



ANTHROPOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

Podcast Transcript

Travelling Artefacts: Ritual Procession in Nyanga, Gabon

MAXIME DE FORMANOIR: In southwestern Gabon, statues still used in initiation societies were considered immobile by some scholars, yet my research shows that one of the most important rituals of Bwiti Dissoumba society performed in the Nyanga province consists precisely of transporting a reliquary bundle and its wood-carved effigy to an enclosure reserved for initiates to undergo various treatments for about a week before bringing them back to the village with great fanfare and depositing them for a night in the society's temple. These same objects are also moved over sometimes long distances, along with their keepers, or when an initiate becomes their new custodian. Before even detailing the journey of artifacts of that type to Western collections, it is therefore these multiple forms of displacements and their various spatio-temporal scales that should also be taken into account when investigating such objects from the perspective of their mobility.