



**FROBENIUS-INSTITUT**  
FÜR KULTURANTHROPOLOGISCHE FORSCHUNG  
AN DER GOETHE-UNIVERSITÄT

# A D . E . J E N S E N - G E D Ä C H T N I S V O R L E S U N G 2 0 1 8

**Prof. Dr. Joel Robbins (Cambridge):**  
**"Values, Social Theory, and the Anthropological Study of the Good"**

**Eröffnungs-Vorlesung:**  
**4. Juni 2018, 18 Uhr c.t. bis 20 Uhr c.t.**  
**Raum 1.811 im Casinogebäude (Campus Westend, Goethe-Universität)**

**Weitere Termine: 11., 18. und 25. Juni 2018**

These lectures explore the potential of the study of cultural values to open up new avenues in anthropological and wider social theoretical thought.

The concept of values has been in play since the founding of the social sciences as independent disciplines, and there have been several brief periods in which it has been an important focus for research. In anthropology, however, the last of these boom periods for the study of values was in the 1950s. There have been several major contributions to the study of values since then, and the singular term "value" has long retained some disciplinary currency, but it is fair to say that at the present time theoretical work on values is due for reconsideration as a potential topic of sustained anthropological discussion. In this spirit, these lectures attempt three tasks:

The first is to determine the nature of values, a task rendered difficult by the way in which they inseparably combine both objective and subjective features. This point made, a second focus of the lectures looks at the objective relations that hold between multiple values present in any social formation and at the subjective forces that these value relations elicit and respond to. The goal of this part of the lectures is to develop an anthropological account of both motivation and social process that is adequate to the place of values in social life. With such an account in place, a third and final topic explores the potential of an anthropological theory of values to return anthropology to a focus on what various groups of people find most important about their lives.

I argue that an anthropology of the good in this sense offers an account of value pluralism that can show a way out of the impasses that currently beset the crucial but now deeply embattled notion of cultural relativism.