Early on, Spittler asks why work has received such scant attention in modern anthropology. One might object that the question is unfair; after all, economic anthropology has been an important subfield ever since Malinowski's "Coral Gardens." Yet the vast majority of studies in economic anthropology have neglected to describe the process of work, and the cultural meanings of work, in any detail, but have instead focused on technology, economic systems, and the Polanyian triad of distribution, consumption, and production. A typical example is the French neo-Marxist Claude Meillassoux and his study of the Guro of the Ivory Coast, assessed by Spittler (267) as follows: "Meillassoux tells us nothing about the knowledge and skills of the Guro or how they performed their work. He is mainly interested in the relations of production and reproduction." In addition, Spittler argues, debates in economic anthropology (such as the formalist–substantivist debate) would have benefited greatly from a historical awareness of similar debates from an earlier stage.

Spittler's book is, thus, not merely a historical account, but its polemical thrust contributes to making it a good read, although one must be forgiven for feeling that he occasionally overstates his case.

The book is divided into two parts ("German Debates on Work," 8 chapters, and "The Turn towards Ethnographic Fieldwork," 5 chapters), and the chronology begins with Marx and ends with Malinowski, although both forerunners and later followers are given their due. Most of the chapters are devoted to a single scholar, but there are also synthetic overviews.

Some of the protagonists of the book are well-known to contemporary anthropologists – Marx, Engels, Weber, Malinowski. Richard Thurnwald is today mainly known through the work of others (notably Mauss), while several of the others – Eduard Hahn, Wilhelm Ostwald, Karl Weule – are entirely new acquaintances for this reviewer. The pioneering ethnologist Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, a conservative contemporary of Marx, advised his students to examine how people worked, but to little avail in the long term. His main study of work, "Die deutsche Arbeit," emphasises the moral and (as we would say) cultural character of particular styles of work. Of greater intellectual stature than Riehl is Karl Bücher, an important precursor and source of inspiration for 20th-century economic anthropologists ranging from Firth to Polanyi. With his emphasis on the interplay between technology and bodily techniques, the distinction between goods for permanent use and goods for rapid consumption, his typology of the organisation of work, and importantly, the now dated but then important contrast between "Naturvölker and Kulturvölker," Bücher defined a number of problems which were subsequently handled by fieldworking anthropologists.

For, notwithstanding their theoretical erudition and empirical imagination, none of the "anthropologists of work" dealt with before Malinowski and Thurnwald were anthropologists in the modern sense. Yet they were often ahead of their time intellectually, and – as lamented by Spittler – rarely got the attention they deserved. Spittler's argument about the marginality of the anthropology of work is largely convincing. Recent years have seen a huge upsurge of interest in the anthropology of the body and performance, but it is hardly ever connected to one of the main ways in which humans use their bodies, namely to work. On the other hand, economic anthropology – both Marxist and non-Marxist – has only rarely dealt with tangible work. The intellectual continuities shown so convincingly by Spittler, linking Weule to Thurnwald and Malinowski and, later, to Firth and Mauss, came to an end before the Second World War. German and Austrian anthropology lost its academic freedom under Nazism, and in the Anglophone world, symbolic culture (USA) and politics (UK) replaced any earlier interest in work and its relationship to other sociocultural phenomena. A residual interest in problems first defined by Chayanov is evident in a handful of contemporary anthropologists concerned with the actual labour process (unlike the French structural Marxists), and there are many others not mentioned by Spittler, yet his argument is on the whole convincing. His book could, therefore, function not only as an introduction to a little known (and somewhat abortive) tradition in anthropological thought, but also as a reminder of the necessity to look into not only the systemic, technological, and organisational aspects of various forms of work and the economy, but also its experiential, practical aspect as an integral part of any cultural lifeworld.   Thomas Hylland Eriksen

Thornton, Robert J.: Unimagined Community. Sex, Networks, and AIDS in Uganda and South Africa. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. 282 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-25553-1. Price: $ 24.95

Robert Thornton has spent some years living in both Uganda and South Africa. He is, therefore, well-suited to writing this volume, a comparison of how HIV/AIDS has been treated in those two countries. Uganda is often described as a striking success in how both government and ordinary people have successfully dealt with the AIDS pandemic that has taken millions of lives in Africa. Uganda's HIV/AIDS rate of infection among adults has dropped to 7% from a previous rate of over 20% in 1992. In contrast, South Africa's comparable rate of infection was also at about 20% in the 1990s, but has continued to rise and is now over 30%. Yet Uganda is a relatively poor and technologically limited nation while South Africa is the richest and most educationally and technologically developed nation in Africa. Many have remarked on this stunning contrast, but Thornton is the first to provide a broad and sustained comparison between these two countries. Obviously, any insights that might help explain why policies have seemed to work in one country and failed in another would be valuable for finding answers to solving this horrendous health calamity which threatens most of Africa. HIV/AIDS is a world crisis, but its scope and damage are especially profound in Africa where many millions have already died and where over twenty-seven

million people are presently infected. Rates elsewhere in the world are worrisome (mainly under 2%) but nothing compared to those in Africa where there are an estimated over seven million people with HIV/AIDS and where the situation continues to get worse.

