

faire annexer ses thèmes par l'anthropologie de la communication (62) – qui doit finir par s'engouer, avec toutes ces religions en communication avec le surnaturel –, il s'agit la plupart du temps d'idées suggérées comme très éclairantes, même si les preuves sont rarement péremptives et si la fixation sur le chamanisme me paraît trop prégnante. Au total, voilà un brillant essai de confrontation de données et d'idées qui paraissaient jusqu'alors cloisonnées. En embrassant une pensée si riche, si documentée, si suggestive, je finis par comprendre ce qu'il y a comme magie d'amour dans ma culture d'anthropologue.

Claude Rivière

Hobart, Angela, and Bruce Kapferer (eds.): *Aesthetics in Performance. Formations of Symbolic Construction and Experience*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. 239 pp. ISBN 1-57181-567-8. Price: \$ 60.00

"Aesthetics in Performance" is a formulation which seems to be very suitable as a title of the book encompassing a large gamut of contributions, fruit yielded during an international symposium that took place at Cross Cultural Centre Ascona in April 2001. The editors of the book, aware that the word "aesthetics" as well as the word "performance" can be understood in several different ways, give in the introduction a solid explanation to clarify these terms. Performance signifies for them an action or a practice which is understood by participants as performance. It is "a process that continually forms itself before reflection, engaging those embraced in its dynamic field to its constructive and experientially constitutive force" (1). It is a "nonreducible emergent phenomenon, a symbolic formation sui generis" (11). Aesthetic processes can only "achieve their distinctive character and potencies in their performative practice and the way they are made to appear to and through the senses" (11).

For the editors aesthetics is not only the domain of art. "Our use of the concept of aesthetics" – they note – "applies to created symbolic genres, or dynamic structures within which human experience, meaning, and value are constituted or emergent" (1). They recall the Kantian notion of sublime which is not limited to the art but extends to the general understanding of human being. Aesthetics binds the art with life. An aesthetic approach allows to discover the dynamic forces behind the human cultural and historical existence. After all, the living realities of a human being are already symbolic constructions within which all activities are oriented.

In this large frame of aesthetics in performance ten essays are inscribed, passing from a concern with life of art to a discussion of the art of life, according to the intention of the editors. They encompass different forms of human practice, from ritual as a performative enactment par excellence, through other aesthetic genres (poetics, music, and dancing), to the public events like carnival or remembrance day. In this way different performances can be seen from the perspective of their symbolic and aesthetic features.

The detailed review of each contribution would be su-

perfluous. In general, they present a high level of specialization and presuppose good knowledge of the discussed subjects. However, across the contributions one can trace the main thread of aesthetics in performance expressed through the senses and emotions.

The acoustic sensations are present in all discussed performances, especially in William O. Beeman's "Making Grown Men Weep" (23–42). The author argues that the opera singing is an excellent means of affective communication, better than spoken language, as well as chant or oratory. In regard of the affective effects opera singing can be easily compared with child weeping. The next contribution, that of David Shulman, "The Buzz of God and the Click of Delight" (43–63), assumes the passage from singing to reciting. It shows the interrelation between music and recitation of Indian poetry. Music as well as poetry has a similar interest in the physical production of sounds. Both – music and poetry – have the common fascination with the metaphysical side of sonic production. Furthermore, the repetition plays a very important role in preparation of singing and of reciting. These two essays concerning the vocal performances are joined by the third, that of Saskia Kersenboom's "Songs of Love, Images of Memory" (64–88), dealing with classical Indian songs of alapana, improvised melodies to be sung at the beginning of the raga performance without accompaniment. The alapana enables the exploration of feelings, moods, and motifs in Indian music.

Rohan Bastin's "The Hindu Temple and the Aesthetics of the Imaginary" (88–108) concerns the visual sensations related to the sacred space in Sri Lanka, with reference to the phenomenology of Mikel Dufrenne. Analyzing the Hindu temple, the author argues that the visitor of the temple is not only spectator but also devotee. The temple develops its status as sacred space through both design and rite, articulating the items of cosmogony and cosmological relations. The temple aesthetics fortifies the awareness of the presence of a deity.

Steven M. Friedson's "Where Divine Horsemen Ride" (109–128) is the only essay of the book concerning Africa. The author analyses the trance dancing of *gorovodu* of Ewe people from Ghana. He insists on the importance of dancing in Africa: "A danced ontology moves us out of an interiority that projects a vision of certainty, and into a world that calls the body to recognize itself in the contours of musical experience" (109). On the other hand, the trance in Africa is "a danced existence, a way of being-in-the-world in a musical way" (111). The music of the shrines which Friedson presents, forms a reality of shifting of centers, building the cross-rhythmic density of drums, bells, clapping sticks, and rattles. Similar to the crossroads, the cross-rhythms are sites of the liminal, where choices have to be made, where the other possibilities have to be open. The sensation of the interweaving of the world of gods and of humans is introduced through the constantly changing of rhythms.

