article focuses on the latter aspect of witches' activity and presents the data on such elements as the appearance and behaviour of the witch, her *modus operandi*, effects of spells, and methods used to counteract “milk spells” and reverse them. The author also presents the vocabulary used to describe such persons, as well as the attitude of the informants to the beliefs in witches. Contemporary accounts on witches have been compared with the information from other regions of Poland and from historical ethnographic sources about the area under study.

Key words: witch, “milk witch”, recognition of witches, folk magic, Ciężkowicko-Rożnowskie Foothills, foothill dialects