Thornton has not undertaken any actual fieldwork related to HIV/AIDS, but he has surveyed much of the relevant literature, though far from all of it. He uses this material to explain why investigation of transmission from one sexual partner to another will not provide sufficient answers for why African rates of infection are so high. He argues that in much of Africa sexual relations are not simply between successive pairs of adults who have relations over a prolonged period before moving on to new relations. Instead, in Africa many adults engage in multiple but sustained sexual relations with a network of partners. Furthermore, these networks are not exclusive but overlap with one another. This system provides an especially powerful highway for the transmission of infections. Thornton describes these network-systems as "unimagined communities." These are "unimagined" because they had not been previously considered by researchers, or even by their own members, but which are none-the-less common in the social life of many African societies. Thornton argues that it is only by recognizing these social networks and by working through them that health workers can effectively contain or reduce this epidemic. This idea was originally developed by social health workers in Uganda whose findings have been eloquently publicized in a volume not cited by Thornton, presumably because it did not appear until after Thornton submitted his work to be published (Helen Epstein, The Invisible Cure. Africa, the West, and the Fight against AIDS. New York 2007). Many of Thornton's valuable observations on South Africa are duplicated but discussed in more detail in another work which seems to have appeared too late for him to cite (Didier Fassin, When Bodies Remember. Experiences and Politics of AIDS in South Africa. Berkeley 2007). It is more odd that Thornton does not cite one of the few volumes published on treatment of HIV/AIDS at the grassroots in Uganda (Sandra Wallman, Kampala's Women Getting By. Wellbeing in the Time of AIDS. Athens 1996). My most serious criticism of Thornton, however, is his failure to consider the likely role of male homosexual behaviour in sometimes transmitting HIV/AIDS in Africa. This has been a topic badly neglected by most writers as though such sexual behaviour does not exist or only very rarely exists on the continent, or that many Africans who are mostly heterosexual also have some homosexual relations. In fact, we do not know the frequency or dimensions of such practices, but there are good reasons to assume that these may also be significant in the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Two volumes have made it strikingly clear that the failure to investigate this aspect of transmission presents a serious gap in our understanding of the epidemic as well as a failure to grasp the full dimension of African sexuality in general, a sexuality that may well be far more polymorphous than is often

claimed (see, Marc Epprecht's prize-winning volume: Hungochani. The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa. Montreal 2004, and Epprecht's recent: Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS. Athens 2008). The published literature actually suggests that one of the areas where this is most likely to be a significant factor is South Africa.

Despite these initial minor criticisms, I consider Thornton's book to be a valuable contribution to the African HIV/AIDS literature. It provides no new data, but it presents a clearly written and persuasive general argument about how the sociocultural character of African societies creates an environment fostering rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in ways not generally found in some other parts of the world. Yet Thornton is positive and constructive in showing how these social features should and can be addressed to provide far more effective prevention and treatment of the pandemic.

In his comparative study Thornton catalogues a long list of contrasting features in Uganda and South Africa. Ugandans own more land than South Africans and, therefore, are more tied and committed to local communities. This facilitates knowing local social sexual networks but also leads to a greater likelihood that there will be kin and concerned neighbours to care for the afflicted. Ugandans are far more likely to marry than are South Africans and are more likely to enter unions within their own ethnic group and locality. There is far greater movement of population in South Africa, not only due to better transportation and communication facilities but on account of the pervasive demands for African migrant labour in the mines, white-owned farms, and large cities. Uganda has endured a series of civil wars but those disruptions were not as socially destabilizing as Apartheid and the violent political and economic persecution of Africans by Whites. This has led to widespread suspicion and distrust of all government and ill feeling between ethnic groups, classes, and races. South Africa has some of the greatest economic differences between rich and poor in the world. All these factors have led to difficulties in even discussing the HIV/AIDS epidemic as well as in the poor blaming their suffering and illness on the economic and political elite who are in control. In contrast, the epidemic is readily discussed and debated in Uganda. Many writers have commented persuasively on the failure of South Africans to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in any clear and public way. South Africa, too, has a shocking record of cruelty, indifference, and neglect toward those afflicted with AIDS, a situation sharply different from Uganda. Finally, Thornton repeatedly describes how Africans in both Uganda and South Africa consider sexual relations as far more culturally essential to the construct of the social self than do many Americans and Europeans. This would make widespread restriction or prohibition of sexual relations a very difficult policy to advocate in Africa. The above are simply examples of the wealth of useful and suggestive contrasts Thornton provides in considering the epidemic in Uganda and South Africa.

