

ANTHROPOLOGY AND CIRCUMCISION

Eric K. Silverman

*Department of Sociology/Anthropology, DePauw University, Greencastle,
Indiana 46135; email: erics@depauw.edu*

Key Words gender, body, cultural relativism

■ **Abstract** This chapter reviews the anthropology of male and female circumcision over the past century. After surveying classic sociocultural and psychodynamic interpretations of male circumcision, I shift to the biblical and Jewish rite, focusing on gender symbolism and counter-hegemonic practice within European-Christian society. The chapter then reviews the relationship between male circumcision in sub-Saharan Africa and reduced rates of HIV. Next, I address female circumcision, focusing again on symbolism but especially on highly impassioned debates over cultural relativism and human rights, medical complications, criticism and imperialism, and female agency versus brute patriarchy. What are the moral, political, and scientific obligations of anthropology to a cultural practice that is increasingly vilified in Western popular culture and jurisprudence? Should anthropology advocate eradication, contextualize Western opposition, or critique one's own bodily practices? Finally, I critically analyze the growing movement to ban the medical and ritual circumcision of infant boys in the West.

INTRODUCTION

“Foreskins are facts,” writes Boon (1999), “cultural facts.” Indeed, the male prepuce is a serious fact, whether wretched or praised, severed or stolen, cultural or biological, depending on your perspective. The sheer facticity of women's genital cuttings (pricks, excisions, and infibulations) is even more apparent, and controversial. For some, circumcision is all about culture, a symbolic message concerning personhood, gender, cosmology, status, and community inscribed in the body. For others, circumcision is an incontrovertible reality of biology and human rights that requires anthropology to transcend and often condemn culture.

Male and female circumcision is a topic of enduring anthropological interest, beginning with Frazer (1904). Today, impassioned debate about the plight of women in the developing world suggests that the moral worth of anthropology often seems to hang on foreskins and genital cuttings. Debates between pluralism and imperialism, analysis and activism, relativism and rights, are both urgent and irreducible.

Male and female circumcisions occur variously throughout the traditional cultures of sub-Saharan and North Africa, the Muslim Middle East, the Jewish diaspora, Aboriginal Australia, the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere.

These practices are less common in the indigenous cultures of North America and Europe. The female rite, in particular, as a result of transnational movements and refugees, is now clashing with Western law from California to Paris. At the same time, Western activists and governments impose notions of somatic integrity onto the bodies and states of others, thus reproducing colonialism or, depending again on your perspective, enabling human rights.

The study of circumcision, one of the most disputed issues in contemporary anthropology, challenges cultural relativism, universalism, modernization, and advocacy. International debates over male and female circumcision focus on health care, AIDS, development, the United Nations, ethics, and law, and frequently draw on the “data” of anthropology. At the same time, anthropologists often are criticized for allowing their moral commitment to pluralism to eclipse what should be a more fundamental duty to defend basic human rights. The very existence of these debates, as well as the rhetorical strategies employed in them, demand anthropological analysis.

This review surveys the anthropology of male and female circumcision from multiple angles. Given the global scope of these rites, no essay could possibly include all instances, themes, and sources, anthropological or otherwise. With the proliferation of on-line databases and myriad Internet sites, readers can readily search for additional materials. My task is necessarily selective: I seek to highlight significant issues and perspectives that have been recognized but largely neglected by anthropology.

I begin by discussing male circumcision, reviewing classic studies that analyze the symbolic, political, historical, and psychodynamic aspects of the rite. I then discuss dilemmas pertaining to Jewish circumcision, after which I shift to recent research investigating links between male circumcision and efforts to curtail the spread of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. Next, I discuss female circumcision, focusing on gender, medical harm, agency, and relativism. I also examine local arguments in favor of the rite, and especially the moral stances of anthropologists who engage this pressing topic. Finally, I review recent debates over routine medical and ritual male circumcision in the West—angry debates with sweeping claims that anthropologists have yet to investigate. In the end, I suggest that male and female circumcision is a topic that might help anthropology redefine its sense of moral purpose.

MALE CIRCUMCISION

The derisive description of male circumcision (abbreviated MC) as a cross-cultural oddity is a venerable Western tradition, extending back to Hellenistic and Roman authors such as Strabo, Herodotus, Martial, and Tacitus.¹ In addition to MC, anthropologists have gazed also on a wide range of male genital practices that captivate students, popular audiences, and (let’s face it) ourselves: Aboriginal

¹Puzzlingly, virtually all cultures that practice some form of circumcision view the uncircumcised with disgust, and vice versa—more so than, say, the unbearded.

Australian subincision (Ashley-Montagu 1937, Singer & DeSole 1967), supercision (Firth 1936, Rubel et al. 1971), Melanesian urethral incision and penile purgations (Hogbin 1970, Lewis 1980), phallicrypts or penis sheaths (Ucko 1969), penis inserts (Brown et al. 1988), and so forth. The anthropology of MC and all penile practices is fraught with the ethnocentric perils of revulsion, admiration, and exoticism. Even the very idea that there is a cross-cultural category worthy of comparison called male circumcision is now challenged (Boon 1999).

A spate of anthropological accounts of MC rites was published from the 1880s through the early decades of the twentieth century (Aufinger 1941, Brewster 1919, Brown 1921, Jensen 1933, Speiser 1944, Spencer & Gillen 1899). Scores of reports appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Man*, *Africa*, *Anthropos*, *Anthropologie*, *Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, etc. (On-line bibliographic databases make these references readily identifiable.) Early anthropologists seemed reluctant to engage the public in a debate about these rites, preferring instead the dispassionate discourses of science. But this is no longer the case, as we shall see.

Conventional Accounts

Van Gennep (1909) classed circumcision with other transitional cuttings, marks, and separations of childhood. Foreskins resemble hair and teeth. The rite often is sacrificial (Loeb 1923). Most classic accounts of MC, focusing on Africa, probed common symbolic themes: enhancement of masculine virility and fecundity, arboreal fertility, complementary opposition between men and women, preparation for marriage and adult sexuality, and the hardening of boys for warfare (Crosse-Upcott 1959; Gluckman 1949; La Fontaine 1985; Spencer 1965; Tucker 1949; Turner 1962, 1967; White 1953).² The traditional male rite, stressed Paige & Paige (1981), always precedes marriage. It typically entails physical brutality, seclusion, testing, esoteric knowledge, death and rebirth imagery, name changes, dance, masked costumes, and dietary and sexual taboos (Beidelman 1964, 1965; Hambly 1935; Heald 1986; Holdredge & Young 1927). The rite fuses Islam with local traditions (Miner 1942), mediates intergroup relations (Turnbull 1957), and integrates the sociocultural system (Ngxamngxa 1971). For the most part, the idea of male or female circumcision evoked little moral disquiet. It was one of those phenomena, like cross-cousin marriage, that required cool analytic attention.

Of course, generalizations are difficult. Usually, boys are expected to endure circumcision stoically—but not so the Ngindo (Crosse-Upcott 1959, p. 176) and Tiv (Bohannon 1954, p. 4). Although men generally do the cutting, high-ranking boys in a Melanesian society are circumcised by women (Todd 1934).

Gender and ideology often are central to MC. The Merina rite on Madagascar, richly analyzed by Bloch (1986), transfers fertility between generations, shifts boys

²The fate of severed foreskins—gulped, saved, buried—also merits review (see Brauer 1942, pp. 17–38; Gluckman 1949, p. 155; Patai 1983b, p. 358, 1983c, p. 283).

from mothers to men, and associates males with timeless, entombed ancestors and descent groups rather than with houses and women. The rite sustains an ideology that “women, sex, birth, and nature” can be “violently conquered” by men. At the same time, the Merina ceremony admits its limitations by assenting to the vital role of women in human life.

Bloch (1986, 1992) also focused on politics, tracing the historical relationship between large-scale circumcision ceremonies and state conquest. Paige & Paige’s (1981) encyclopedic, cross-cultural survey of MC reduced the rite to a political oath in potentially fissile, patrilineal societies. A father demonstrates loyalty by entrusting his son’s reproductive potential to elder kinsmen and the “fraternal-interest group.” Although the rite often renews group unity (Mercier 1951), it may also enable political realignments (Levine 1959).

Turner’s famous analysis of Ndembu circumcision rites elucidated the nuances of symbolic classification (1962, 1967; see also Beidelman 1964, McWilliam 1994). de Heusch (1985, ch. 6) presented a structuralist relationship between the bloods of circumcision, sacrifice, menstruation, and castration in Dogon myth. And Lévi-Strauss (1988; cf. Mills 1961) provocatively juxtaposed the circumcised removal of the natural biblical prepuce with the Bororo encasement of the penis in a cultural sheath.

Among the noncircumcising Kayapo of central Brazil, penis sheaths certify men’s entitlement to enter into sexual relations and marriage (Turner 1995). But, although the sheath signifies an erection, public displays of the glans are considered shameful. The sheath obscures what it celebrates (Gell 1971). The same dynamic occurs in “circum-incision” on Malekula (Layard 1942, ch. 18). The prepuce is removed to expose the glans, which is covered by a pandanus wrapper. A cultural foreskin, associated with men (but plaited by women), replaces the natural, feminine prepuce (Layard 1942).

In sum, a series of themes and approaches emerges from classic accounts of MC in the anthropological literature: symbolism, politics, aggressive manhood, history, structuralist inversions, and the nature-culture dichotomy.

The Psychodynamic Phallus

Layard’s (1942) underappreciated study recognized the homoerotic dimensions of circumcision, something most other anthropologists oddly seem to miss. Indeed, classic texts on MC generally understood the rite to engender singular—not contrary—meanings pinned typically to dominant ideologies.

