

Endangered Species

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Ethnographic Studies in Medical Anthropology Series



Pamela J. Stewart
and
Andrew Strathern
Series Editors

Endangered Species

*Health, Illness and Death Among
Madagascar's People of the Forest*

Janice Harper

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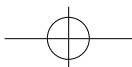
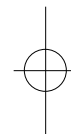
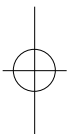
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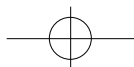
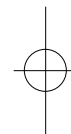
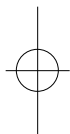
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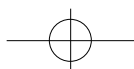
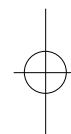
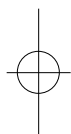
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Series Editors' Preface

Medical Anthropology Series: Endangered Species *Health, Illness and Death Among Madagascar's People of the Forest*

**Pamela J. Stewart and
Andrew Strathern**

Harper's book presents a fascinating narrative of the Malagasy living in Ranotsara who live in the southeast of Madagascar. This presentation provides the reader with a vivid picture of how these people cope with contemporary changes in their world. The materials are contextualized in terms of the historical background of the research area, emphasizing the environmental concerns of the people and their interaction with the local National Park Project.

These Malagasy forest farmers, like many peoples around the globe, have an intimate and sustained relationship with their physical environment in addition to deep-seated emotional perceptions of their landscape. The focus here on the environment and how this overlays with health issues is particularly insightful in terms of both physical and psychological wellness.

Harper's arguments throughout the book also reflect the increasing concern that anthropologists have to understand better the dynamics of the wider contexts in which the lives of people are set. Her work resonates well with studies conducted in other places. For example, the Duna people of Papua New Guinea, with whom we work, live their lives with a tangible awareness of the intertwining aspects of their environment and their society at large (see Stewart and Strathern 2002).

The discussion of Harper's interactions with the Ranaomafana National Park Project is a valuable part of this work. It highlights the growing aware-

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ness by anthropologists that fieldwork experiences nowadays are often impacted by the presence of governmental, company or non-governmental agencies that are involved in development projects locally within the field area (see Stewart and Strathern 2001). Often one aspect of the interaction of development projects within an area is the provision of health care services of one sort or another. Harper's discussion of the problems that arose among the Malagasy living in Ranotsara from these services (or lack thereof) is a cautionary tale which unfolds through the chapters of her book.

We are very pleased to present Janice Harper's book as the latest contribution to the Ethnographic Studies in Medical Anthropology Series. The other titles in this Series include:

"Curing and Healing: Medical Anthropology in Global Perspective", 1999 (by Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart)

"Healing the Modern in a Central Javanese City", 2001 (by Steve Ferzacca)

"Physicians at Work, Patients in Pain", 2nd edition, 2001 (by Kaja Finkler)

References

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- Stewart, Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern 2002. *Remaking the World: Myth, Mining, and Ritual Change among the Duna of Papua New Guinea*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

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Department of Anthropology
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15260 USA