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A Goddess for semiotics of law and legal discourse

Jan M. Broekman

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Abstract

The work of the great American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) becomes more and more appreciated beyond the boundaries of his pragmatism, a philosophical mainstream he founded in the early 20th century. This essay is inspired by five points of interest, all of which focus on law and legal discourse. *Firstly*, one should acknowledge that his proposal pertaining to a general theory of signs, which he called ‘semeiotics’ around 1860, leads to an untraditional and in-depth understanding of legal discourse: in essence, of law as a system of specific meanings and signs. Semiotics in general became a substantial part of his ‘evolutionary cosmology,’ an all-embracing approach to tackle classical and modern philosophical issues. *Secondly*, his anthropological intuition based on semiotics, (concentrated in the formula ‘man is a sign’) became important for our understanding of a human subject’s position in law, as author of a legal discourse as well as an individual subjected to law. *Thirdly*, the tensions between chance and continuity in legal discourse are of focal interest for the creation of legal meaning in law’s practices. Novelty, Peirce suggested in this context, occurs by the grace of chance rather than of continuity and fixed traditions. *Fourthly*, Roberta Kevelson (1931-1998) explored and expanded the field of legal semiotics on the basis of the works of Peirce. In doing so, she established an American tradition of legal semiotics distinct from a European tradition, which related more to linguists, psychologists and philosophers embracing structuralism. *Fifthly*, Tyche, the Ancient Goddess of fate and fortune, is because of Peirce’s references more at home in the US legal semiotic tradition. Her fame and influence reaches beyond law and became supported by recent archaeological discoveries, publications and exhibitions, which not only provide information about her background, but also underline her possible influence on modern legal thinking.

Anthropology in the post-Euclidean State, or from textual to oral anthropology

Antonio Luigi Palmisano

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Abstract

The actual crisis of anthropology is examined in relation to its wide public success. Anthropology has prospered and the anthropologists have proliferated becoming more specific. But the theoretical debate has come to a halt over the last decades. The article suggests that both the methodology and the form of expression of the ethnographic report have developed and then become crystallized around actual protocols. A critique of the dichotomy Subject/Object, namely the key discussion about the notion of Otherness, is here re-examined as the testimony for an immanent “non-protocolar” character of anthropology. This critique together with the end of anthropology as *tekhne*, i.e. as protocolar activity, will allow anthropology to go on enhancing many other social and non social sciences. The article discusses the re-definition of anthropology in the context of *Dasein* analysis and, therefore the changing relation between man and power, that is between the social actor and the post-Euclidean State in the era of the *tekhne*.

The Nepalese traditional concepts of illness and treatment

Prem K. Khatri

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Abstract

The relation between magic, religion and therapy in Nepal is analyzed here in the context of the widest process of medicalization which takes place at global level. The Nepalese indigenous system of diagnosis, treatment and healing has evolved in a process of trial-and-error, empirical observation and experimental procedure. The article suggests that it is an on-going process not dissimilar to modern medicine.

The concept of disease does not include the germ theory but rather the theory that the essence of the body has been captured by some external power. Task of the healer is to try to release the soul or balance the system establishing “normal” functions. The article provides the description of multiple roles related to the diagnostic process and gives ethnographic case-studies of the relation between traditional and modern medicine. Government and private agencies are described as working in the rural areas with the healers in order to use their clout to take the modern health-package to the most remote communities and to reduce the mortality rate.

Landscapes of the mind: it isn't just in your head

Ronald R. Reminick

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Abstract

The debate on the shamanistic therapeutic practices in the post-global societies and the research activities which are presently on the margin of the orthodoxy of physics and medicine, is a hot issue in medical anthropology and epistemology. The author asserts that the great capacity of the human mind, the capacity to access a wide range of experiences from a number of body and specifically brain sources gives us our potential for experiencing spirit and achieving spirituality. But higher level of consciousness do not arise from our normal everyday routine experience. An intense altered state of consciousness, a powerful state of mind is requested. The experiences transporting one into a transformative space come from a special learning and a discipline that trains and entrains the mind to emerge into higher level of knowing. This realm of knowledge is necessary for the healthful survival of society.

Khush Hal Nameh: dal teatro all'emozione etnografica

Veronica Boldrin

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Khush Hal Nameh: from theatre to ethnographic emotion

Abstract

During the summer of 2011 the theatre company of an Italian High School puts on “Khush Hal Nameh”, an ethnographic drama by Ariane Baghaï, which through the tale of the rivalry between two Pashtun brothers projects both actors and spectators in the heart of Afghan society and in its kinship structures and dynamics of power. The article concentrates on the protagonists of this initiative, above all on the young actors, in order to understand what their “structure of experience” was like. It therefore follows the various phases of the staging process starting with the motivations of the students to take part to the experiment and the assessment of additional knowledge and competence; it also analyzes a wide range of relationships such as between actors and characters, between the theatre company and outside world and also between students and school-institution.

The theatre laboratory reveals itself as an ideal space to reflect about social relations and ethnographic drama as in Victor Turner's *performing ethnography*: a valid instrument reach to an emotional and cognitive comprehension of the Other.

Fototeca Andina: Fotografía y cultura en el Cuzco del siglo XX

Nicoletta Velardi

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Photographs from the Andes: Photography and culture in Cuzco in the XX century

Abstract

The photographic representation and self-representation of Andean society in Cuzco at the beginning of the 900' allows an intense dialogue between history and local culture. Photography becomes ethnography when its qualities are used as a manifestation of subjectivity and tangible expression of a culture which intends to communicate itself to the Other and not only to itself. To recognize that at the moment of its creation a specific photographic representation meant something else, allows, with a punctual analysis of the context and its “different meanings”, to understand these specific photographs as general texts which reveal “occult stories”. In the article many examples taken from the Andean Photographic archives are illustrated so as to offer an understanding of the complex and changing social relations through which the photography showed is actuated, experimented, created and permeated of significations and intentions.