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T.OTEM

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In this Issue:

Socio-Cultural Anthropology
Different Worlds: Looking at Jehovah’s Witnesses
Carnival: Fighting Oppression with Celebration
Syncretism in Two African Cultures
Indian Christians: Definition of Identity
Advertising Strategies of the O.M.M.B.

Biological Anthropology/Archaeology
Social and Biological Consequences of Nutritional Adaptation
The Neandertal Pelvis with Attention to its Obstetrical Significance
Sexual Selection in Humans
Human-like traits in Early Hominids
TB or not TB: The New World Question
HIV: Its Development Within the Human Population

Linguistics
Topic Shift in Casual Conversation
Spatial Metaphors as Linguistic Primitives

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# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ................................................................. 1

The Girl Who Cried Wolf / fiction
*Tim Bisha* ........................................................................... 2

Human-like Traits in Early Hominids: Misplaced Analogies in the Interpretation the African Archaeological Record
*John Albanese* ..................................................................... 4

Different Worlds: Looking at Jehovah’s Witnesses
*Tim Bisha* ............................................................................. 9

HIV: Its Development Within the Human Population
*Jeffrey S. Charno* ............................................................... 16

Sexual Selection in Humans: An Evolutionary and Anthropological Perspective
*Becky Godkin* ....................................................................... 21

Social and Biological Consequences of Nutritional Adaptation: Do the Costs Outweigh the Gains?
*Alison Gray* ........................................................................... 27

Topic Shift in Casual Conversation
*Angela James* ........................................................................ 33

Advertising Strategies of the Ontario Milk Marketing Board: Milking the Cow for All It’s Worth
*Adrienne Lamb* ..................................................................... 37

Indian Christians: Definition of Identity
*Bruce Lawrence* .................................................................... 43

The Neandertal Pelvis with Attention to It’s Obstetrical Significance
*Paul O’Neal* .......................................................................... 47

TB or not TB: The New World Question
*Rob Rost* ................................................................................ 54

Syncretism in Two African Cultures
*Diane Simpson* ................................................................. 61

Carnival: Fighting Oppression with Celebration
*Karolee Stevens* ..................................................................... 65

Abura-Dunkwas, Ghana: Impressions of a Secondary School
*Karolee Stevens* ..................................................................... 69

Spatial Metaphors as Linguistic Primitives: A Comparison of UP-DOWN Metaphors in Three Languages
*Mark Tovey* ........................................................................... 71

Postscript
*Toby R. G. Cockcroft* .......................................................... 75
Totem, this year, is being jointly edited by Toby Cockcroft and myself. Toby’s primary experience is in socio-cultural Anthropology and Archaeology, whereas my experience is primarily with Linguistics. Our areas of specialization, therefore, complement nicely for the purposes of our mandate. The variety of articles we have for you this year well represent Totem’s areas of concentration.

Jeffrey Chamo has written a dispassionate look at the HIV family of viruses -- their history, their evolution, and their future impact on the human population. Though fairly technical, it is relatively accessible to the layperson, and is useful for the clinical eye it brings to an often very emotional subject.

Rob Rost has produced a convincing argument for the existence of Tuberculosis in the New World prior to Contact with the Old World--with a twist. Rost argues that a different strain of Tuberculosis was responsible for pre-Contact TB than that which ravaged the indigenous population shortly following Contact.

John Albanese looks at the evidence often offered in support of human-like traits in hominids and found it wanting. It is a caution to archaeologists who try to reconstruct too much on the basis of too little.

Tim Bisha has conducted an ethnography of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. He found himself surprised at how quickly it was necessary to abandon simplistic categories and childhood preconceptions about them. Tim has also supplied the short story which opens this year’s Totem.

Mark Tovey examines the mapping of such ideas as happy and sad, control and subjugation, and past and future upon the spatial metaphors of UP and DOWN. So far such mapping has only been considered for English but Mark extends this to two other languages.

Bruce Lawrence has spent time studying the Oneida on the Thames, and submits this consideration of the effects of syncretism between Traditional Oneida and Protestant Christian cultures, and how this has affected the identity of the modern Oneida Indian.

Paul O’Neal offers a careful survey of current thinking about Neandertal obstetrics, with particular attention to gestation period, using his own measurements and observations as a vehicle for shedding light on the question of whether Neandertal was simply replaced by Homo Sapiens or whether the distinction disappeared as a result of interbreeding.

Karolee Stevens has given us an analysis of the social forces that have produced Carnival in the West Indies. Developed as a reaction to slavery, this synthesis of colonial festivals and traditional rituals is an expression of what it is to be free and to be able to freely express oneself. In a separate article, Karolee gives us a very personal assessment of the state of the school system in Ghana, through the lens of her visit to a rural high school.

Alison Gray challenges the politically-charged idea that stunting among some African populations is merely a natural process of adaptation to a smaller food-supply. She eloquently shows how lack of food adversely affects not only physical ability, but by impeding education and intellectual development, stunts the potential of the whole society.

Becky Godkin has undertaken an analysis of the evolutionary factors involved when human beings choose a mate. She debunks some old canards, and offers us a useful survey of current thinking about this perennially interesting topic.

In analysing a sample of contemporary casual speech, Angela James gives us a concrete example to follow in examining some of the ways in which people switch topics throughout conversation.

Adrienne Lamb considers some of the factors which make the Ontario Milk Marketing Board advertising campaign, she considers ways in which the advertisers use both traditional and avant-garde ideas in creating their advertising strategy.

Diane Simpson compares different forms of syncretism resulting from the Christianization and Islamicization of two African cultures, the Tswana and the Nubians respectively. She considers how the rapid assimilation through conquest and concerted missionary work of one culture, and the slower, informal conversion of the other culture have variously affected each.

I have enjoyed and benefited from working with the papers you see before you, and am pleased to be involved in bringing them to a wider audience. I hope you find them as informative and as engaging as I have.

Mark Tovey
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June 20, 1995