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La contraddizione come Divinità Trickster, Fuoco e Diabolos in una prospettiva comparativa tra culture

Bernhard Streck

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Contradiction as a Deity: Trickster, Fire and Diabolos in a Cross-Cultural Comparison

Abstract

This article begins by reflecting on the widely held view of human beings as situated between two opposing extremes, good and evil, between which they are called upon to make a choice. The author, however, suggests setting aside for a moment this common view of a reality rigidly divided into two, to observe instead an aspect of the deities in which good and evil are not clearly separated, but often overlap, alternate or merge with one another. Although pagan deities do differ from the one God of monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — due to their ambiguous and elusive nature, a particular figure frequently appears in the various pantheons who clearly embodies this contradiction. It is a figure who challenges, if not outright contradicts, everything that modern thought associates with order and clarity.

Contemporary ethnology and mythology define this type of deity with the English term ‘trickster’, that is, a ‘joker’ or ‘cheat’: a figure who sets traps for others but who, as popular wisdom also reminds us, often ends up falling into them themselves. And it is on this very contradiction as a deity that the author explores the subject in greater depth, from a cross-cultural perspective.

Keywords: contradiction, divinity, trickster, monotheism, paganism

Le vie del (ri)evocare Costruzioni sociali, tradizioni “inventate” e consumo culturale nelle rievocazioni storiche

Mario Pesce

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To conjure (from bottom) up. Social construction and cultural use in historical re-enactments

Abstract

This study explores the cultural dynamics and socio-anthropological significance of historical reenactments in local communities, drawing on ethnographic research conducted in the regions of Sardinia and Lazio, Italy. The central argument posits that reenactment is a powerful expression of a community's defensive *cultural dynamic*, acting as a counter-thrust against the homogenizing, consumerist forces of globalization and mass culture.

The research utilizes Vittorio Lanternari's concept of *cultural dynamic* to frame the phenomenon. It analyzes the creative tension between external, disintegrative forces (leading to identity crisis and deculturation) and the internal, revitalistic push of local communities seeking to reclaim their shared history, memory, and cultural values. Through ethnographic observation and interviews with key informants, the essay demonstrates that the reenactment act is a substantive process of communal mobilization and a means of generating social capital.

A key focus is the resolution of the perceived dichotomy between "tradition" and "innovation", or the concept of the "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm). The findings suggest that, far from being a static or inauthentic creation, the reenactment is a form of cultural continuity. It is a reflexive process where a community deliberately selects and re-signifies symbols and practices from its past – proximate or remote – to address the current "void of values". This adaptive invention serves to re-establish social cohesion, ethical belonging, and a renewed collective identity, effectively transforming a moment of crisis into a period of cultural resurgence and conscious self-determination. The historical reenactment, therefore, functions as a vital, dynamic, and elastic response to modernity, actively fostering continuity between the past's values and the present's social needs.

Keywords: Vittorio Lanternari, tradition, historical re-enactments, social construction, social capital

Olfactory Order and the Non-Discursive Power of Modernity: Reading Patrick Süskind's *Perfume*

Davide Costa

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Abstract

This paper offers a sociological interpretation of olfaction as an under-integrated dimension of modern power. While the sociology of the senses has explored the cultural and symbolic meanings of scent, its role in shaping social ordering remains less explicitly theorized. Reading *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* as a form of speculative sociology, the paper examines how smell operates as a medium of classification, exclusion, and affective orientation. Through the figure of Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, the analysis highlights how sensory absence and olfactory mastery reveal the importance of perceptual participation in processes of social recognition. Rather than proposing olfaction as an alternative framework, the paper shows how it clarifies the sensory and affective conditions through which power is exercised. In doing so, it contributes to a more integrated understanding of how social order is sustained not only through discourse and representation, but also through the embodied organization of perception.

Keywords: Olfaction, social theory, sensory power, sociology of the senses, Jean-Baptiste Grenouille

I lupi mannari nella valle dell'Aventino (Abruzzo) tra le antiche tradizioni e le riscoperte

Amelio Pezzetta

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Werewolves in the Aventine Valley (Abruzzo): ancient traditions and rediscoveries

Abstract

This essay reports on werewolf traditions in the Aventine Valley, a geographical area in the province of Chieti that has been discussed several times in articles in this journal and which includes 11 municipalities: Palena, Lettopalena, Colledimacine, Taranta Peligna, Lama dei Peligni, Torricella Peligna, Montenerodomo, Gessopalena, Fara San Martino, Civitella Messer Raimondo, and Casoli.

Until the late 1950s, the majority of the local population practiced agriculture, and in a few cases also herded cattle. Subsequently, various factors led to the abandonment of the land and livestock farming, and to socioeconomic upheavals that impacted the cultural fabric, modifying traditions with centuries-old roots. Currently, a fairly widespread trend is observed leading to the recovery and valorization of ancient beliefs and traditions.

Keywords: werewolves, metamorphosis, ancient beliefs, tradition, Chieti

Counter-surveillance as a crime or as resistance?

Julian Assange and the case of *wikileaks*

Vincenzo Scalia

p. 95

Abstract

Relational surveillance makes the relation between the surveilled and the surveillants more and more ambiguous. The former, by surfing in the web, are able to gather those informations about the crimes of the powerful that can increase the awareness of public opinion about abuses committed by those who hold either economic or political power. Julian Assange and Wikileaks, who used their technological skills to make public opinion aware about tortures, secret prisons, massacres, were criminalized by the American government. Chelsea Manning was arrested and convicted. Assange faced a 14 years judicial prosecution, which only ended last 26th of June. The case of Julian Assange shows that the internet is a field of political struggles: despite those in power who try to control people, restrict the use of the web, and criminalize those who make an alternative use of it, an open, unrestrained use of the web both controls power and reinforces democracy.

Keywords: surveillance, counter-surveillance, deviance, Assange, resistance

**Ecomusei/musei diffusi nel Chianti, il caso “I Lecci”
Da centro per la cultura del vino a museo del territorio**

Alice Ferretti

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Ecomuseums in Chianti, the case of I Lecci: from center for the culture of wine and vines to museum of the territory

Abstract

Rural civilization is the subject of multiple interpretations, criticisms and studies. What methods and instruments are chosen for its representation? It is still possible for a community to self-determine its natural and cultural heritage? What is the relationship between communities, territory and heritage? What is the function of the contemporary museum and how can it be representative and change maker for the community who host it? These are some of the questions that arose when thinking about local museums in the countryside where the author's family lives and where she spent many years. In particular, the essay analyzes the themes of museum anthropology in the context of the widespread museum of Empoli Valdelsa, in the case of the I Lecci museum, in the municipality of Montespertoli. Subjects of analysis are the preserved material heritage, the representation of peasant civilization and traditions intangible, the rearrangement during the construction of the new local museum and the use itself inside the community and for this latter itself.

Keywords: ecomuseum, museo del territorio, rural areas, peasant culture, visual ethnography