

## Culture



**Michel IZARD and Pierre SMITH, eds., *Between Belief and Transgression: Structuralist Essays in Religion, History and Myth*, translated by John Leavitt, with an introduction by James A. Boon, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983. 288 pages, US \$20.00 (paper)**

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Volume 3, Number 2, 1983

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1078147ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1078147ar>

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### Publisher(s)

Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie

### ISSN

0229-009X (print)

2563-710X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

### Cite this review

Schwimmer, E. (1983). Review of [Michel IZARD and Pierre SMITH, eds., *Between Belief and Transgression: Structuralist Essays in Religion, History and Myth*, translated by John Leavitt, with an introduction by James A. Boon, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983. 288 pages, US \$20.00 (paper)]. *Culture*, 3(2), 87–89. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1078147ar>

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Nelson GRABURN, ed., *The Anthropology of Tourism*, (*Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 10, no. 1), New York, Pergamon Press, 1983. 192 pages, US \$15.15 (paper).

By Frank E. Manning  
University of Western Ontario

A decade ago, tourism was conspicuous by its absence in scholarly literature. Since then, however, a remarkable number of published studies have established it as an appropriate concern of social research. Tourism has also become a common subject of theses, dissertations, and field-training projects, a trend suggesting that we can look for a further proliferation of the literature.

The *Annals of Tourism Research*, a social sciences journal which is now in its tenth year of publication, has played a prominent role in catalyzing academic interest in tourism. The collection reviewed here is a special issue of that journal devoted to anthropology. Previous special issues dealt with the geography of tourism, the sociology of tourism, the economics of tourism, and so on, while future issues promise to explore tourism's relationship to political science, social psychology, and other disciplines. The growing specialization of tourism studies is seen in the present volume. Two of the contributors, Jean Thurot and Gaétane Thurot, are based at a French tourism institute, the Centre des Hautes Études Touristiques in Aix-en-Provence. Predictably, they have coined a new rhetoric, identifying their subject as "touristology" and themselves as "touristologists".

In his introductory essay, editor Nelson Graburn distinguishes broadly between two types of anthropological work on tourism: 1) studies of tourists and the nature of tourism; and 2) studies of the impact of tourism on host populations, including the character of the host-tourist relationship. While he indicates that this collection is restricted to studies of the former type, he does not mention that the latter type have generally been far more critical of tourism, often seeing it as a major source of cultural debilitation and social dislocation, especially among Third World peoples. Hence the book is rather more sanguine than its title would suggest.

This caveat notwithstanding, the book serves to dispel at least one ethnocentric misconception: the notion that pleasure travel is an exclusive privilege of white Westerners. Included are vivid ethnographic accounts of Japanese tourists (who venture much further from home than most North American

tourists), middle class Mexican tourists (whose behavior at a beach resort is more rambunctious and licensed than that of their *gringo* counterparts), East Indian tourists (who comprise about two-thirds of all visitors to the erotic temple statuary at Khajuraho), Sri Lankan tourists (who carry huge tape decks blaring cacophonous rock music on a "pilgrimage" to Sri Pade, a mountain held sacred by Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians), and French tourists (who are confronted by powerful, highly seductive advertising images beckoning them to plush tropical resorts). Even within Western society tourism is certainly not monolithic, as indicated by essays on such diverse groups as charter yacht tourists in the Caribbean and visitors to Taos, New Mexico, an area known for museums, ethnic arts, and strenuous outdoor recreational pastimes. What emerges from these presentations is a view of tourism as a worldwide but culturally varied phenomenon, understandable in relation to the symbolic forms and social formations that shape it in a given place and time.

There are two recurrent conceptual themes in the book. The first is the relationship of tourism to pilgrimage. Most authors favor MacCannell's (in *The Tourist*, 1976) position that tourism is usefully seen as a modern quest for authentic, even sacred experience. The second theme is that tourism has essential qualities of both ritual and play. Here there is a disappointing lack of theoretical refinement, resulting in analyses that are often too simplistic for the vivid and complex material to which they are addressed. Overall, however, the ethnographic strengths of the collection outweigh its analytical weaknesses. For those unfamiliar with tourism research, the book is a lively introduction to the field. For the specialist, it is a worthwhile source of data.

