

Anthropology and Ontological Symmetry

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Message from the Guest Editor

Dear Colleagues,

The articles gathered in this Special Issue of the *Journal of Symmetry* intend to answer an open-ended set of questions: What happened to the project of symmetrical anthropology after the recent efforts at an ontological turn? What difference does it make to consider a multiplicity of cultures over the background of a unified nature, or a multiplicity of natures in addition to a multiplicity of cultures? How does it open up another type of scientific anthropology, no longer based on comparison but on ontological symmetry? With the proposal of a symmetrical anthropology, do the very rejection of the old dualisms of moderns and others or nature and culture run the opposite risk of reifying them anew and throwing us back into the entrenched belief in the old ontological dualities as if they really were separate wholes? By stepping aside notions of culture and meaning, and by simply replacing culture with ontology, do we risk falling back into old traps, for example, seeing other ontologies as given substances, like other cultures may once have been, instead of relational processes generated in historical events (Carrithers et al., 2010)?



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

Symmetry is ultimately the most important concept in natural sciences. It is not surprising then that very basic and fundamental research achievements are related to symmetry. For instance, the Nobel Prize in Physics 1979 (Glashow, Salam, Weinberg) was received for a unified symmetry description of electromagnetic and weak interactions, while the Nobel Prize in Physics 2008 (Nambu, Kobayashi, Maskawa) was received for the discovery of the mechanism of spontaneous breaking of symmetry, including CP symmetry. Our journal is named *Symmetry* and it manifests its fundamental role in nature.

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