

Inhalt

Finke, Peter: Foreword	1
Heiss, Jan Patrick and Albert Piette: Individuals in Anthropology	9
Piette, Albert: Relations, Individuals and Presence	19
Heiss, Jan Patrick: Assessing Ernst Tugendhat's philosophical anthropology as a theoretical template for an empirical anthropology of the individual	39
Jabiot, Isabelle: On individual variations regarding belief	55
Verne, Markus: Music, Transcendence, and the Need for (Existential) Anthropologies of the Individual	75
Plancke, Carine: Shaping Affective Drives: An Anthropological Close-Up of Singing Subjects	91
Waage, Trond: Mutual dependency: Young male migrants from the Central African Republic in Urban Cameroon	111
Papadaniel, Yannis; Nicole Brzak and Marc-Antoine Berthod: Individuals and humanity: Sharing the experience of serious illness	131

Buchbesprechungen

Alber, Erdmute: Soziale Elternschaft im Wandel. Kindheit, Verwandtschaft und Zugehörigkeit in Westafrika (Werner M. Egli).....	149
Behrends, Andrea; Sung-Joon Park and Richard Rottenburg (eds.): Travelling Models in African Conflict Management (Astrid Bochow)	151
Benz, Wolfgang: Sinti und Roma: Die unerwünschte Minderheit. Über das Vorurteil Antiziganismus (Barbara Danckwortt)	153
Nieswand, Boris und Heike Drotbohm (Hg.): Kultur, Gesellschaft, Migration. Die reflexive Wende in der Migrationsforschung (Tsypylma Darieva).....	156

Foreword

Peter Finke

The first issue of the Zeitschrift für Ethnologie in 2015 is devoted to the theme of studying the individual in anthropology. We are convinced that it will be a very controversial issue. This was already noticeable when we distributed the individual papers for reviews. For it is indeed rare to receive one positive and one negative external opinion for each of the submitted contributions. We then did what is usually done in such situations, namely to ask for a third opinion. This time we sent the whole issue to a recognized scholar in a field very close to the theme of the issue, but one from which the editors and contributors more or less explicitly distance themselves, namely the study of self and personhood. The reviewer in question was enthusiastic about the volume and strongly recommended it for publication as is. So we did, as we agree that a controversial, but in itself highly coherent special volume is just what a scientific journal should go for.

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)

Individuals in Anthropology

Jan Patrick Heiss

University of Zürich

Institut für Sozialanthropologie und Empirische Kulturwissenschaft, Ethnologie, Andreasstr. 15, CH-8050 Zürich

Albert Piette

Department of Anthropology, Paris West University Nanterre

In 1570, John Dee, a Euclidean geometry specialist, mathematician, astronomer, geographer and a bit of a mystic, associated anthropology with the description of the number, size, shape, location and color of every element in the human body. During the Renaissance, anthropography was a cross-disciplinary project that was viewed as a kind of “cartography” intended to enable an increasingly complex understanding of human beings. ¹ The term “anthropography” was primarily restricted to the study of people’s physical and anatomical characteristics. But what would an anthropographer do today? He would first observe a human being, an individual. His methodological point of departure would be the individual, the single human being, which anthropology encounters in the field, but loses sight of in the course of the research process.

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)

Relations, Individuals and Presence

A Theoretical Essay

Albert Piette

Department of Anthropology, Paris West University Nanterre

Abstract: In this theoretical article, the author examines the rarely discussed but ubiquitous references to relations in anthropology. Research themes, explicatory concepts, work methods: everything seems to pass through relations. But is this not too much? And what about the existence of each human singularity, each individual? Does this not risk being absorbed by this excess of relationism? The author offers a critical evaluation of relationism and invites us to observe human existence, presented as a theme, concept and method associated with anthropological knowledge.