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Michel IZARD and Pierre SMITH, eds., *Between Belief and Transgression: Structuralist Essays in Religion, History and Myth*, translated by John Leavitt, with an introduction by James A. Boon, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983. 288 pages, US \$20.00 (paper).

By Eric Schwimmer  
Université Laval

This is a translation of a work that appeared in 1979 under the title: *La fonction symbolique, Essais d'anthropologie*. As such it has been widely re-

viewed and read. Moreover, it is now published with two introductions, one by the original editors and one by Boon, each of which offers an appraisal of each of the papers published therein. Another detailed discussion of the content could hardly say much that is new.

Three of the papers included in the volume have already become little classics and part of the mainstream of anthropological thought. These are Sperber's "Is symbolic thought prerational?", Pouillon's "Remarks on the verb 'to believe'" and Sahlins' "The apotheosis of Captain Cook". It contains several other papers of major importance, such as Pierre Smith's on the ludic, aesthetic and illusionist aspects of rites; François Héritier's on the symbolics of incest—both these point at important developments in symbolic anthropology whose impact will be felt increasingly in the coming years. Let us also note at this point that the translation is excellent and elegant.

Faithful though this edition is, therefore, to the material included in the original text, the volume as a whole has undergone a curious transformation due to Boon's introduction and to the rearrangement of the order of the pieces. It consists of the same parts, yet is a different animal. To cap the transformation, it has been provided with a different title, probably because a literal translation of the original one (*The Symbolic Function*) would have totally misled the English-speaking reader.

We do not, on the whole, condemn this transformation but it is important to draw attention to it. As far as the title is concerned, we do have reservations, as it implies that belief and transgression are on the same axis, so to speak, and that they are, as it were, antinomies or Weberian types: the more you believe, the less you transgress? Now, there are theorists who would refuse on principle to place 'belief' and 'transgression' on the same axis, and who would hold that they belong to different domains of discourse. They are not necessarily right, admittedly, but they would include, I feel, the great majority of the authors included in the volume under review. A more recent French work, Marc Augé's *Le génie du paganisme*, which I reviewed recently for the present journal, offers interpretations of the concepts 'belief' and 'transgression' that would be generally accepted by our authors and that would claim belief and transgression to be antinomies in Christian but not in Pagan thought.

It would not be appropriate to do a detailed analysis here of the ideas of Boon's introduction, as this is evidently a summary of a book that appeared

very recently and that I have not seen: *Other Tribes, Other Scribes*, Boon's own theory of structuralism, symbolic anthropology, etc. It presents the 'prostructuralist' side, the 'antistructuralist' side, and also a third attitude that is the author's own that he briefly summarizes in the present introduction thus: "And on the ambivalently structuralist side (certainly the right attitude!) (*sic*) we have Paul Friedrich's *The Meaning of Aphrodite* and the works of Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty..." This ambivalently structuralist side blends the ideas of Lévi-Strauss with something like American empiricism and Weberian systematics.

The major difference between the French and the American presentation of the material is that the former avoids all attempts at synthesis. As the title indicates, it's just a collection of essays on different aspects of symbolic anthropology by a group of people with somewhat similar ideas. Sperber's article is put right at the beginning, thus indicating that the group as a whole rejects the cultural relativism and a "merely hermeneutic" methodology characteristic of much symbolic anthropology (Izard and Smith, p. xvii). Within this non-relativist climate, contributors all follow their highly individual directions. This approach is somewhat repugnant to North American publishers who always avoid heterogeneous collections and prefer that each volume provide a new synthesis, a new 'system', or a new theory about the topic. To put this in well-worn Kantian terms, they want the whole to be greater than the sum of the parts.

While this bias is not in principle non-scientific, it may at times come perilously close to magic. Boon in fact achieves it by his introduction, by his title and by a curious total rearrangement of the pieces where the original prow of the ship (Sperber's essay) is turned into an Appendix. It would appear that the "ambivalently structuralist side" he espouses is less sure about relativism than the Parisians presented in the volume. As a result of these devices, the reader may not interpret the material in quite the manner originally intended.