Often, however, MC is a dialogical rite that both sustains and subverts its own intended symbolism. In terminology and gesture, the rite frequently flirts with castration (Bohannon 1954, p. 3; Cansever 1965).³ Egyptian adults, reported Ammar (1954, p. 123), may threaten to recircumcise children! Yet MC is also not

³In addition to hair and teeth, foreskins double as heads (Turner 1962, p. 170) and eyes (Beidelman 1965, p. 146; Boyarin 1992).

castrative: The rite almost always unleashes male fecundity, leaving a “heroically scarred” penis (Paul 1990, pp. 328–29) to teach boys that “masculinity is safe” (Levy 1973, p. 373; Ozturk 1973).

Or is it? The adolescent rite may plague boys (and adult men) with unresolved anxieties surrounding the social significance of sexuality (Kennedy 1970, pp. 183–87). Circumcised masculinity, too, I stress, often circumscribes males within a maternal or uterine yearning. The rite is phallic and feminizing. It crafts a parturient phallus.⁴

Many anthropologists, as I mentioned, have probed the psychological and psychoanalytic dimensions of circumcision (Ammar 1954; Burrige 1969; Graber 1981; Heald 1986, 1994; Hiatt 1994; Ottenberg 1988; Róheim 1942, 1945; Rosen 1988; Walter 1988). Several well-known papers drew on the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) to correlate globally pubertal rites such as circumcision with mother-child sleeping patterns, absent fathers, postpartum sex taboos, solidarity, sex differentiation, residence and marriage patterns, sociocultural complexity, and so forth (Barry & Schlegel 1980; Burton & Whiting 1961; Graber 1981; Harrington 1968; Kitahara 1974, 1976; Paige & Paige 1981; Whiting et al. 1958; Young 1965).⁵

The work of Róheim represents a classic yet underappreciated psychodynamic-symbolic perspective on circumcision. For him, “separation from the mother is represented as a separation of a part of the body from the whole” (1942, p. 366). The removal of the foreskin, too, symbolizes the birth of the boy (Róheim 1945, p. 71; see also Turner 1962). Yet circumcision, which detaches Aboriginal boys from motherhood, also attaches them to potent paternal symbols such as bullroarers (albeit symbols bedecked with uterine insignia). Circumcision rebirths boys into manhood, identifies them with mothers, and reenacts birth (Warner 1958/1937, pp. 127–31; Meek 1885/1931, p. 357). In addition, as Róheim (and Mehta 1996) emphasized, the physical act of circumcision, carving unity into duality, mirrors the psychosocial movement of boys from the youthful mother-child dyad to the adult pairings of father-son, man-ancestor, and husband-wife. Circumcision dramatizes unease over separation-individuation through a symbolism that affirms yet blurs the normative boundaries between masculinity and motherhood.

Let me illustrate this idea with reference to biblical and rabbinic circumcision. Often, MC ritually reenacts birth as a type of *couvade* (Silverman 2003; relatedly, Crosse-Upcott 1959, pp. 173–74; La Fontaine 1972).⁶ The rite creates a form of manhood that is modeled after, and yet in opposition to, uterine fertility, parturition, menstruation, and motherhood (see also Turner 1962). In my analysis, biblical

⁴For nineteenth century ethnology, Protestant Bible dictionaries, and Lacan’s Phallus, see Carpenter (1988).

⁵The electronic Human Relations Area Files (eHRAF) contain a wealth of information on circumcision in several classic cultures I do not discuss, such as Dogon and Maasai.

⁶The classic statement is Bettelheim’s (1954), despite his erroneous contention that infant circumcision expresses only oedipal tension, not male envy.

culture and rabbinic Judaism construed the blood of circumcision as a positive male transformation of negative menstrual blood (Silverman 2003; see also Delaney 1991). Within these two allied cultural formations, this paradox contributed to a valid construction of normative, heterosexual manhood (Boyarin 1997). But, from the perspective of hegemonic Euro-Christian notions of gender, Jewish manhood was invalid, illegitimate, and diminished, little better (and often worse) than the other significant category of European Others, women.⁷ Circumcision in Judaism (and Ancient Israel) emulates menstruation to invest men with the ability to reproduce the community. Despite a denuded phallus (as it were) circumcised Jews within Judaism remain whole men. In the eyes of non-Jews, however, the rite is further proof that Jewish males are less than true men. That is, the rite constructs an emasculated rather than an alternative form of masculinity. In this regard, it seems reasonable to propose that the blood of circumcision likely contributed to the long-standing belief that Jewish men menstruated. Here, however, male menstruation was linked not to the masculine reproduction of culture, but to divine punishment for betraying Christ. Because the rite so powerfully cuts into the core of Western cultural notions of embodied selfhood and disembodied salvation, MC remains deeply dissonant within dominant Western traditions.

Many theorists argued that circumcision expresses the father's anxieties as projected onto his son (Graber 1981, Róheim 1945, Rosen 1988). This interpretation inverts the common Freudian analysis that circumcision is a castrative reaction by fathers to youthful licentiousness, or a warning against moral trespass (Hiatt 1994, p. 177; see also Raum 1940, pp. 310–11; Róheim 1945, pp. 73–74).

Crapanzano (1981) brilliantly analyzed Muslim MC in Morocco.⁸ The rite, because of the financial burden of sponsoring a ceremony, exacerbates father-son tensions, as it does elsewhere (Heald 1994). More significantly, Crapanzano argued that the rite presents only the illusion of passage from dependence to adulthood. Instead, circumcision is a "rite of return" that in various ways, some even erotic, renews the mother-child bond and equates the boy with women and infants. The rite commemorates nontransition by cutting an absence, gap, or negation into the boy's body.

After circumcision, Moroccan boys believe themselves emasculated, a castration they attribute to their mothers. Sometimes the cut boy is placed on his mother's naked back. She then dances, and sweating causes a sting on her son's penis that adult men recall with horror. The Moroccan rite, according to Crapanzano, also allows adult men to relive their own circumcision through their sons. I add to this assertion that the ceremony might also permit men a vicarious experience of taboo intimacy with motherhood (see also Heald 1994). After the circumcision and the

⁷As a truncated penis, reports Gilman (1993, pp. 38–39), the clitoris in *fin de siècle* Vienna was called the "Jew"; female masturbation was "playing the Jew."

⁸Muslim circumcision often resembles marriage (Geertz 1960, ch. 5; Kennedy 1970, pp. 176–77). Removing the foreskin parallels bridal defloration (Delaney 1991, p. 86; Mehta 1996, p. 220).

boy's painful union with his mother's body, she puts him to bed, and the adult men sleep with prostitutes. The Moroccan rite thus seems to express ambivalently—neither thwarting nor actualizing—oedipal conflicts.

Genesis, Gender, and Jews

Few anthropologists have explored biblical circumcision (e.g., Genesis 17), which “cuts” God's covenant into the male body partly to establish Abrahamic monotheism. Goldberg (1996, p. 27) contended that the timing of this rite—in infancy—stressed the importance of the family and women for socialization. By contrast, puberty rites signal an educational shift away from the family to non-coresident men. Goldberg (1996, p. 31) and Prewitt (1990) also situated the biblical rite in a pattern of affinal and agnatic alliances. For Delaney (1998, 2001), Abrahamic circumcision created a notion of paternity that, even today, erased legal and moral motherhood. Although painful to boys, the rite was (and remains) a form of violence mainly directed at women and mothers.

Paul (1996), from a psychoanalytic perspective, anchored biblical circumcision to the oedipal dimensions of generational succession. As mentioned above, I interpret the rite as an expression of male envy of female fertility (Silverman 2003, n.d.). The physical act of circumcision—dividing a single body into two parts—parallels the structure of the Genesis 1 cosmogony, the Genesis 2 creation of woman from the body of an androgynous yet male creature, and the formation of society in the Hebrew Bible.

Many scholars in Jewish Studies borrowed from anthropology to analyze the biblical rite. They drew on the ethnography of Middle Eastern and African pastoral societies (Morgenstern 1966, Eilberg-Schwartz 1990), and structuralism (Hoffman 1996, Kunin 1996). Further afield, scholars often have mined anthropology for insights into the Jewish rite (e.g., Daly 1950, Weiss 1966).

For contemporary Jews, Boyarin & Boyarin (1995) argued, circumcision marks the male body, like the presence of a skullcap (yarmulke), as ethnically distinctive within a diasporic setting. Jewish circumcision, mandated by tradition, resists the ideology of the “self-made man.” The rite also challenges the Hellenistic ideal of the naturally whole body that achieved hegemony through the spread of Pauline Christianity (Boyarin 1994). Finally, the Jewish gesture is counterphallic, cutting an image of manhood that is distinctive and contrary to dominant notions of male identity by incorporating desirable qualities associated with women into an ideal of masculinity (Boyarin 1997).

Bilu (2000) compared circumcision among the Israeli ultraorthodox to a first haircutting ceremony.⁹ The ritual trimming, as a type of adolescent weaning, reenacts infant circumcision so that, this time, the boy is able to remember the ritual messages (Bilu 2000). The haircutting ceremony, like circumcision, snips boys from

⁹Accounts of non-European Jewish circumcision practices include Brauer (1942, 1947) and Patai (1983a).

femininity and motherhood, and tethers them to adult men who, through feeding and care, nurture youth. Bilu (2000) also identified themes of cutting and division throughout traditional Jewish culture, including menstruation, charity, and food.

To the Jewish mystical and classic rabbis, circumcision inscribed God's name into the body of men (Wolfson 2002). Today, Jewish circumcision is at the center of increasing controversy. The bodily rite has become a text for contested inscriptions of gender, power, sexuality, and ethnic particularism. Reform Judaism emerged in the late nineteenth century to integrate the religion into the Enlightenment tenets of modernity, emphasizing individual autonomy and scientific rationality. Today, many nontraditional Jews question the necessity of circumcision, advocating either the abolishment of the rite or comparable ceremonies (liturgical mainly, but including one call for hymenal pricks) that hallow the birth of girls (see Goldberg 2003, Hoffman 1996, Silverman n.d.). To some, these revisions ensure a viable future for Judaism as a worthy, moral ethnicity. To others, Jewish arguments against the covenantal cut unwittingly yield to Pauline hegemony and transform the obligations of tradition into an optional, contractual relationship.

