

CSLS SPECIAL LECTURE

Friday, February 22, 2013

12:15 to 1:30p.m.

Light lunch at 11:30p at 2240 Piedmont Ave. (JSP Building)

Boalt Room 140

JOHN COMAROFF

Professor of African and African American Studies and of Anthropology,
and Oppenheimer Fellow in African Studies, Harvard University

and

JEAN COMAROFF

Professor of African and African American Studies and of Anthropology,
and Oppenheimer Fellow in African Studies, Harvard University

"THE RETURN OF KHULEKANI KHUMALO, ZOMBIE CAPTIVE"

Imposture of various kinds has become strikingly common in post-apartheid South Africa, which is increasingly afflicted by, among other things, identity theft, plagiarism, fakery, even counterfeit crime. Taking a case – the alleged impersonation of a famous Zulu musician, deceased two years ago – this lecture asks why this has happened, what the resort to imposture tells us about postcolonial self-fashioning, about personhood under contemporary economic, social, and cultural conditions, and about the difficulties faced by the law in dealing with twenty-first century imposture.



John Comaroff is Professor of African and African-American Studies and Anthropology, and Oppenheimer Research Scholar, at Harvard University. Before moving to Harvard, he was the Harold H. Swift Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, Honorary Professor of Anthropology at the University of Cape Town, and Research Professor at the American Bar Foundation. His current research in South Africa is on crime, policing, and the workings of the state, on democracy and difference, and on postcolonial politics. His authored and edited books include, with Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (2 vols), *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*, *Modernity and its Malcontents*, *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa*, *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*, *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, *Ethnicity, Inc.*, *Zombies et Frontières A l'Ere Néolibérale*, and *Theory from the South: or, how Euro-America is evolving toward Africa*.

Jean Comaroff was educated at the University of Cape Town and the London School of Economics. After a spell as research fellow in medical Anthropology at the University of Manchester, she moved to the University of Chicago, where she was remained until 2012 as the Bernard E. and Ellen C. Sunny Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, and Director of the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory. She is also Honorary Professor at the University of Cape Town. Her research, primarily conducted in southern Africa, has centered on processes of social and cultural transformation – the making and unmaking of colonial society, the nature of the postcolony, the late modern world viewed from the Global South. Her writing has covered a range of topics, from religion, medicine and body politics to state formation, crime, democracy and difference. Her publications include *Body of Power*, *Spirit of Resistance: the Culture and History of a South African People* (1985), "Beyond the Politics of Bare Life: AIDS and the Global Order" (2007); and, with John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (vols. I [1991] and II [1997]); *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (1992); *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism* (2000), *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony* (2006), *Ethnicity, Inc.* (2009), and *Theory from the South, or How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa* (2011). A committed pedagogue, she has won awards for teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and has championed programs that enable college students to study abroad, especially in Africa.