

Fellows



Gerd Baumann
IFK_Visiting Fellow

Duration of fellowship
01. October 2002 bis 07. December 2002

Gerd Baumann

PROJECT TITLE

Grammars of Selfing and Othering in the Metropolis

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

If every definition of an urban 'Self' involves exclusions or marginalizations of an urban or non-urban 'Other', the question arises how far these processes of selfing and othering can be approached within a comparative framework. Scanning the historical, sociological and anthropological literature on inclusions and exclusions, there appear to be three distinct modalities - one may perhaps call them grammars- by which definitions of Self and Other are structured:

- "orientalism" (Edward Said) constructs the self and its other as negative mirror images of one another;
- the grammar of segmentation (Edward Evans-Pritchard), a sliding scale of inclusions and exclusions which is organized according to distinguishable taxonomic levels;
- "encompassement" (Louis Dumont), a hierarchical subsumption of the other under the self. In tracing these grammars in the utterances and processes of metropolitan selfings and otherings, as they are applied most visibly to non-urbans, outsiders or tourists, newcomers and postmigration minorities, it is possible to see the complex negotiations by which different grammars are pitched against each other and urban inclusions and exclusions are rendered contestable.

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Gerd Baumann ist Professor für Kulturanthropologie am Research Centre Religion and Society der Universität Amsterdam.

Publications

U. a. Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London (Cambridge University Press 1996); The Multicultural Riddle: Re-Thinking National, Ethnic and Religious Identities (Routledge 1999)