For traditional Judaism, no less than for many Melanesian and African cosmologies, male and female bodies require postpartum refinements to attain proper wholeness. Although an anathema to most Western sensibilities, the body is not everywhere complete upon birth. Many foes of the Jewish rite understand circumcision to be antisexual. But the canonical rabbis argued otherwise: Jewish circumcision celebrates sexuality and bodily experience by marking the covenant in flesh. For the most part, however, anthropologists have neglected to study the impassioned debate over MC in Judaism, a debate that resonates with the same issues as disputes over female circumcision.

Male Circumcision and HIV

Until recently, anthropologists have said little about the medical aspects of male circumcision, infant or adolescent (e.g., Meintjes 1998).¹⁰ The relationship between MC and various diseases, especially cancer and syphilis, has punctuated the debate—both pro and con—over Jewish circumcision. To Western culture since the Letters of Paul, the circumcised Jew represents the preeminent bodily symbol of dangerous Difference. Sometimes his foreskinlessness points to enviable hygiene; at other times, it threatens non-Jews with fearful, often contagious, infirmities. This is well known.

Less well known is the fact that several anthropologists are now investigating links between MC and the epidemiology of AIDS, especially in Africa. Much of this research suggests that MC may inhibit the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The fragile foreskin is susceptible to minute scratches and tears. It also contains specialized cells (e.g., Langerhans) that join readily with HIV and other pathogens (Auvert et al. 2001, Quigley et al. 2001, Bailey et al. 2001,

¹⁰For evolutionary views of MC and infibulation, see Gallo (1992a), Immerman & Mackey (1997, 1998), Rowanchilde (1996).

Halperin & Bailey 1999, Moses et al. 1998, USAID/AIDSMark 2003; cf. Siegfried et al. 2003). Cultural anthropologists might identify here echoes of the attribution of medical benefits to the Jewish rite. The circumcised penis yet again is the site of hygienic marvels, this time on the body of Africans. Medical anthropologists, however, should find the evidence compelling. Some anthropologists have suggested the introduction of MC, or its reintroduction after missionary curtailment, to stem the AIDS epidemic, in cooperation with local authorities and medical practitioners (Bailey et al. 2002, Halperin 2000; see also Soori et al. 1997). Research on the relationship between MC and HIV is ongoing, and new studies, both pro-circumcision and con-, appear almost weekly, mainly in medical journals.

Of course, MC techniques vary greatly (Brown et al. 2001), thus complicating the matter. Moreover, no anthropologist has advocated MC as a “natural condom” (Bonner 2001, Lagarde et al. 2003). Just the opposite: There is persistent concern that MC might substitute, tragically, for other efforts (as in Papua New Guinea; see Jenkins & Alpersi 1996), such as condom use and behavioral modifications (for “dry sex,” see Halperin 1999). Yet opponents of medical MC (addressed below) are appalled at the idea of performing surgical interventions instead of altering social practices (Hodges et al. 2002). As in the case of female circumcision, however, the matter is not simply a debate within the Western medical-ethical community. Africans themselves are participating increasingly in discussions about MC and AIDS. In the main, they seem to endorse the proposal (Bailey et al. 2002, Kebaabetswe et al. 2003).

Another factor may be at work here. In many African cultures, MC was problematic for Christian missionaries (e.g., Beidelman 1997). The rite represented the “dark” ways of the sinful past. But MC also received biblical backing from both Abraham and Christ. In one fascinating case from Papua New Guinea, MC (actually, supercision) was introduced after World War II by health orderlies, and so became associated locally with the hygienic practices of Europeans and modernity (Kempf 2002). The rite, linked to Christ’s Crucifixion and Christian purification, became integrated into male initiation in the 1950s and 1960s. By removing the sinful, dark foreskin, MC enables the Ngaing to maintain tradition while integrating into modernity and contesting European domination. Other anthropologists who work in traditionally non-circumcizing areas of Melanesia anecdotally report on men who underwent the rite to emulate Europeans, especially American GIs during World World II. In one location, members of the South Seas Evangelical Church, who see themselves as a lost tribe of Israel, recently initiated circumcision. Here and elsewhere, MC intersects in complex ways with the past, modernity, hygiene, medicine, and the religious entanglements of colonialism.

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

Female circumcision has emerged as one of the central moral topics of contemporary anthropology (Kratz 1999, Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000). No area of the discipline seems so entwined with ethical claims, activism, and the participation

of governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Today, few anthropologists would dare merely to describe clitoridectomy (e.g., Mayer 1952) or to defend it boldly as Kenyatta (1959, pp. 153–54) famously did. But, as Kenyatta's oft-invoked apology for the practice demonstrates, all statements about the topic are embedded in complex colonial and postcolonial histories (Browne 1991, Natsoulas 1998, Thomas 2003). Terminological shifts and disputes are nothing new in anthropology. But few quarrels are as morally and politically loaded as that between proponents of the terms female circumcision (which dilutes the horror), female genital mutilation (or FGM, which evokes only horror),¹¹ and female genital cutting (which is neutral; see Walley 1997).

There is a broad spectrum of female circumcision (abbreviated here FC). So-called symbolic circumcision entails a slight prick of the clitoris or, in some communities, the application of red color or some other, nonintrusive gesture that responds to concerns over actual cutting. More dramatic are two other practices: removal of the clitoral prepuce, called "sunna circumcision" (a term controversially derived from Islam), which reduces the clitoris entirely; and excision or clitoridectomy. (Sunna circumcision compares best with MC.) These procedures correspond to the World Health Organization (WHO) Types I and II. Most dramatic is pharaonic circumcision. This practice removes the external genitalia (prepuce, clitoris, labia minora, and all or part of the labia majora) and then, through infibulation, stitches together the vagina, leaving only a tiny opening for drops of urine and menstrual blood (WHO Type III). A final, rare form of FC is introcision, or the cutting away of the external genitalia (WHO Type IV, which includes unclassified forms of the procedure).

African FC occurs to a great extent in association with Islam. In fairness, canonical Islamic texts offer little justification for the practice. But this theological point seems more significant to educated Muslim opponents of the rite and to its Western foes than to local women who frequently tie their Islamic identity as women to the practice of the rite (Johnson 2000).

Feminizing the Female

In the past two decades, anthropologists have offered many important studies of FC (e.g., Ahmadu 2000, Boddy 1996, Gruenbaum 2001, Hayes 1975, Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000, van der Kwaak 1992). These works examined the symbolism of the rite, often drawing on recent ideas in gender theory. A common rationale for Muslim FC echoed, despite the lack of historical connections, the rabbinic view of the male prepuce as repulsive: Uncircumcised female genitals are unclean and impure. Worse, they may grow like a penis (Gordon 1991; Inhorn & Buss 1993, p. 232; van der Kwaak 1992, p. 781). This view suggests that FC feminizes a woman's otherwise androgynous genitalia, and thus corresponds to MC, since uncircumcised foreskins often are said to resemble female genitals (Turner 1962,

¹¹The term male genital mutilation (MGM) is obscure, except among opponents of the rite.

p. 161; 1967, pp. 265–74). FC and MC, then, commonly transform cross-sexed youth into wholly male and female persons (Talle 1993). But there is a key difference. MC, as we saw, often creates feminine men. But no FC rite, as far as I know, masculinizes the vulva.

MC in Northern Sudan, argued Boddy (1982, 1989), exposes the male reproductive organ (relatedly, see Beidelman 1964, 1965). The foreskin is a penile “veil.” This phallic exposure represents male privilege to venture into the outside, nondomestic world.¹² Women enclose their genitals through excision and infibulation. The female rite thus corresponds to confinement within the village. This bodily enclosure also “sews” a woman into an agnatic group so that, later, she is opened by her husband (Talle 1993). Here again, MC and FC create or carve single-sexed bodies.

Another localized explanation for FC is that women develop less reason than men, and so are more prone to carnal desires. FC constrains woman’s sexuality, which is sometimes associated with the wild bush (Beidelman 1965; Muller 1993, 2002 for “pseudoexcision”). The rite is less about enhancing male sexual pleasure, as is commonly averred, and more about preparing a woman for motherhood by retaining her inner, fertile moisture.

To repeat, anthropologists such as Boddy (1982) have shown that FC persists precisely because the rite is embedded in culturally salient idioms of purity, embodiment, sexuality, fertility, and “enclosedness.” The local meaning of FC expands well beyond stereotypical notions of male coital satisfaction.

Is FC Medically Harmful?

Perhaps the greatest complicating factor in the moral evaluation of FC by anthropology is that these rites are largely practiced—and advocated—by women. But isn’t FC medically harmful to women? The anthropological response is equivocal. Medical complications such as infertility do occur (Gordon 1991, Gruenbaum 1982, Inhorn & Buss 1993, Larson 2002).¹³ Still, several anthropologists deemed that these perils have been overly—if not unjustly—magnified in the popular imagination, because this view of FC portrays Africans, especially African women, as passive victims of their own ignorance and of patriarchy, wholly wounded in body and spirit, devoid of any possible joy, erotic or otherwise. In effect, this view of FC offers the West justification for intervention and, more subtly, assertions of cultural superiority. Anthropologists increasingly contest the view of African women as mutilated and imprisoned by a physiological mar of their own making (Ahmadu 2000, Gruenbaum 1996, Walley 1997; cf. Balk 2000). In turn, these anthropologists are themselves contested. Obermeyer (1999) concluded that most accounts of the medical, sexual, and reproductive horrors of FC are lacking in

¹²A boy’s grandmother wore his foreskin as a ring (Boddy 1982, p. 688), a practice similar to that of a medieval female mystic who wedded Christ with the Holy Prepuce (Bynum 1987, pp. 174–75).

