

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

Michael Harbsmeier: Cowhides, the Curse of Ham and Writings on the Wings of Butterflies. Europeans in Comparative Mythology

From the 16th to the 20th century, innumerable myths and stories have been told about Europeans and the white man in Asia, Africa and the New World. This essay tries to compare some of these myths and legends across their Asiatic, American, biblical or classical European origins. Starting from the the story of Dido, who after having requested as much land as an oxhide could cover, cut the hide into hairthin strips, laid them out on the ground and claiming the encircled area as his own, I'll move on with the African legends and myths studied by Fritz Kamer to the American myths about the Europeans analyzed by Claude Lévi-Strauss to conclude with a short more general discussion of allegedly illiterate cultures' interpretation and understanding of the magic of writing.

Keywords: myths, colonial situations, comparative mythology

Peter Hornbæk Frostholt & Thomas Rauff Krøyer: "Then it just hung down!" Mythical Accounts from a Workshop

This article revolves around an ethnographic fieldwork at a train maintenance workshop carried out over 3 months. Over 400 employees work here, including diesel mechanics, blacksmiths, and electricians – all but a few of them are men. What most of them have in common is that they have been at the workshop for a long time – several for 25-30 years and more. The workshop carries a historicity and heritage that is important for the culture and social understandings among the men as they construct and cultivate it together. Through selected empirical findings from the project's data material, this article shows how a large group of men at the workshop produce myth-like accounts of former and current employees through particular narratives and through the use of nicknames, teasing, certain character traits and achievements, and how they through mythological representations confirm the legitimacy of the working male community on the site.

Keywords: myths, masculinity, nicknames, workshop, humor, narrative

Inger Sjørsløv: The Myth Materialized. King Salomon's Temple and the Brazilian evangelicals

Based on ethnographic descriptions of a temple, called King Solomon's Temple, which an Evangelical Church has erected in the Metropolis São Paulo in Brazil, the article analyzes how the Bible's representations of the story of King Solomon and the myths associated with it are brought into play in a contemporary context. The article's thesis is that myths are dynamic, and that they are kept alive by being supported by spectacular material surroundings and when they are performed in rituals. Among the rituals of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, Igreja Universal Reino de Deus, some of which are often repeated, the spirits that are worshipped in the Afro-Brazilian religions are exorcised with the help of the Holy Spirit. The myth of King Solomon has been addressed by the British anthropologist Edmund Leach in an article in which he builds on Lévi-Strauss's structuralist ideas. He concentrates in particular on what is called the third element, the mediator in myth structures. Here there are paradoxes to be found. The story of the rituals of King Solomon's temple is also full of paradoxes. Certain elements of the myths about the African gods are passed on while the gods are being expelled and replaced by the mythical history of the Old Testament. Therefore, a point in the article is that there is a cultural whitening, "branqueamento", which parallelling the racist ideas of the past, seeks to "thin out" the African cultural heritage in favor of the cultivation of myths such as the one about King Solomon, accompanied by strong connections to Jewish symbols and the country of Israel. The example illustrates how myths can shape and seduce. Inside the materialized form of the large imposing temple, a physical incarnation contributes in the form of a copy of the Ark of the Covenant to legitimize the myth and continue its power.

Keywords: myth, ritual, materiality, Evangelical church, Afro-Brazilian religion, paradox, whitening