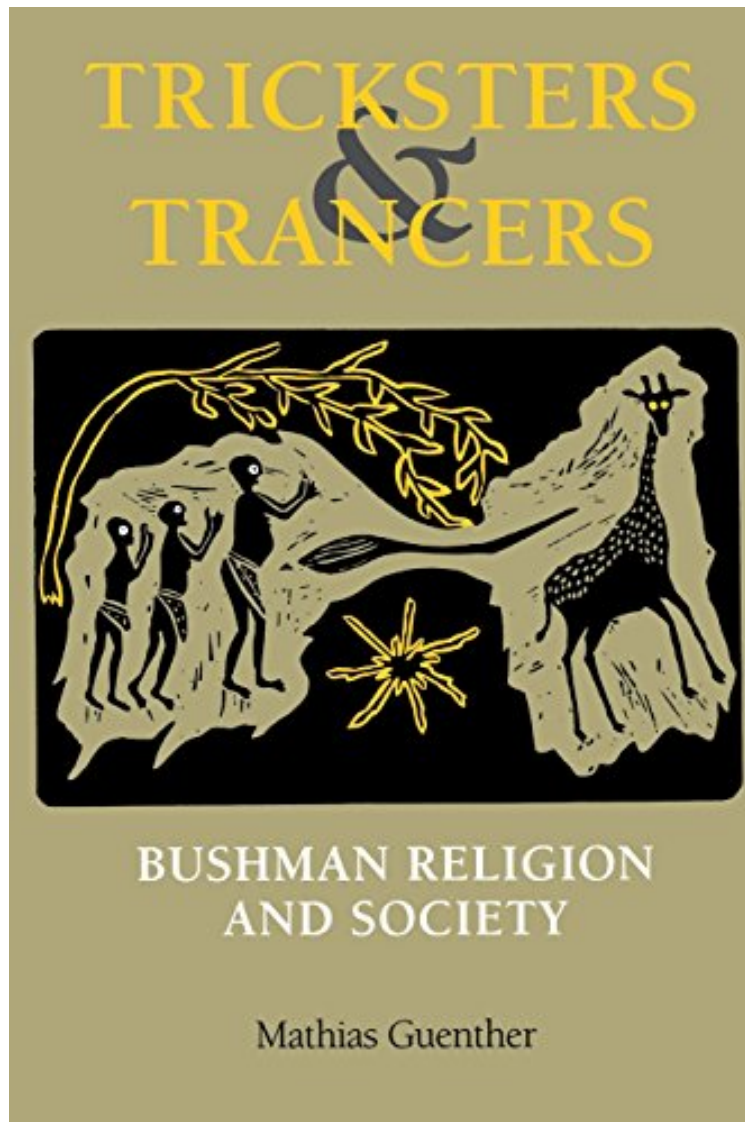


[Mobile book] Tricksters and Trancers: Bushman Religion and Society

Tricksters and Trancers: Bushman Religion and Society

Mathias Guenther

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Mathias Guenther : Tricksters and Trancers: Bushman Religion and Society before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tricksters and Trancers: Bushman Religion and Society:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very nice By PeteB Bushmen are largely being wiped out, in the same way native americans were, and for the same reasons. Their culture is fascinating, for the same reasons native

american culture is. This book is at times a bit too scholarly, however, it is nonetheless fascinating. You simply don't know a culture until you know its stories. What is scripture, really? Mostly stories. I read this book entranced. I loved it.

... a first-rate piece of scholarship... an invaluable summary and commentary on the multilingual literature on [Bushman] people." ChoiceThe trickster and trance dancer are the guides through Bushman (or San) religion, a world of ambiguity and contradiction, and of enchantment. The two figures, who in Bushman belief are symbolically equivalent and mystically linked, embody these antistructural traits.

Despite the voluminous material on Botswana's Bushman (the contentious ethnic label knowingly adopted by the author), this is an important contribution for a number of reasons. First, Guenther (Wilfrid Univ., Canada) provides an invaluable summary and commentary on the multilingual literature on these people. Second, and more important, the text takes up the topic of Bushman religion and cosmology, which, like its social organization, is fluid and varied. In discussing this relatively neglected concern, the author pays particular attention to the significance of the trickster, an ambiguous and disorderly creature from the beginning of time in indigenous thought, and the trance state, an important feature of Bushman ritual system. The value of Guenther's long-term fieldwork among a segment of these people is clearly demonstrated in his examination of these topics and in their relationship to gender issues. He concludes with a suggestion for anthropologists to pay greater heed to the relevance of ambiguity in Bushman society and cosmology but does not mention the theoretical work of Simmel in this context. Otherwise, this is a first-rate piece of scholarship. Upper-division undergraduates and above. W. Arens, SUNY at Stony Brook, 2000jul CHOICE. (W. Arens, SUNY at Stony Brook, 2000jul CHOICE.)About the AuthorMathias Guenther, Professor of Sociology and anthropology at Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario, is the author of *The Farm Bushmen of the Ghanzi District, Botswana*; *The Nharo Bushmen of Botswana: Tradition and Change*; and *Bushman Folktales :Oral Traditions of the Nharo of Botswana and the Xam of the Cape*.