¹³Jackson et al. (2003) discussed inconsistencies in self-reporting.

scientific evidence (see also Stewart et al. 2002). Mackie (2003) strongly refuted this claim, prompting an accusation of selective reading (Obermeyer 2003). At stake in this debate is the relationship between anthropology and advocacy. In addition, a meta-debate is taking place over the definition of valid data in regard to this emotionally charged issue.

Because FC seems so horrifying, one could argue that it might be best to suspend the standards that define rigorous empirical science so that we can attend to the sheer anguish. The issue is humanistic. But, because FC is a physiological and medical issue, too, one could also argue that all legitimate claims must be supported by the highest standards of empirical research. The issue is now one of science. Therein, I suggest, lies much of the methodological quandary.

How to Respond?

The ethical dimensions of FC in anthropology are bitterly disputed. Most anthropologists who study FC do not condone the rite. But they temper their criticism in order to advocate on behalf of subjected women while not reproducing stereotypes that continue to silence African and Muslim women. We often read that, despite FC, Africans are not ignorant, are not in need of Western salvation, and are not immobilized psychologically by brute patriarchy. Moreover, the accusatory finger is often pointed at us: Clitoridectomy was not uncommon in Victorian England and America (Sheehan 1981), and the practice still persists, or did so until recently, on the fringes of Western medicine.¹⁴ Furthermore, many African and Muslim women are appalled at our standards of beauty, honor, and dignity.

A telling exchange of views followed Gordon (1991), who positioned FC just outside the limits of relativist acceptance (see also Salmon 1997). What about our own treatment of women's bodies?, asked Boddy (1991). Moreover, to condemn the rite often seems like a vacuous gesture, a mere classroom exercise. And what right have we to criticize them? Morsy (1991) excoriated the "Western civilizational project" that underlies opposition to FC. [In fairness, most anthropologists believe that all efforts to curtail FC ultimately must arise from local women (Gruenbaum 1982).] Scheper-Hughes (1991) commented on the (unjustified, in her view) practice of MC in the United States.¹⁵ For these anthropologists, criticism against FC is misguided at best and racist at worst.

Yet some anthropologists strongly object to FC. van der Kwaak (1992) dismissed appeals to cultural relativism and, although acknowledging the validity of local beliefs, endorsed eradication. Oboler (2001) objected to FC primarily because of lack of consent, as do most opponents of routine neonatal MC (see below).

¹⁴Dr. William Burt of Akron, Ohio, the so-called "Love Doctor," surgically altered scores of clitorises of both consenting and nonconsenting women to enhance, not stifle, their sexual pleasure, and even published a book in 1975, *Love Surgery*. His practice ended in 1989.

¹⁵In the past, anthropologists often defended MC against colonial, missionary, and European sensibilities as moral, not carnal (e.g., Browne 1913, p. 140; Mayer 1971; Tucker 1949, p. 59). Today, anthropology more often is ambivalent (Heald 1986).

Many women who experience or suffer FC did not grant informed consent and were culturally unable to do so.

Shweder (2000, 2002) argued that the extraordinary moral outrage evoked by the very idea of FC stymies true pluralism, because “seeing the cultural point and getting the scientific facts straight is where tolerance begins.” For him, one fact is clear: That FC seems beyond discussion is precisely the reason why the issue warrants anthropological skepticism. How should we respond? With ambivalence, perhaps.

Agency, Not Patriarchy

Alice Walker’s celebrated book, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, and her more recent film and literary collaboration *Warrior Marks* significantly raised public awareness of FC. To most anthropologists, though, these works seem somewhat naive. Worse, they may reproduce antiquated, even racist, images of Africa as a Hobbesian place of savage brutality in need of American healing (Babatunde 1998, James 1998).

Western responses to FC today emerge typically from visceral reactions, not from informed knowledge as defined by the sensibilities and canons of anthropology (Gruenbaum 1996). Consequently, critics of FC portray circumcised women as ignorant, hapless, traumatized victims of a brutal patriarchy. This characterization denies to many African women the capacity for agency, decision making, and legitimate consciousness (Abusharaf 2001, Hayes 1975, Walley 1997). African and Muslim cultures are oppressive and insane; Western culture is ennobling and free. They are enslaved to an evil, irrational tradition; we transcend tradition through rationality. They subsume individuality within the collectivity; we applaud the person who stands above the crowd. Therefore, as a consequence of a type of moral manifest destiny, we must change them.

However, for many African women, FC and its attendant meanings “are means whereby the limitations of ascribed inferiority are overcome . . . they use, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps strategically, what we in the West might prefer to consider instruments of their oppression as means to assert their value” (Boddy 1989, p. 345; see also Omorodion 1991, Skinner 1988). Rites we see as horribly demeaning are a form of symbolic capital to alleged victims, gaining them access to custom, community, virtue, and morality. FC even allows some women to contest, not accede to, patriarchy, and to define, not erode, their self-worth.

For critics, FC betokens a lack of power and control. But some instances of FC give local women a sense of control so that they can become socially relevant actors in a highly gendered world (Abusharaf 2001, Kratz 1994). By cutting off undesirable sexuality, FC allows women the inner psychological strength to manipulate their husbands who, in various Islamic settings, lack any such control over their own sexuality. FC violates no human rights, claimed the Sudanese women studied by Abusharaf (2001). To them, the rite was deeply meaningful, in part because they understood the human whose rights we are discussing in vastly

different terms. Although FC rites are often painful, Walley (1997, p. 422) pointed out that women who undergo the rite may attribute significant social meanings to their ability to endure it. We may shudder at the thought of FC, but they viewed the pain as something to be endured, not avoided, because it fostered positive transformations of the self (Johnson 2000).¹⁶

However much Westerners might yearn to save and enlighten African women—neglecting, typically, to ask whether they want this salvation—the means of our assistance unwittingly might exacerbate the muteness of the circumcised subaltern. The clash between moral universes is particularly acute for women in the African and Islamic diaspora who wish to continue the rite (Gallo 1992b, Johnsdotter 2002). Moreover, the current obsession in the West with addressing FC seems routinely to detract from far more pressing and lethal forms of everyday oppression such as lack of land, food, and clean water, not to mention war, drought, and international isolation (Abusharaf 1998; Gruenbaum 1996; Mandara 2000, p. 104; Omorodion & Myers 1989). It is always easier to oppose their rites than our wrongs.

Circumcision and History, Theirs and Ours

I have alluded repeatedly to the importance of history in understanding the meanings of different forms of male and female circumcision. Rarely, however, do anthropologists embed the rite in wider changes of bodily practices associated with colonialism, diaspora, and modernity (cf. Comaroff 1985). Middleton (1997) presented an insightful exception. A Madagascar people who once practiced circumcision in order “to have a history” have forgone the rite to recollect a more recent history of “impotence and defeat.” This discontinuation of MC was a conscious practice, not a passive acquiescence to colonialism. By making taboo circumcision and other ancestral activities, absence becomes a form of omnipresent memory.¹⁷

Is it possible that many women practice FC today for a similar reason? Perhaps the rite is a response to modernity and the lack of memory that the modernist project implies. At the very least, many Third World women do not see eye-to-eye with First World feminists on FC. To them, our opposition is part of a long history of colonialism. Perhaps FC resists certain aspects of modernity, or helps transform modernity from a monolithic conception into a vernacular reality that both accedes to and yet defies the Western assumptions of the world system and development.

As Parker (1999) demonstrated, most Western accounts of FC tell us far more about our own historically embedded sexual anxieties and subjectivities. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, female selfhood entailed the capacity to experience orgasm (and, for the male, the ability to make this happen). From this point of view, the salience of FC in anthropology and wider public discourses is about our history, not their practices. In this regard, it is noteworthy that anthropologists

¹⁶The ritual role of bodily pain remains undertheorized (but see Whitehouse 2000).

¹⁷Jewish, especially mystical, traditions inscribed memory in the space once occupied by the foreskin, a notion captivating to Derrida (Wolfson 2002).

troubled by uncritical condemnations of FC almost never refer to an obvious aspect of Western history: the long-standing rhetoric against Jewish circumcision. Critics of Jewish particularism since the medieval era—actually, since the letters of Paul—have painted Jewish circumcision with the same colors of barbarism and ignorance that now so frequently taint Africans and Muslims (Gilman 1999, Lyons 1981).¹⁸ To the extent that European objections to Jewish circumcision often are rooted in the bodily assumptions of Pauline-Hellenistic Christianity, opposition to FC may be seen as a similar form of bodily imperialism. (To this, some foes will respond, So what?) Moreover, opposition to FC tends to arise from unstated culture-specific and historical notions of citizenship, statehood, individualism, and intrinsic rights (Droz 2000). For many Westerners, a woman's vagina (and a man's foreskin) is the individual's intrinsic property. But this individualism clashes with cultural epistemologies in which foreskins and pudenda have importance that expands beyond the individual's rights (Talle 1993).

To further complicate the picture, young girls in at least one traditionally non-circumcising region of Africa (southern Chad) now practice FC for reasons that are unclear but seem linked with notions of modernity, not primitivism (Leonard 2000a). There, FC is a "fashion statement, a fad, something that is fun, rebellious, and cool" (Leonard 2000b, p. 190). When Leonard continued to query a woman about this novel rite, she was scolded: "You are looking too hard—there is nothing."

So, What to Do?

Anthropologists suggest a number of practical ways of reducing or challenging FC. Oboler (2001) drew on Mackie's (1996) analogy with Chinese antifootbinding societies to propose the formation of anti-FGM associations. These groups could foster local marriage "markets" for women in regions where the rite is linked to male matrimonial desire. This way, women who decline FC could still marry. Because medical complications are uncommon in some areas, over-reaction might be detrimental. Rather, the introduction of "correct information about negative consequences. . .in general education programmes" should suffice (Myers et al. 1985).¹⁹ And, although some anthropologists have defended legal bans as providing moral support to public education campaigns (Oboler 2001), others have suggested that the illegality of FC might drive the procedure underground, thus increasing potential harm. Instead, FC would be best ameliorated through medicalization (Shell-Duncan 2001; see also Browne 1991). However, this argument may prove as unsavory to opponents of FC as recent developments in penile nerve blocks are to foes of routine MC: It simply makes a bad practice acceptable (Mandara 2000, pp. 103–4). No position about FC lacks moral and immoral implications.

