

EXPLAINING DISEASE THROUGH WITCHCRAFT:
THE EXAMPLE OF HIV/AIDS IN ZIMBABWE



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009

HAFFENREFFER MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT
MANNING HALL, MAIN GREEN, BROWN UNIVERSITY

Explaining Disease through Witchcraft: The Example of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe

Friday, November 20, 5:30 p.m.
Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology,
Manning Hall, Main Green, Brown University

HIV/AIDS is a catastrophic health crisis with complex cultural dimensions. Explanations of where it comes from, who gets it, and who dies are tied to political agendas, religious beliefs, and the psychology of devastating grief. Medical anthropologist **Alexander Rödlach** (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Creighton University) shows how beliefs about witchcraft surrounding HIV/AIDS are an important element in Zimbabweans' efforts to understand why someone has fallen ill with AIDS-related conditions, to offer hope for healing, and to appeal for help. He also demonstrates the impact of these beliefs on public health and advocacy programs, arguing that cultural misunderstandings contribute to the failure of many well-intentioned efforts.

Reception will follow.