One should not complain too much. As soon as one culture begins to borrow from another (i.e. to translate) it must inevitably reinterpret the message to suit its own preoccupations and Boon has well understood how the material can be made to look relevant to North Americans. Yet, when it comes to cultural transformations, we—as anthropologists—cannot swallow very well the product as unconsciously and spontaneously as the mere layman; after all, cultural transformations are our trade.

The reader will recognize that the points I

make here are minor indeed, as far as the value of the book is concerned. It is obviously essential reading for all anthropologists who work in this field and who cannot read the original, and Boon's introduction does provide a valid North American context.

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Adam KUPER, *Wives for Cattle: Bridewealth and Marriage in Southern Africa*, London & Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982. 202 pages, US \$34.95 (cloth).

By P.H. Gulliver  
York University

In the author's words: "This book is concerned with the varieties of bridewealth institutions among the Southern Bantu" (p. 157) of southern Africa. Specifically, the societies concerned are Lovedu, Nguni, Swazi, Tsonga, Tawana and Venda, with lesser references to others in the same region. The book is written in that curious language, the ethnographic present, and deals with the so-called "traditional" forms of bridewealth institutions and their connections with other features of the social structures in which they operated. Except for half a dozen paragraphs in the concluding chapter, there is virtually nothing on "modern" bridewealth practices, because, as the author notes, present day information is inadequate.

The structure of the book is straightforward. First, there is a general review, based on the literature, of the Southern Bantu ideas—"the intellectual basis"—about men, women, cattle and fertility and their general rules concerning bridewealth transactions. Secondly, there is an examination of the political context of bridewealth, both in general for the Southern Bantu and with fairly detailed studies of four particular varieties: the Lovedu "marrying in", the Venda variant, the Swazi "marrying up" and the Tsonga "marrying out". Thirdly, the author concentrates on the theme of transformations around a common set of ideas with the intention of demonstrating that "the various local institutions represent highly constrained transformations of each other" (p. 157). That is to say, the several ideological forms are neither ad hoc solutions to local structures and their problems nor localized varieties of some great tradition.

It is this notion of transformations that ultimately is the chief concern of the author. He spe-

cifically disavows an intention to develop any general theory about bridewealth institutions—indeed, he is sceptical of the possibilities of such an endeavour—although he claims that his own general conclusions for the Southern Bantu have theoretical relevance for the further understanding of bridewealth and of alliance theory. It would, therefore, be unfair to criticize the author for neglecting something which he has chosen not to attempt. Nevertheless, it seems a pity that, after several years of study of Southern Bantu bridewealth, he should not have gone further and given us his ideas and opinions as to where and how the particular ethnographic cases contribute to the general theoretical ideas in social anthropology. In fact, Professor Kuper does, at the end of his book, discuss rather briefly some of the implications of his findings for general theory. However, for better or worse, it is mainly left to the readers to make what use they can of the analyses and conclusions of specific ethnography.

For readers who are already familiar and especially concerned with the Southern Bantu peoples, societies and cultures, the book will surely make fascinating reading. They will find themselves in the presence of an anthropologist who well knows the available data and who has carefully synthesized them to reinforce some old understandings and to produce some new ones. For such specialists, the book is a "must", although they will scarcely need this recommendation concerning a work by an anthropologist who has already made his mark on studies of that region of Africa.

For other readers, the book may prove to be hard going. Despite the relative shortness of the work and the competence of its prose, there is a lot of data, much detail and many ethnic and cultural distinctions to be borne in mind. Perhaps one gets lazy about other anthropologists' ethnography and seeks primarily for structural implications and analytical conclusions; and that is why it has become the habit of many anthropologists, when presented with another lot of ethnography, to turn to the final chapter and see what it has to offer to those whose ethnographic interest lies elsewhere. It happens to all of us. So what are we offered by this (possibly unfair) practice? In the final chapter's thirteen pages, we are given a brief review of the three sets of factors said to be responsible for variations in bridewealth institutions (viz: pastoral and agricultural conditions, cousin marriage rules and forms of political stratification), some diagrammatic models of bridewealth transfer and transformations of alliance, and a brief discussion of the useful potentiality of the structural implica-