¹⁸One also might recall the fearful bodily image of the licentious African woman, marred by an enlarged clitoris (the so-called "Hottentot apron") that cautioned Victorian women against succumbing to sexual excess.

¹⁹For examples of public campaigns against FC, see Creel et al. (2001), El-Gibaly et al. (2002), Gosselin (2000), and Hernelund (2000).

Fuambai Ahmadu, a Sierra Leonean raised in the United States, while pursuing an Anthropology PhD, returned to her natal Kono village to undergo FC (Ahmadu 2000). Ahmadu's circumcision initiation into the "secret women's society" failed to dampen her sexuality. She discovered also that Kono women derive considerable empowerment from the rite. Through "supernatural" associations, they can assert legitimate ritual leadership, thus arresting the possibility of male hegemony. Ahmadu maintained that the experiences of Kono women with FC contradict the Western assertion that the rite is a devastating violation of African women.

Ahmadu spoke, if not for all African woman, at least to a point many African voices have raised in the recent anthropological literature. Although some African women have opposed FC, others view Western opposition to the rite as another form of colonial domination. For this reason, many anthropologists have drawn attention to debates within cultures that practice FC (Gruenbaum 1996), listening carefully to women, and not criminalizing them (Abusharaf 2001). In other words, ruptures within official cultural ideologies present opportunities for Western critics to engage circumcised rites, wrongs, and rights.

OPPOSITION TO MALE CIRCUMCISION AS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Opposition to FC is well known and common. Less obvious to anthropologists is an equally vociferous, diverse movement that opposes the routine medical and ritual circumcision of infant boys in the West (e.g., Denniston et al. 1997, 1999; Goldman 1997). The number and acronymic flamboyance of these activist groups are staggering, even occasionally absurd and self-mocking. But these groups are serious, and it would be incorrect to dismiss them as the fringe. They are fast moving to the center of legal, medical, and moral discourse. And they are both very angry and very aggressive.

A partial list of anti-MC groups includes NOCIRC (National Organization of Circumcision Resources), INTACT (Infants Need to Avoid Circumcision Trauma), UNCIRC (Uncircumcising Information and Resources Center), D.O.C. (Doctors Opposing Circumcision), NOHARMM (National Organization to Halt the Abuse and Routine Mutilation of Males), MUSIC (Musicians United to Stop Involuntary Circumcision), Boys Too (as in "Boys Too Deserve the Same Protection as Girls"), Mothers Against Circumcision, OUCH (Outlaw Unnecessary Circumcision in Hospitals), S.I.C. Society (Stop Infant Circumcision Society), Nurses for the Rights of the Child, ARC (Attorneys for the Rights of the Child), and In Memory of the Sexually Mutilated Child. Nearly all these organizations maintain elaborate Web sites which are worth viewing, regardless of one's position.

Much of the anti-MC movement draws moral support from the origins of the medical rite in late-nineteenth-century Victorian America. Then, the health of bodies and the body politic were believed to hinge on an economy of sexual desire and "vital" nervous energy. Also prominent was widespread concern with

moral-physical hygiene, fueled in part by the arrival of new immigrants. Male circumcision emerged as a routine medical practice from specific historical anxieties. This procedure insured against youthful masturbation, a scourge then thought to spawn a host of psychological, social, and physiological ailments (Gollaher 2000). Here, as elsewhere, culture was scripted in a bodily idiom.

To contemporary opponents of MC (who prefer the term “prointact” or “genital integrity”), recent medical justifications for the rite are little different than those proffered in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, foes of MC today attribute a broad range of social and psychological ailments to infant MC, including, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, depression, inferiority, envy of “intact men,” rage, resentment, hate, fear, diminished body image, guilt, and obsession with penis size. Circumcised men express, in the uniquely modern American practice of public confession, their intimate experiences with sexual dysfunction, poor relationships, and feelings of parental betrayal, violation, victimization, powerlessness, distrust, shame, abuse, deformity, and alienation. Circumcised men who oppose MC have often likened the procedure to rape and maternal abandonment. Consequently, it is often said that circumcised men are more likely to abuse and rape women. Others have asserted that circumcision made them gay.

Many circumcision foes, emboldened by studies of genuine childhood neglect and abuse, have attributed a host of societal woes to the trauma of male circumcision—alcoholism, drug addiction, violence, teenage suicide, low productivity, theft, and divorce. Having lost their errogenously sensitive foreskin, circumcised men are driven to “unnatural” sexual practices such as fellatio and “deep” intercourse. Goldman (1997), who received a radiant endorsement from a noted anthropologist (Montagu 1995), shockingly proposed that the trauma of infant circumcision sometimes results in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) as a form of “infant suicide.” MC illustrates the insidious power of patriarchy, since mothers allow their sons to be cut, as well as the insidious power of patriarchy that rips helpless infants from their mothers’ loving arms. We all suffer: The social implications of MC result in fiscal burdens through rising medical costs and taxes to fund crime prevention, prisons, law enforcement, and welfare programs.

But all is not lost for the emotionally disabled, sexually stilted, foreskinless man. Men now can restore their foreskins, and join self-help groups such as NORM (National Organization of Restoring Men; <http://www.norm.org>), formerly known as RECAP (“RECover A Penis”), and BUFF (Brothers United for Future Foreskins). Non-surgical restoration methods include stretching the existing skin over the glans with various devices such as lead fishing weights, steel balls, weighted cones, external catheters, infant bottle nipples, and several commercial devices (e.g., VacuTrac, Foreballs, and Tug Ahoy).

Circumcisers, as they are called after the cognate term “abortionist,” are routinely derided as perverts, sadists, and Nazis. Circumcised men deny their own “primal wounding.” Denial leads to repetition-compulsion. Hence, cut physicians sadistically cut defenseless infants (and women) to reenact their own trauma. So

outraged are circumcised men by the sight of the foreskinned penis that they inflict this torture on the very babies they father!

Many opponents of routine medical and religious MC have mobilized the same moral and legal arguments as are used in opposition to FC, including notions of consent and appeals to international treaties such as the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, the U.N. Convention Against Torture, and the European Convention on Human Rights. Indeed, a common refrain has been that the global concern with FC neglects the equally harmful effects of MC, thus further attesting to the broad societal denigration of the male body and psyche. According to this view, it is an easy step from cutting off foreskins to cutting away men's emotions and sending them off to war.

FC is now illegal in the United States. In 1996, Congress passed the "Federal Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act" (S.1030), initiated by Representative Pat Schroeder. Many legal challenges to MC in US courts appeal on this basis to the equal protection clause of the fourteenth Amendment.

I propose that, for many opponents of the procedure, MC is a potent symbol of anxieties that are not linked directly to the penis. Rather, the lost foreskin symbolizes a series of modern losses arising from historically specific anxieties (Silverman 2000). These anxieties concern the lost effectiveness of the political, economic, and judicial processes; pluralism; violence; contested notions of masculinity, motherhood, sexuality, and gender; the medicalization of birth; vulnerability before technological advances; notions of personhood similar to those raised in the abortion debate; and the hypercapitalist commodification of the body. Opposition to MC, widely hailed by the mythopoetic men's movement, also has revealed an enduring and disturbing antisemitism (Silverman n.d.).

I have devoted considerable space to discussing the anti-MC movement, not because I find it morally compelling or equivalent to the debate over FC, but because I believe the growing opposition to MC is a fascinating, occasionally deeply disturbing cultural phenomenon which is unknown to most anthropologists, but surely is worthy of sustained investigation.

CONCLUSION

Because FC—both the rite and the popular discourse—is so important to the public, it deserves further anthropological investigation. As I have tried to make clear, it cannot be assumed that strong opposition to circumcision occurs only in the case of FC. But opponents of MC have received virtually no anthropological attention.

Anthropology should redouble its efforts to compile further ethnographic and historical research on circumcision, to fine-tune relevant methodologies such as gender theory and ritual theory, to investigate the relationship between circumcision and HIV, and to embed the opposition to all forms of circumcision in the contemporary cultural milieu. Indeed, I have argued that the fact that the practice of circumcision is or is not a topic of study is no less an object of anthropological concern than is the practice itself.

Circumcision offers anthropology an opportunity to examine our sense of who we are as a discipline that remains tethered to a Western tradition that aspires to pluralism, yet refuses to cede certain long-standing (if not God-given) tenets of the body and self. We can reflect on what is going on in our own cultural systems, and we can rethink how we want to engage morally such vital issues as human rights and cultural relativism. To the extent that many of us are ensconced within the relative safety of the classroom or book-lined office, the topic of circumcision also offers us an opportunity to escape the claim that we are, or might become, irrelevant.

All too frequently, public, legislative, and even scholarly opinions about MC and FC lack the measured, nuanced, careful understanding that most of us value as the signature of the anthropological project. Often, it seems nonanthropologists are not interested in what we have to say, or how we say it.

One has the nagging suspicion that, in the end, the topic of circumcision presents anthropology with something of an identity crisis. Well-intentioned folks such as Pat Schroeder and Alice Walker successfully oppose FC on the basis of little anthropological knowledge. If anthropologists merely agree with them, what unique insight do we have to offer? If we disagree, who will pay attention to us?

As the wider world debates FC and MC, it behooves us to enter the fray to justify anthropology as a unique, legitimate, and serious endeavor. We had better have something important to say. I think we do, and I think it can be found in the sources I have here reviewed. But does the rest of the world agree? I am not sure.