Bruce Kapferer in "Sorcery and the Beautiful" (129–160) underlines that the efficacy of many rituals is founded in its aesthetics. He analyses the Sinhalese rites of healing, especially the Suniyama Performance, and

shows how it reacts to the cosmological process and causes a progressive change in the victim. He states that the ritual as an aesthetic process works in the embodied basis of human cognition. Through this process the victims are delivered from their particular sufferings and feelings of injustice and recover the existential position of subject. In ritual the pragmatic force of aesthetic processes is actualized.

Angela Hobart in “Transformation and Aesthetics in Balinese Masked Performances – Rangda and Barong” (161–182) presents the Balinese feast Galungan with its famous Barong and Rangda masks, and the less known Calon Arang Dance-Drama, showing the power of aesthetics during their performance and their influence on the participants. The diverse aesthetic modes cause the transformation of meanings and experience and enable the participants to remake their worlds and reinforce their life. The festive mood encompasses also the next contribution, that of Roberto DaMatta, “A Concise Reflection on the Brazilian Carnival” (183–195). The author shows that the ritual inversion and obscenity during the Carnival help to recreate the Brazilian society. It is impossible to imagine Brazil without Carnival which is a constitutive part of Brazilian identity.

Don Handelman’s “Bureaucratic Logic, Bureaucratic Aesthetics” (196–215) presents the opening event of Holocaust, Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day in Israel. The author states that the aesthetics of official celebration of this day are close to the mundane life, following the bureaucratic mentality. The everyday aesthetics of practice are feelings of rightness-in-doing, of the feeling that it is right what is done. The celebration of this political feast constitutes the societal icons, fully open to the inspection of the public gaze, which demonstratively shows social taxonomies.

The last essay, Yoram S. Carmeli’s “Compassion for Animals, Indifference to Humans” (216–230), discusses the problem of the protection of animals, especially those which perform in circus. The author shows the compassion of the audience for animals, against which he sets its indifference for the hard and dangerous enactments of performers. In their moralist posturing against the state of animals, not only the circus fans but also the Animal Rights protesters themselves lose what for them is Nature’s real nature. Paradoxically, rejecting the attitude making animals like humans, they accept the reducing of man to the state of machine.

Circus ring, official hall, open air, temple, court, almost every space is appropriate to be a stage of the performance. However, the nature of performance requires the presence of aesthetic forms. The book analyses the multiplicity and variety of these forms showing that the notion of aesthetics can not be reduced to art and that the aesthetics in performance served not only to express some truths and have affective effects, but also to recreate the individual and the society, producing renewal or change. Nowadays, when the aesthetics seems to be in the centre of anthropological debate, this book dealing with symbolic constructions and experience is welcome.

Jacek Jan Pawlik

Hoffmann, Henryk: *Dzieje polskich badań religioznawczych 1873–1939*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2004. 301 pp. ISBN 83-233-1770-4. Cena: Zł 29.00

Hoffmann’s book “The History of Polish Scientific Studies of Religions 1873–1939” is most welcome in scholarly circles dealing with the annals of religion. Even though religious studies or studies in comparative religion in Poland date back 130 years, the course of their development is not well documented. This lacuna is now well covered by Hoffmann’s in-depth research. The author not only brings together much of the literature (60 pages of references) on the subject from a variety of academic disciplines, but he also sifts through it with intelligence and care. The book consists of an introduction, followed by eight chapters, a conclusion, and an index of names. At the end of the book there are numerous photographs of scientists who contributed to the development of comparative religion, including two non-Polish founding fathers of the discipline, namely Friedrich Max Müller and Cornelis Petrus Tiele. There are also several photographs of title pages from the first issues of leading scientific journals dealing with religious studies, for example, *Revue de L’histoire des Religions* from 1880, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* from 1898, and the renowned *Anthropos* from 1906.

The first chapter of this book, “Religious Studies as a Scientific Field and the Significance of Understanding Its Developmental History,” deals with the beginnings of religious studies and the discipline’s emergence as an independent branch of science. This evolution into an independent scientific field is marked by the dissociation of religious studies from theology. In this opening chapter, the author also discusses the relationship of scientific studies of religions to other disciplines, such as theology, philosophy, history, sociology, ethnology, and geography of religion. The last is the youngest discipline in the study of religion among those listed. At the conclusion of this chapter Hoffmann presents a brief but interesting outline of Marxist studies in comparative religion, which was a dominating paradigm in the study of religion in the context of the post-Second World War period of communist Poland and lasted until the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Although the basis for Marxist studies of religion was laid out by K. Marx and F. Engels, the leading representatives of the initial stage of the evolving Marxist study of religion were Soviet scholars like K. Kautsky, A. Labriola, J. Plechanov, and H. Cunov and most of all the leader of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, who was V. I. Lenin. After the Russian Revolution, Marxist studies of religion found particularly beneficial conditions for development in the USSR. Following the Second World War in the Soviet Union, many academic centers conducted thorough ethnographic and psychological research on religion and atheism. From this part of the book we learn that religious studies based on Marxist ideology, together with communists’ ideas, first spread throughout Soviet Block countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Religious studies based on Marxist ideology were also