



Eric Wolf Lecture

Jane and Peter Schneider

**Mafia, Antimafia, and the
Plural Cultures of Sicily**

in Kooperation mit:
Institut für Ethnologie, Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie der
Universität Wien
Kommission für Sozialanthropologie der Österreichischen Akademie
der Wissenschaften

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Dies ist die zweite Eric Wolf Lecture, zu Ehren von Eric R. Wolf (1923-1999), gebürtiger Wiener, 1938 aus Österreich emigriert, langjähriger Professor für Anthropologie an der City University of New York, Doyen der Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie.

Weiterführende Literatur:

Die Völker ohne Geschichte. Europa und die andere Welt seit 1400

(Frankfurt/M.: Campus-Verlag 1991); gem. mit John W. Cole:

Die unsichtbare Grenze. Ethnizität und Ökologie in einem Alpental

(Wien: Folio-Verlag 1995)

Sicily has long been represented in literature, and in historical and social science texts, as a place that is burdened by cultural values and practices that resist modernity: clientelism and corruption, familism, patriarchy and lack of trust are said to condemn the island to backwardness. Sicily's association with the mafia adds a further negative image to these representations, an image of organized criminality that is conflated with Sicilian culture in general. Much as in the "Southern Question" discourse in Italy, and similar constructions of otherness elsewhere, novelists, scholars, and public intellectuals present these characteristics as essential traits – as if there were a homogenized "Sicilian culture" that reproduces itself all too consistently through time.

Eric R. Wolf was a brilliant critic of this way of thinking about culture, insisting, rather, that complex historical processes produce differentiated socio-cultural forms over time in any given location. Inspired by his example, we trace the differentiated histories of the mafia and antimafia forms in Sicily, analyzing the values and practices that are contrastive and specific to each. Our purpose is to represent Sicily as culturally plural and to generate a framework for recognizing and combating the all too common tendency to criminalize entire populations believed to share a common culture.

Jane Schneider is Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the City University of New York.

Peter Schneider is Professor of Sociology at Fordham University.

Recent Book: *Reversible Destiny: Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo*, Berkeley 2003.

18.30 | Begrüßung

Thomas Fillitz (Institut f. Ethnologie, Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Universität Wien)
Hans Belting (IFK)

Einführung

Andre Gingrich (Kommission f. Sozialanthropologie der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften)

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