The *Annual Review of Anthropology* is online at <http://anthro.annualreviews.org>

LITERATURE CITED

- Abusharaf RM. 1998. Unmasking tradition: a Sudanese anthropologist confronts female "circumcision" and its terrible tenacity. *Sciences* 38:22–28
- Abusharaf RM. 2001. Virtuous cuts: female genital circumcision in an African ontology. *Differences* 12:112–40
- Ahmadu F. 2000. Rites and wrongs: an insider/outsider reflects on power and excision. See Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000, pp. 283–312
- Ammar H. 1954. *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Ashley-Montagu MF. 1937. The origin of subincision in Australia. *Oceania* 8:193–207
- Aufinger A. 1941. Einige ethnographische notizen zur beschneidung in Neuguinea. *Ethnos* 6:25–39
- Auvert B, Buve A, Lagarde E, Kahindo M, Chege J, et al. 2001. Male circumcision and HIV infection in four cities in sub-Saharan Africa. *AIDS* 15:S31–40
- Babatunde E. 1998. *Women's Rites Versus Women's Rights: A Study of Circumcision Among the Ketu Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press
- Bailey R, Muga R, Poulussen R, Abicht H. 2002. The acceptability of male circumcision to reduce HIV infections in Nyanza province, Kenya. *AIDS Care* 14:27–40
- Bailey RC, Plummer FA, Moses S. 2001. Male circumcision and HIV prevention: current knowledge and future research directions. *Lancet Infect. Dis.* 1:223–31
- Balk D. 2000. To marry and bear children: the demographic consequences of infibulation in

- Sudan. See Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000, pp. 55–71
- Barry H III, Schlegel A. 1980. Early childhood precursors of adolescent initiation ceremonies. *Ethos* 8:132–45
- Beidelman TO. 1964. Pig (guluwe): an essay on Ngulu sexual symbolism and ceremony. *Southwest. J. Anthropol.* 20:359–92
- Beidelman TO. 1965. Notes on boys' initiation among the Ngulu of East Africa. *Man* 65:143–47
- Beidelman TO. 1997. *The Cool Knife: Imagery of Gender, Sexuality, and Moral Education in Kaguru Initiation Ritual*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press
- Bettelheim B. 1954. *Symbolic Wounds: Puberty Rites and the Envious Male*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press
- Bilu Y. 2000. Circumcision, the first haircut and the Torah: ritual and male identity among the Ultraorthodox community of contemporary Israel. In *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, ed. M Ghoussoub, E Sinclair-Webb, pp. 33–63. London: Saqi Books
- Bloch M. 1986. *From Blessing to Violence: History and Deology in the Circumcision Ritual of the Merina of Madagascar*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press
- Bloch M. 1992. *Prey Into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press
- Boddy J. 1982. Womb as oasis: The symbolic context of pharaonic circumcision in rural Northern Sudan. *Am. Ethnol.* 9:682–98
- Boddy J. 1989. *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men and the Zar Cult in Northern Sudan*. Madison: Univ. Wisc. Press
- Boddy J. 1991. Body Politics: continuing the anticircumcision crusade. *Med. Anthropol. Q.* 5:15–17
- Boddy J. 1996. Violence embodied? Circumcision, gender politics, and Cultural aesthetics. In *Rethinking Violence Against Women*, ed. RE Dobash, RP Dobash, pp. 77–110. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Bohannon P. 1954. Circumcision among the Tiv. *Man* 54:2–6
- Bonner K. 2001. Male circumcision as an HIV control strategy: not a 'natural condom'. *Reproduc. Health Matters* 9:143–55
- Boon JA. 1999. Circumcision/uncircumcision: an essay amidst the history of a difficult description. In *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. SB Schwartz, pp. 556–85. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press
- Boyarin D. 1992. "This we know to be the carnal Israel": circumcision and the erotic life of God and Israel. *Crit. Inq.* 18:474–502
- Boyarin D. 1994. *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
- Boyarin D. 1997. *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
- Boyarin J, Boyarin D. 1995. Self-exposure as theory: the double-mark of the male Jew. In *Rhetorics of Self-Making*, ed. D Battaglia, pp. 16–42. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
- Brauer E. 1942. The Jews of Afghanistan: an anthropological report. *Jew. Soc. Stud.* 4:121–38
- Brauer E. 1947. *The Jews of Kurdistan*. Transl. R Patai, 1993. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press (From Hebrew)
- Brewster AB. 1919. Circumcision in Noikoro, Noemalu and Mboumbudho. *J. R. Anthropol. Inst.* 49:309–16
- Brown DE, Edwards JW, Moore RP. 1988. *The Penis Inserts of Southeast Asia: An Annotated Bibliography with an Overview and Comparative Perspectives*. Occ. Pap. 15, C. South Southeast Asia Stud., Univ. Calif., Berkeley
- Brown JE, Micheni KD, Grant EM, Mwenda JM, Muthiri FM, Grant AR. 2001. Varieties of male circumcision: a study from Kenya. *Sex. Transm. Dis.* 28:608–12
- Brown JT. 1921. Circumcision rites of the Becwana tribes. *J. R. Anthropol. Inst.* 51: 419–27
- Browne DL. 1991. Christian missionaries,

- Western feminists, and the Kikuyu clitoridec-tomy controversy. In *Politics of Culture*, ed. B Williams, pp. 243–42. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press
- Browne GSJO. 1913. Circumcision ceremonies among the Amwimbe. *Man* 13:137–40
- Burridge K. 1969. *Tangu Traditions: A Study of the Way of Life, Mythology, and Developing Experience of a New Guinea People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Burton RV, Whiting JWM. 1961. The absent father and cross-sex identity. *Merrill-Palmer Q. Behav. Develop.* 7:85–95
- Bynum CW. 1987. *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
- Cansever G. 1965. Psychological effects of circumcision. *Br. J. Psychol.* 38:321–31
- Carpenter MW. 1988. “A bit of her flesh”: circumcision and “the signification of the phallus” in *Daniel Deronda*. *Genders* 1:1–23
- Comaroff J. 1985. *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African Power*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press
- Crapanzano V. 1981. Rite of return. *Psychoanal. Stud. Soc.* 9:15–36
- Creel E. 2001. *Abandoning Female Genital Cutting: Prevalence, Attitudes, and Efforts to End the Practice*. Washington, DC: Popul. Ref. Bur. http://www.prb.org/pdf/AbandoningFGC_Eng.pdf
- Crosse-Upcott ARW. 1959. Male circumcision among the Ngindo. *J. R. Anthropol. Inst.* 89:169–89
- Daly CD. 1950. The psycho-biological origins of circumcision. *Int. J. Psychoanal.* 31:217–36
- de Heusch L. 1985. *Sacrifice in Africa: A Structuralist Approach*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press
- Delaney C. 1991. *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
- Delaney C. 1998. *Abraham on Trial: The Social Legacy of Biblical Myth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press
- Delaney C. 2001. Cutting the ties that bind: the sacrifice of Abraham and patriarchal kinship. In *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, ed. S Franklin, S McKinnon, pp. 445–67. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press
- Denniston GC, Hodges FM, Milos MF, ed. 1999. *Male and Female Circumcision: Medical, Legal, and Ethical Considerations in Pediatric Practice*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum
- Denniston GC, Milos MF, ed. 1997. *Sexual Mutilations: A Human Tragedy*. New York: Plenum
- Droz Y. 2000. Circoncision féminine et masculine en pays kikuyu. *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 158:215–40
- Eilberg-Schwartz H. 1990. *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press
- El-Gibaly O, Ibrahim B, Mensch BS, Clark WH. 2002. The decline of female circumcision in Egypt: evidence and interpretation. *Soc. Sci. Med.* 54:205–20
- Firth R. 1936. *We, the Tikopia: Kinship in Primitive Polynesia*. Boston: Beacon
- Frazer JG. 1904. The origins of circumcision. *Indep. Rev.* 4:204–18
- Gallo PG. 1992a. The origin of infibulation in Somalia: an ethological hypothesis. *Ethnol. Sociobiol.* 13:253–65
- Gallo PG. 1992b. Les mutilations génitales féminines des Africains en Italie. *Rivista di Antropologia* 70:175–83
- Geertz C. 1960. *The Religion of Java*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press
- Gell AF. 1971. Penis sheathing and ritual status in a West Sepik village. *Man* 6:165–81
- Gilman SL. 1991. *The Jew's Body*. New York: Routledge
- Gilman SL. 1993. *Freud, Race, and Gender*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press
- Gilman SL. 1999. “Barbaric” rituals? In *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*, ed. J Cohen, M Howard, MC Nussbaum, pp. 53–58. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press
- Gluckman M. 1949. The role of the sexes in Wiko circumcision ceremonies. In