Thornton's work holds its greatest value for three groups of readers: 1) medical/scientific researchers who fail to understand that science and medicine alone cannot supply the answers needed to combat this epidemic; 2) social health workers and government and private aidagencies who do not understand that whatever they have understood about the epidemic in their own societies and cultures is not necessarily applicable in other societies and cultures in the world; and 3) students interested in learning about the huge challenge that the HIV/AIDS pandemic poses to anyone concerned with modern Africa. This is not a definitive study, but it is a useful introduction to this very complex problem.

T. O. Beidelman

Van Dongen, Els, and **Ruth Kutalek** (eds.): Facing Distress. Distance and Proximity in Times of Illness. Wien: Lit Verlag; Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2007. 155 pp. ISBN 978-3-7000-0622-0; ISBN 978-3-8258-0171-7. Wiener ethnomedizinische Reihe, 4) Price: € 14.90

This collection of papers published by the Department of Ethnomedicine was first presented at the 8th Biennial EASA Conference in Vienna in September 2004. The seven articles are dealing with the conditions of intersubjectivity and human relationships in times of illness and the balance between reaching out for social contact, while taking care not to lose individual integrity. This balance is addressed in various ways in the articles with a shared reference to the moral obligation of both medicine and anthropology to be sciences of consequence and responsibility.

The volume opens with a thorough methodological discussion by Sylvie Fainzang addressing the relationship between empathy and knowledge in medicine and anthropology. Drawing on concrete and illustrative examples from her research in various African and European settings, Fainzang uses a comparative perspective to show the complexity of different positions that the anthropologist is faced with while doing fieldwork. Participant observation as a central method implies that the researcher is able to engage in the social lives of others in a delicate balance between proximity and distance. Proximity in order to understand and build relationships of trust; distance in order to construct knowledge and pay respect to different positions and interests.

The discussion of politics and positions in fieldwork is taken a step further in Els van Dongen's chapter dealing with the ethics and difficulties of taking positions when fieldwork is carried out in societies with extreme violence and intra-group conflicts. Examples from her study of elderly peoples' memories in the context of the New South Africa show that the anthropologist may have to remain at distance from social secrets and to search for proximity beyond the said. Although proximity is contested and limited by the circumstances the small but well-chosen bits of ethnography in the article show that interpersonal engagement and empathically understanding is not impossible after all. Van Dongen argues for an applied and responsible anthropology where

reflections on the consequences of anthropological work are based on moral confidence.

The challenges of an applied and responsible anthropology in the sense of making good moral and practical judgements suggested by Els van Dongen become appallingly clear when reading Ruth Kutalek and Armin Prinz' chapter on witchcraft and violence in present-day Africa. The authors understand witchcraft as a way to gain control over situations that are otherwise unbearable in a context of immense poverty: From the people's perspective something can be done against witchcraft, while disease and misfortune often leave you helpless. What follows of this reasoning, however, is that both victims and sorcerers, accusers and accused, suffer from the social disruptions and violent reactions to witchcraft – forces that seem to hit the most vulnerable members of society. The theme of distance and proximity is two-sided in this thought-provoking article where the dark side of kinship and social relations is revealed as well as the dangers of anthropological exoticism.

The next chapter takes us from Africa to Europe with an interdisciplinary group of researchers, practitioners, and activists working with experiences of sexual violence among refugees seeking asylum in the Netherlands. Annemiek Richters, Marian Tankink, Hishamah Bel Khodja, Janus Oomen, and Marianne Cense have combined their experiences as professional health care workers and insights as researchers in a strong argument for a more integrated and contextual understanding of the mechanisms of disclosure and silence when dealing with memories of sexual violence. Victims of sexual violence are often caught in a dilemma between asylum procedures and legal hearings demanding them to reveal traumatic experiences, and the cultural censorship and fear for social expulsion that demand their silence – a dilemma that seems to be poorly understood and handled by immigration officials. In situations where empathy and an atmosphere of trust would be appropriate, the refugees are met with inquisitorial distance and distrust.

Inquisitorial demands, dilemmas, and paradoxes are also central themes in Charlottes Bredahl Jacobsen's chapter on proximity and distance in Danish forensic psychiatry. While proximity between patients and nursing staff is considered a necessary and valuable basis for building authentic social relationship, it is also a strategic role-play performed by patients as well as staff to secure personal integrity and proper distance. In trying to strike a balance between these opposed demands, patients find themselves caught in situations where they are unable to deliver the kind of proximity required by staff or the kind of relationship that they might benefit from. In psychiatry proximity and knowledge is closely related to surveillance and control, making disclosure and social engagement a risky business.

Jónína Einarsdóttir's chapter takes us to a very different setting within the medical establishment: a neonatal intensive care unit, where popular theories about maternal bonding and mother love are contested. The universal naturalness or culturally determinedness of certain emotions such as mother love has been a subject of in-