



ÖAW
Austrian Academy
of Sciences



*A cooperation between the
Institute for Social
Anthropology (ISA) of the
Austrian Academy of
Sciences, the Department
of Social and Cultural
Anthropology of the
University of Vienna and
the IFK*

Margaret Lock is Marjorie Bronfman Professor Emerita in the Department of Social Studies of Medicine and the Department of Anthropology at McGill University. Her research focuses on an anthropology of the body, comparative epistemologies of medical knowledge, and the global impact of emerging biomedical technologies. She is the author and/or co-editor of 16 books and has published over 200 scholarly articles. Her monograph *Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America* won six prizes. *Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death* and the co-authored *An Anthropology of Biomedicine* are also award-winning volumes. Her most recent book is titled *The Alzheimer Conundrum: Entanglements of Dementia and Aging*. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and an Officier de L'Ordre national du Québec, Lock was a recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts Molson and Killam Prizes, in addition to a Trudeau Foundation Fellowship. She was awarded the Gold Medal for Research by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Career Achievement Award of the Society of Medical Anthropology of the American Anthropological Association. Recently she received The McGill Medal for Exceptional Academic Achievement. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada.



The Eric Wolf Lectures

The international ERIC WOLF LECTURES have so far been held seven times since 2002. The researchers who are invited to speak have all made significant contributions to their respective fields. It is hoped that the Eric Wolf Lectures will serve Eric Wolf's legacy and advance the liberal and broad-minded development of a transnational cultural and social anthropology.

Previous Lecturers (chronologically): Marshall Sahlins, Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider, Judith Okely, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Aihwa Ong, Jean und John L. Comaroff, Vyjayanthi Rao.*

* visit <http://tiny.cc/ericwolfllectures> for a detailed list

THE 8th ERIC WOLF LECTURE



Reassessing Embodiment in the Era of the Epigenome

Margaret Lock (McGill University)

Monday, 28th of October 2013, 6 p.m.

Festsaal der ÖAW

A-1010 Vienna, Dr. Ignaz Seipl-Platz 2

Main Books

*Wolf, Eric R. (1999):
Envisioning Power:
Ideologies of Dominance
and Crisis, Berkeley.*

*Wolf, Eric R. (1982): Europe
and the People Without
History, Berkeley.*

*Wolf, Eric R. (1969):
Peasant Wars of the
Twentieth Century,
New York.*

*Wolf, Eric R. (1966):
Peasants, New York.*

*Wolf, Eric R. (1959): Sons of
the Shaking Earth, Chicago.*

*Cole, John W./Eric R. Wolf
(1974): The Hidden
Frontier: Ecology and
Ethnicity in an Alpine
Valley, New York.*

Eric Robert Wolf was born in Vienna on 1 February 1923. Because of his Jewish family background he was forced to emigrate under the Nazi regime. He first went to England and then to the USA, where Eric Wolf was raised for the most part in New York. A soldier in the US army, he fought against Mussolini in Italy and Nazi Germany. After World War II he studied anthropology at Columbia University, and then taught at the University of Michigan, Lehman College and finally at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York. Eric Wolf died on March 6, 1999 in New York.

Eric Wolf did field research in Latin America and in Europe. His most important monograph was "Europe and the People Without History", in which he showed that non-Europeans were not isolated, but involved in global processes of world history from at least the year 1400.

Eric Wolf was a McArthur Prize laureate, a member of the American Academy of Fine Arts and Sciences and held an honorary doctorate from the University of Vienna. He is considered one of the most important anthropologists of the 20th century, standing for cultural and social anthropology that is cosmopolitan and liberal-minded. His importance for anthropology lies in his focus on themes such as power, politics and colonialism, which he analysed from a comparative viewpoint. The goal of anthropology was, in his opinion, to explain the socio-cultural diversity of the world. This meant that societies were to be examined within their respective historical context and as part of a continuing process of exchange, not as isolated and closed entities. In many respects, Eric Wolf was a pioneer in the anthropology of a globalized era.

Reassessing Embodiment in the Era of the Epigenome

The theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics postulated by Jean-Baptist Lamarck early in the 19th century is undergoing a surprising revival, albeit in modified form. The burgeoning field of epigenetics, grounded in molecular biology, rests on the assumption that variables other than genes, both external and internal to the body, contribute at times to the phenotype of ensuing generations. The gene has been de-centered as the organizing principle of human life. However, even though epigeneticists acknowledge that historical, social, political, and environmental variables contribute to cellular epigenetics, their primary approach is one of a reinvigorated somatic reductionism, focused on mechanisms at the cellular level that activate genes. In this lecture, I argue that anthropologists must counter such reductionism by embracing a theory of embodiment that recognizes a nature/nurture entanglement that contributes throughout the lives of individuals to development, behavior, health, and disease, via the medium of epigenetic markers. "Deep" ethnographically grounded research that situates material bodies in specific historical, socio/political, and environmental realities of lived experiences is called for. Such research permits theorizing the ways in which violence, discrimination, racism, and unremitting poverty are literally embodied, bringing about the obdurate unequal distribution of disease and illness so evident in epidemiological research. Furthermore, it challenges a common anthropological assumption of a universal, skin-bounded material body. Illustrative examples will be given to support the above arguments.

Introduction and Welcoming Address

Andre Gingrich
*Institute for Social
Anthropology (ISA) at the
Austrian Academy of
Science*

Ayşe Çağlar
*Department of Social and
Cultural Anthropology at
the University of Vienna*

Helmut Lethen
*International Research
Center of Cultural Studies,
Vienna*

*open discussion with
Margaret Lock on
Tuesday, 29th of October
2013, 4.00-6.00pm, at the
IFK, Reichsratsstraße 17,
1010 Vienna*

free admission