- Social Structure: Studies Presented to A.R. Radcliffe-Brown*, ed. M Fortes, pp. 145–67. Oxford: Clarendon
- Goldberg HE. 1996. Cambridge in the land of Canaan: descent, alliance, circumcision, and instruction in the Bible. *J. Anc. Near E. Soc.* 24:9–34
- Goldberg HE. 2003. *Jewish Passages: Cycles of Jewish Life*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
- Goldman R. 1997. *Circumcision: The Hidden Trauma*. Boston: Vanguard
- Gollaher D. 2000. *Circumcision: A History of the World's Most Controversial Surgery*. New York: Basic Books
- Gordon D. 1991. Female circumcision and genital operations in Egypt and the Sudan: a dilemma for medical anthropology. *Med. Anthropol. Q.* 5:3–14
- Gosselin C. 2000. Handing over the knife: *Numu* women and the campaign against excision in Mali. See Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000, pp. 193–214
- Graber RB. 1981. A psychocultural theory of male genital mutilation. *J. Psychoanal. Anthropol.* 4:413–34
- Gruenbaum E. 1982. The movement against clitoridectomy and infibulation in Sudan: public health policy and the women's movement. *Med. Anthropol. Newsl.* 13:4–12
- Gruenbaum E. 1996. The cultural debate over female circumcision: the Sudanese are arguing this one out for themselves. *Med. Anthropol. Q.* 10:455–75
- Gruenbaum E. 2001. *The Female Circumcision Controversy: An Anthropological Perspective*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press
- Halperin DT. 1999. Dry sex practices and HIV infection in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. *Sex. Transm. Infect.* 75:445–46
- Halperin DT. 2000. *Cut and dry: reviving male circumcision and introducing dry sex prevention in South Africa and Botswana*. Presented at Annu. Meet. Am. Anthropol. Assoc., 99th, San Francisco
- Halperin DT, Bailey RC. 1999. Male circumcision and HIV infection: 10 years and counting. *Lancet* 354:1813–15
- Hambly WD. 1935. Tribal initiation of boys in Angola. *Am. Anthropol.* 37:36–40
- Harrington C. 1968. Sexual differentiation in socialization and some male genital mutilations. *Am. Anthropol.* 70:951–56
- Hayes RO. 1975. Female genital mutilation, fertility control, women's roles, and the patrilineal in modern Sudan: a functional analysis. *Am. Ethnol.* 2:617–33
- Heald S. 1986. The ritual use of violence: circumcision among the Gisu of Uganda. In *The Anthropology of Violence*, ed. D Riches, pp. 70–85. London: Basil Blackwell
- Heald S. 1994. Every man a hero: Oedipal themes in Gisu circumcision. In *Anthropology and Psychoanalysis: An Encounter Through Cultures*, ed. S Heald, A Deluz, pp. 184–209. London: Routledge
- Hernlund Y. 2000. Cutting without ritual and ritual without cutting: Female "circumcision" and the re-ritualization of initiation in the Gambia. See Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000, pp. 235–52
- Hiatt LR. 1994. Indulgent fathers and collective male violence. In *Anthropology and Psychoanalysis: An Encounter Through Cultures*, eds. S Heald and A Deluz, pp. 171–83. London: Routledge
- Hodges FM, Svoboda JS, Van Howe RS. 2002. Prophylactic interventions on children: balancing human rights with public health. *J. Med. Ethics* 28:10–16
- Hoffman LA. 1996. *Covenant of Blood: Circumcision and Gender in Rabbinic Judaism*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press
- Hogbin I. 1970. *The Island of Menstruating Men: Religion in Wogeo, New Guinea*. Scranton: Chandler
- Holdredge CP, Young K. 1927. Circumcision rites among the Bajok. *Am. Anthropol.* 29:661–69
- Immerman RS, Mackey WC. 1997. A biocultural analysis of circumcision. *Soc. Biol.* 44:265–75
- Immerman RS, Mackey WC. 1998. A proposed relationship between circumcision and neural reorganization. *J. Genet. Psychol.* 159:367–378

- Inhorn MC, Buss KA. 1993. Infertility, infection, and iatrogenesis in Egypt: the anthropological epidemiology of blocked tubes. *Med. Anthropol.* 15:217–44
- Jackson EF, Akweongo P, Sakeah E, Hodgson A, Asuru R, Phillips JF. 2003. *Women's Denial of Having Experienced Female Genital Cutting in Northern Ghana: Explanatory Factors and Consequences for Analysis of Survey Data*. New York: Popul. Council. <http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/wp/178.pdf>
- James SM. 1998. Shades of othering: reflections on female circumcision/genital mutilation. *Signs* 23:1031–48
- Jenkins C, Alpersi M. 1996. Urbanization, youth and sexuality: insights for an AIDS campaign for youth in Papua New Guinea. *PNG Med. J.* 39:248–51
- Jensen AE. 1933. *Beschneidung und Reifezeremonien bei Naturvölkern*. Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder
- Johnsdotter S. 2002. *Created by God: How Somalis in Swedish Exile Reassess the Practice of Female Circumcision*. Lund: Lund Monogr. Soc. Anthropol.
- Johnson MC. 2000. Becoming a Muslim, becoming a person: female “circumcision,” religious identity, and personhood in Guinea-Bissau. See Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000, pp. 215–33
- Kebaabetswe P, Lockman S, Mogwe S, Mandevu R, Thior I, et al. 2003. Male circumcision: an acceptable strategy for HIV prevention in Botswana. *Sex. Transm. Infect.* 79:214–19
- Kempf W. 2002. The politics of incorporation: masculinity, spatiality and modernity among the Ngaing of Papua New Guinea. *Oceania* 73:56–78
- Kennedy JG. 1970. Circumcision and excision in Egyptian Nubia. *Man* (NS) 5:175–91
- Kenyatta J. 1959. *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*. London: Secker & Warburg
- Kitahara M. 1974. Living quarter arrangements in polygyny and circumcision and segregation of males at puberty. *Ethnology* 13:401–13
- Kitahara M. 1976. A cross-cultural test of the Freudian theory of circumcision. *Int. J. Psychoanal. Psychother.* 5:535–46
- Kratz C. 1994. *Affecting Performance: Meaning, Movement, and Experience in Okiek Women's Initiation*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press
- Kratz C. 1999. Contexts, controversies, dilemmas: teaching circumcision. In *Great Ideas for Teaching About Africa*, ed. ML Bastian, JL Parpart, pp. 103–18. Boulder: Lynne Rienner
- Kunin SD. 1996. The bridegroom of blood: a Structuralist analysis. *J. Stud. O. T.* 70:3–16
- La Fontaine JS. 1972. Ritualization of women's life-crises in Bugisu. In *The Interpretation of Ritual: Essays in Honour of A.I. Richards*, ed. JS La Fontaine, pp. 159–86. London: Tavistock
- La Fontaine JS. 1985. *Initiation*. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press
- Lagarde E, Dirk T, Puren A, Reathe RT, Bertran A. 2003. Acceptability of male circumcision as a tool for preventing HIV infection in a highly infected community in South Africa. *AIDS* 17:89–95
- Larsen U. 2002. The effects of type of female circumcision on infertility and fertility in Sudan. *J. Biosoc. Sci.* 34:363–77
- Layard J. 1942. *Stone Men of Malekula*. London: Chatto & Windus
- Leonard L. 2000a. ‘We did it for pleasure only’: hearing alternative tales of female circumcision. *Qual. Inq.* 6:212–28
- Leonard L. 2000b. Adopting female “circumcision” in Southern Chad: the experience of Myabé. See Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000, pp. 167–91
- Levine RA. 1959. An attempt to change the Gusii initiation cycle. *Man* 59:117–20
- Lévi-Strauss C. 1988. Exode sur *Exode*. *L'Homme* 28:13–23
- Levy RI. 1973. *Tahitians: Mind and Experience in the Society Islands*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press
- Lewis G. 1980. *Day of Shining Red: An Essay on Understanding Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press

- Loeb EM. 1923. *The Blood Sacrifice Complex*. Am. Anthropol. Assoc. Memoir, No. 30
- Lyons H. 1981. Anthropologists, moralities, and relativities: the problem of genital mutilations. *Can. Rev. Sociol. Anthropol.* 18:499–518
- Mackie G. 1996. Ending footbinding and infibulation: a convention account. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* 61:999–1017
- Mackie G. 2003. Female genital cutting: a harmless procedure? *Med. Anthropol. Q.* 17:135–58
- Mandara MU. 2000. Female genital cutting in Nigeria: views of Nigerian doctors on the medicalization debate. See Shell-Duncan & Hernlund 2000, pp. 95–107
- Mayer P. 1952. Gusii initiation ceremonies. *J. R. Anthropol. Instit. of G. B. Ireland* 83:9–36
- Mayer P. 1971. 'Traditional' manhood initiation in an industrial city: the African view. In *Man: Anthropological Essays Presented to O.F. Raum*, ed. EJ De Jager, pp. 7–18. Cape Town: C. Struik
- McWilliam A. 1994. Case studies in dual classification as process: childbirth, headhunting and circumcision in West Timor. *Oceania* 65:59–74
- Meek CK. 1931. *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria*. 2 vols. London: Paul, Trench, Trubner (Originally 1885)
- Mehta D. 1996. Circumcision, body and community. *Contrib. Indian Sociol.* 30:215–43
- Meintjes G. 1998. *Manhood at a Price: Socio-Medical Perspectives on Xhosa Traditional Circumcision*. Grahamstown, South Africa: Inst. Soc. Eco. Res., Rhodes Univ.
- Mercier P. 1951. The social role of circumcision among the Besorube. *Am. Anthropol.* 53:326–37
- Middleton K. 1997. Circumcision, death, and strangers. *J. Rel. Africa* 27:341–73
- Mills AR. 1961. Ritual circumcision on Tanna, New Hebrides. *Man* 61:185
- Miner H. 1942. Songhoi circumcision. *Am. Anthropol.* 44:621–37
- Montagu A. 1995. Mutilated humanity. *Humanist* 55:12–15
- Morgenstern J. 1966. *Rites of Birth, Marriage, Death, and Kindred Occasions Among the Semites*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union Coll. Press
- Morsy SA. 1991. Safeguarding women's bodies: the white man's burden medicalized. *Med. Anthropol. Q.* 5:19–23
- Moses S, Bailey RC, Ronald AR. 1998. Male circumcision: assessment of health benefits and risks. *Sex. Transm. Infect.* 74:368–373
- Muller J-C. 1993. Les deux fois circoncis et les presque excisees: le cas des Dii de l'Adamaoua (Nord Cameroun). *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 33:531–44
- Muller J-C. 2002. *Les Rites Initiatiques des Dii de l'Adamaoua (Cameroun)*. Nanterre: Société d'Ethnologie
- Myers RA, Omorodion FI, Isenalumhe AE, Akenzua GI. 1985. Circumcision: its nature and practice among some ethnic groups in Southern Nigeria. *Soc. Sci. Med.* 21:581–88
- Natsoulas T. 1998. The politicization of the ban on female circumcision and the rise of the independent school movement in Kenya: the KCA, the missions and government, 1929–1932. *J. Asian Afr. Stud.* 33:137–58
- Ngxamngxa ANN. 1971. The function of circumcision among Xhosa-speaking tribes in historical perspective. In *Man: Anthropological Essays Presented to O.F. Raum*, ed. EJ De Jager, pp. 183–204. Cape Town: C. Struik
- Obermeyer CM. 1999. Female genital surgeries: the known, the unknown, and the unknowable. *Med. Anthropol. Q.* 13:79–106
- Obermeyer CM. 2003. The health consequences of female circumcision: science, advocacy, and standards of evidence. *Med. Anthropol. Q.* 17:394–412
- Oboler RS. 2001. Law and persuasion in the elimination of female genital mutilation. *Hum. Org.* 60:311–18
- Omorodion FI, Myers RA. 1989. Reasons for female circumcision among some ethnic groups in Bendel State, Nigeria. *Afr. Stud. Monogr.* 9:197–207
- Omorodion FI. 1991. Nature and practice of female circumcision among the Ubijaa people of Bendel State, Nigeria. *W. Afr. J. Archaeol.* 21:172–86

