



The Subject of Virtue: An Anthropology of Ethics and Freedom (New Departures in Anthropology)

By Dr James Laidlaw

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The anthropology of ethics has become an important and fast-growing field in recent years. This book argues that it represents not just a new subfield within anthropology but a conceptual renewal of the discipline as a whole, enabling it to take account of a major dimension of human conduct which social theory has so far failed adequately to address. An ideal introduction for students and researchers in anthropology and related human sciences.

- Shows how ethical concepts such as virtue, character, freedom and responsibility may be incorporated into anthropological analysis
- Surveys the history of anthropology's engagement with morality
- Examines the relevance for anthropology of two major philosophical approaches to moral life.

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Editorial Review

Review

Advance Praise: "James Laidlaw's book, which has the advantage of being elegantly written, is bound to transform the anthropological study of morality and ethics. Along the way, he helps us rethink many of our most important ideas, models and theories, including those related to practice, to relativism, to agency and - above all - to freedom." --Charles Stafford, London School of Economics

"Clearly argued, beautifully written and brilliant, this book will become a foundational text in the new anthropology of morality--an anthropology that is both ethically responsible and philosophically deep." -- T.M. Luhrmann, Stanford University

"This is the kind of game-changing book we have been waiting for in the anthropology of ethics. Theoretically astute, philosophically wide-ranging, and dazzling in its use of ethnographic materials, all intellectually ambitious anthropologists will want to read it. And philosophers who have made great efforts recently to render their arguments psychologically realistic now have a perfect place to turn to begin to engage the social aspects of their subject matter with equal care." --Joel Robbins, University of California, San Diego

About the Author

James Laidlaw is Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology and Fellow of King's College at the University of Cambridge.

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