[Individual, relation, relationism, anthropology, theory, existence, existential, methodology, presence]

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)

Assessing Ernst Tugendhat's philosophical anthropology as a theoretical template for an empirical anthropology of the individual

Jan Patrick Heiss

University of Zürich, Institut für Sozialanthropologie und Empirische Kulturwissenschaft,
Ethnologie, Andreasstr. 15, CH-8050 Zürich

Abstract: As a result of focusing on other themes, anthropology hasn't developed sophisticated theoretical tools to analyse individuals. The philosopher Ernst Tugendhat has proposed a theory of the individual. In this article, the author tries to fathom in how far Tugendhat provides a useful template for an anthropology of the individual. In view of this aim, the author tests Tugendhat's theory with empirical anthropological studies, in which individuals play a major role, and with Albert Piette's writings on the individual. By confronting Tugendhat with these anthropological writers, he shows that Tugendhat's theory covers a significant part of how anthropologists perceive the individual, but he also identifies those points in Tugendhat's theory that might need to be elaborated further. Finally, the author tries to show that explicit reflection on the nature of individuals improves anthropologists' accounts of individuals.

[individual, theory, Tugendhat, philosophical anthropology, implicit notions, empirical research]

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)

On individual variations regarding belief

Isabelle Jabirot

Laboratoire d'Ethnologie et de Sociologie Comparative (LESC – UMR CNRS 7186), Université Paris Ouest la Défense, Maison Archéologie & Ethnologie – René Ginouvès, 21 Allée de l'université, 92023 Nanterre Cedex, isabellejab@gmail.com

Abstract: The author argues, that anthropology often interprets religious beliefs as shared by the believers and assumes that believers straightforwardly think that their beliefs are true. In her article “On individual variations regarding beliefs”, she shows, however, that the relations between believers and their beliefs are malleable. They vary between different believers and even an individual believer's relation to his beliefs might change from situation to situation. She makes her point with reference to two Moroccan city-dwellers who hold a common belief, namely, in the existence of djinns. However, they ascribe different identities to the djinns and confrontation with a different perspective on djinns strengthens their belief in the truth of their own perspective. Moreover, the validity of beliefs that are firmly embedded in their actions as tacit knowledge becomes suspended when the beliefs become a theme of discourse. Furthermore, believers can differ in how much they doubt a belief. Next the author argues that, an actor's emotions in a specific situation can strengthen his belief. Finally, beliefs can become emblematic for one's cherished way of life and this can make the actor hold on to a belief. The author thus concludes that a shared belief does not imply that the relation towards the belief is also shared. Individuals, as she shows, rather have a relation to their beliefs that is specific to them and specific to their present circumstances.

[Morocco, djinns, belief, individual]

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)

Music, Transcendence, and the Need for (Existential) Anthropologies of the Individual 1

Markus Verne

Universität Bayreuth, Fakultät für Kulturwissenschaften, Fachgruppe Ethnologie, Universitätsstr. 30,
D-95440 Bayreuth

Abstract: This article is concerned with the importance of transcendence for culture. Transcendence, i. e., the wish for and practice of going beyond the norm in a given environment, is not only central to art and expressive forms of culture. As I will argue in the following pages, it is a precondition of human life, and therefore central to culture in the broadest sense of the term, which is why transcendence must also come into focus in the study of culture. Taking the efforts of two Malagasy power metal musicians to record their music as an ethnographic point of departure, and drawing on aspects of “existential anthropology”, this paper shows how individual actions may successfully overcome their local cultural environments and push existing boundaries, here represented by a shared understanding of “Malagasy metal” (metal gasy). Thus, the paper concludes, to really understand the nature of culture, whether expressive or otherwise, anthropology’s major concern with collective processes needs to be complemented by studies of individuals and their attempts to overcome the narrow confines of actual local situations.

[existential anthropology, transcendence, study of culture, anthropology of popular music, Madagascar]

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)

Shaping Affective Drives: An Anthropological Close-Up of Singing Subjects

Carine Plancke

Centre for Dance Research, University of Roehampton, SW15 5PJ London, United Kingdom

Abstract: During the last decades, social scientists have increasingly questioned the individual/society dichotomy and, as an alternative, have emphasized relationality. Actor-Network-Theory and affect theory are most representative of this shift. While considering these theories promising, anthropologists have also criticized them due to their dismissal of subjectivity, in the debarring of questions on intentionality and meaning, and their neglect of individual singularity. In this study, the action of singing songs in rural Punu society (Congo-Brazzaville) is explored as a relational, networking movement that emerges out of affect and further carries it. The singer is hereby situated as the one who, in shaping affective drives according to her experiences, situation and singularity, orients this movement and the meaning it generates. This subject-oriented approach is implemented through the in-depth presentation of two different singers and the songs composed and interpreted by them as they move through different contexts. It is shown how this creative activity not only allows the singers to voice their feelings and to manifest their unique way of being. Simultaneously, it revitalizes shared images, thoughts and values and recreates the community who, in responding to the song, acknowledges its sociocultural relevance.

[Affect, emotion, song, creation, subject, Punu, Congo-Brazzaville]

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)

Mutual dependency: Young male migrants from the Central African Republic in Urban Cameroon

Trond Waage

PhD/Associate Professor in Visual Anthropology, Visual Cultural Studies,
Department of Archaeology and Social Anthropology,
UiT Arctic University of Norway, Norway

Abstract: Rural Central and Western Africa is losing its population to cities (Adepoju, 2005). The young men described in this article have left poor economic conditions in the Central African Republic for a better life in Cameroon. They are mostly orphans who left their homes before the age of 15 and, through various paths, found their way to Tongo, a Muslim neighbourhood in the centre of the fastgrowing city Ngaoundéré in northern Cameroon. All those 'who come' rely on whatever opportunities they can carve out in the relation between themselves as individuals and the host community. Available work is mostly within petty-service which was the work for slaves in the 19th and most of the 20th century. Drawing on ethnographic material gathered over a period of ten years, this article asks: What strategies are used by the young men coming to urban Ngaoundéré to gain access to work and to survive? In this specific setting, the quality of the relation between the young men who have come and the Muslim women is of special concern. Accepting slave like working conditions, following certain rules of respectability and a reciprocal logic, with the work providers; some migrants find their surviving strategies. Not accepting or not being able to negotiate such work conditions is work access denied, which is extremely dramatic for young men without any social network in the city. The article merges approaches from visual anthropology and 'the ethnography of the particular' (Abu-Lughod, 1991), and aims at making a fresh contribution to the study of migration and youths in urban Africa.

[Central Africa, urbanisation, migration, youth, slavery, informal economy, visual anthropology]

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)

Individuals and humanity: Sharing the experience of serious illness 1

Yannis Papadaniel, Nicole Brzak and Marc-Antoine Berthod, PhD

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, Lausanne

Abstract: When illness strikes, not only the sick person and her relationship to the world may change: the relatives may go through a similar process. They have to revisit their modes of reaching a balance between their private and their professional lives in order to articulate work, family, and care to be given to the sick person. This article is based upon an anthropological study conducted in Switzerland over a period of more than three years. It involved patients and other family members as well as colleagues, managers and health care professionals; its aim was to analyse the impacts of changes brought about by an individual illness on the relatives' employment situation as well as on family dynamics. We have observed that many of the interviewees still vividly remember the small gestures and words of a nurse or a physician perceived as "very human". These short narratives show how close relatives of very ill patients may develop a sudden attachment to people who have behaved as if they had truly, immediately understood their ordeal. Humanity is thus the keyword of this article, in which we will analyse its ambiguous meaning through the lens of individual's everyday experiences. Our hypothesis is that the notion of humanity serves as a «bridge» to a collective universe, providing a connection for individuals who have become strangers to their own world and are experiencing a specific form of loneliness.

[Humanity, end of life, individuals, disease, illness, biopower, biosociality, loneliness, experience]

[\[Zurück zum Inhalt / Back to Content\]](#)