- Ottenberg S. 1988. Oedipus, gender and social solidarity: a case study of male childhood and initiation. *Ethos* 16:326–52
- Ozturk OM. 1973. Ritual circumcision and castration anxiety. *Psychiatry* 36:49–60
- Paige KE, Paige JM. 1981. *The Politics of Reproductive Ritual*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
- Parker M. 1999. Female circumcision and cultures of sexuality. In *Culture and Global Change*, ed. T Skelton, T Allen, pp. 201–11. London: Routledge
- Patai R. 1983a. *On Jewish Folklore*. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press
- Patai R. 1983b. Jewish birth customs. See Patai 1983a, pp. 337–43 (From Hebrew 1944–1965)
- Patai R. 1983c. Sephardi folklore. See Patai 1983a, pp. 279–287 (Orig. unabridged 1960)
- Paul RA. 1990. Bettelheim's contribution to anthropology. *Psychoanal. Stud. Soc.* 15:311–34
- Paul RA. 1996. *Moses and Civilization: The Meaning Behind Freud's Myth*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press
- Prewitt TJ. 1990. *The Elusive Covenant: A Structural-Semiotic Reading of Genesis*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press
- Quigley MA, Weiss HA, Hayes RJ. 2001. Male circumcision as a measure to control HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. *Curr. Opin. Infect. Dis.* 14:71–75
- Raum OF. 1940. *Chaga Childhood: A Description of Indigenous Education in an East African Tribe*. London: Int. Inst. Afr. Lang. Cult.
- Róheim G. 1942. Transition rites. *Psychoanal. Q.* 11:336–74
- Róheim G. 1945. *The Eternal Ones of the Dream: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Australian Myth and Ritual*. New York: Int. Universities Press
- Róheim R. 1949. The symbolism of subincision. *Am. Imago* 6:321–28
- Rosen LN. 1988. Male adolescent initiation rituals: Whiting's hypothesis revisited. *Psychoanal. Stud. Soc.* 12:135–55
- Rowanchilde R. 1996. Male genital modification: a sexual-selection interpretation. *Hum. Nat.* 7:189–215
- Rubel AJ, Liu WT, Brandewie E. 1971. Genital mutilation and adult role behavior among lowland Christian Filipinos of Cebu. *Am. Anthropol.* 73:806–10
- Salmon MH. 1997. Ethnical considerations in anthropology and archaeology, or relativism and justice for all. *J. Anthropol. Res.* 53:47–63
- Scheper-Hughes N. 1991. Virgin territory: the male discovery of the clitoris. *Med. Anthropol. Q.* 5:25–28
- Shapiro W. 1989. The theoretical importance of pseudo-procreative symbolism. *Psychoanal. Stud. Soc.* 14:71–88
- Sheehan E. 1981. Victorian clitoridectomy: Isaac Baker Brown and his harmless operative procedure. *Med. Anthropol. Newsl.* 12:9–15
- Shell-Duncan BK. 2001. The medicalization of female "circumcision": harm reduction or promotion of a dangerous practice? *Soc. Sci. Med.* 52:1013–28
- Shell-Duncan B, Hernlund Y, eds. 2000. *Female "Circumcision" in Africa: Culture, Controversy, and Change*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner
- Shweder RA. 2000. What about "female genital mutilation"? And why understanding culture matters in the first place. *Daedalus* 129:209–32
- Shweder RA. 2002. What about "female genital mutilation"? And why understanding culture matters in the first place. In *Engaging Cultural Differences: The Multicultural Challenge in Liberal Democracies*, ed. RA Shweder, M Minow, HR Markus, pp. 216–51. New York: Russell Sage
- Siegfried N, Muller M, Volmink J, Deeks J, Egger M, et al. 2003. Male circumcision for prevention of heterosexual acquisition of HIV in men (Cochrane Review). *The Cochrane Library*, Issue 4. Chichester, UK: Wiley
- Silverman EK. 2000. *Anti anti-circumcision: a symbolic critique of the male circumcision controversy*. Presented at the Annu. Meet. Am. Anthropol. Assoc., 99th, San Francisco
- Silverman EK. 2003. The cut of wholeness:

- psychoanalytic interpretations of biblical circumcision. In *The Covenant of Circumcision: New Perspectives on an Ancient Jewish Rite*, ed. EW Mark, pp. 43–57. Hanover: Brandeis Univ. Press
- Silverman EK. n.d. *Circumcision and Its Discontents: Jewish Circumcision from Abraham to America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield
- Singer P, DeSole DE. 1967. The Australian subincision ceremony reconsidered: vaginal envy or Kangaroo bifid penis envy. *Am. Anthropol.* 69:355–58
- Skinner EP. 1988. Female circumcision in Africa: the dialectics of equality. In *Dialectics and Gender: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. RR Randolph, DM Schneider, pp. 195–210. Boulder: Westview
- Soori N, Boerma JT, Robert W, Mark U. 1997. The popularization of male circumcision in Africa: changing practices among the Sukuma of Tanzania. *Afr. Anthropol.* 4:68–79
- Speiser F. 1944. Über die Beschneidung in der Südsee. *Acta Tropica* 1:9–29
- Spencer B, Gillen FJ. 1899. *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*. London: Macmillan
- Spencer P. 1965. *The Samburu: A Study of Gerontocracy in a Nomadic Tribe*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Stewart H, Morison L, White R. 2002. Determinants of coital frequency among married women in Central African Republic: the role of female genital cutting. *J. Biosocial Sci.* 34:525–39
- Talle A. 1993. Transforming women into ‘pure’ agnates: aspects of female infibulation in Somalia. In *Carved Flesh/Cast Selves: Gender Symbols and Social Practices*, ed. V Broch-Due, I Rudie, T Bleie, pp. 83–106. Oxford: Berg
- Thomas LM. 2003. *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
- Todd JA. 1934. Report on research in South-West New Britain. *Oceania* 5:80–101, 193–213
- Tucker JT. 1949. Initiation ceremonies for Luimbi boys. *Africa* 19:53–60
- Turnbull CM. 1957. Initiation among the BaMbuti pygmies of the Central Ituri. *J. R. Anthropol. Inst.* 87:191–216
- Turner T. 1995. Social body and embodied subject: bodiliness, subjectivity, and sociality among the Kayapo. *Cult. Anthropol.* 10:143–70
- Turner V. 1962. Three symbols of passage in Ndembu circumcision ritual. In *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations*, ed. M Gluckman, pp. 124–73. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press
- Turner V. 1967. Mukanda: the rite of circumcision. In *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, pp. 151–279. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press
- Ucko PJ. 1969. Penis sheaths: a comparative study. *Proc. R. Anthropol. Inst.* 1969, pp. 27–67
- USAID/AIDSMark. 2003. *Male Circumcision: Current Epidemiological and Field Evidence; Program and Policy Implications for HIV Prevention and Reproductive Health*. Conference Report. Washington, DC: USAID. [http://www.rho.org/men+rh_%209-02/menrh_mc_conf_report\(rev\).pdf](http://www.rho.org/men+rh_%209-02/menrh_mc_conf_report(rev).pdf)
- van der Kwaak A. 1992. Female circumcision and gender identity: a questionable alliance? *Soc. Sci. Med.* 35:777–87
- Van Gennep A. 1960 [1909]. *Rites of Passage*. Transl. MB Vizedom, GL Caffé. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press. (From French)
- Walley CJ. 1997. Search for “voices”: feminism, anthropology, and the global debate over female genital operations. *Cult. Anthropol.* 12:405–38
- Walter MAHB. 1988. The fetal and natal origins of circumcision and other birth symbols. In *Choice and Morality in Anthropological Perspective: Essays in Honor of Derek Freeman*, ed. GN Appell, TN Madan, pp. 213–37. Albany: State Univ. NY Press
- Warner WL. 1958. *A Black Civilization: A Social Study of an Australian Tribe*. New York: Harper. Rev. ed.
- Weiss C. 1966. Motives for male circumcision among preliterate and literate peoples. *J. Sex Res.* 2:69–88

- Weiss HA, Quigley MA, Hayes RJ. 2000. Male circumcision and risk of HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *AIDS* 14:2361–70
- White CMN. 1953. Notes on the circumcision rites of the Balovale tribes. *Afr. Stud.* 12:41–56
- Whitehouse H. 2000. *Arguments and Icons: Divergent Modes of Religiosity*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press
- Whiting JWM, Kluckhohn R, Anthony A. 1958. The function of male initiation ceremonies at puberty. In *Readings in Social Psychology*, ed. EE Maccoby, TM Newcomb, EL Hartley, pp. 359–70. New York: Henry Holt. 3rd ed.
- Wolfson ER. 2002. Assaulting the border: Kabbalistic traces in the margins of Derrida. *J. Am. Acad. Rel.* 70:475–514
- Young FW. 1965. *Initiation Ceremonies: A Cross-Cultural Study of Status Dramatization*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill