where, tumbled as they are into endless connection, it is increasingly difficult to get out of each other’s way.

Geertz also provided me with the concluding flourish of an earlier book of mine, *The Convict and the Colonel*. In any case, I am very pleased to have my name associated with this distinguished ancestor.

As for religion and *Travels with Tooy*, there’s something of a paradox. In the very final, comparative, chapter of the book, I wrote:

Astute readers may note that this is my first use of the word “religion” in regard to Saramakas in this book... For Saramakas, “religion” is not a separate or separable realm of life and unlike, say, Candomblé or Vodou or Santería, it has no name. Nor is religion—that which gives Saramaka life much of its meaning—a domain that is easily separable for the analyst.

“Religion” cannot be described by saying that practitioners believe this or that, but can only be understood by describing and analyzing the connections between events, experience, social relationships, and the ways people represent these to themselves. In the comparative context of this [final] chapter, I use it simply as a convenient label or shorthand.

Let me end by citing one of my favorite snippets of Geertzian wisdom, as he tried to sum up the new challenges facing anthropology in the 1980s (which, I believe are still very much with us). There has been a “transformation,” he said, “of the people anthropologists mostly write about, from colonial subject to sovereign citizens,” which has “altered entirely the moral context in which the ethnographical act takes place” and which perforce “leaves contemporary anthropologists in some uncertainty as to rhetorical aim.” “Who,” Geertz asked, “is now to be persuaded? Africanists or Africans? Americanists or American Indians? Japanologists or Japanese? And of what: Factual accuracy? Theoretical sweep? Imaginative grasp? Moral depth?” And he continued, “It is easy enough to answer ‘All of the above.’ It is not quite so easy to produce a text that thus responds.” But at the same time as the moral foundations of ethnography had been shaken, its epistemological foundations, Geertz noted, had also been cracked by general questions raised in other disciplines about the nature of representation. To the anthropologists’ worry about “Is it decent?” there was now added “Is it possible?”—a concern, Geertz claimed, “with which they are even less well prepared to deal.” Geertz concluded his overview by arguing that what we needed was effective art: “If there is any way to counter the conception of ethnography as an iniquitous act or an unplayable game, he wrote, “it would seem to involve owning up to the fact that, like quantum mechanics or the Italian opera, it is a work of the imagination.”

I would like to think that this prize recognizes *Travels with Tooy* as fitting into that imaginative Geertzian tradition of ethnography.

Please send column ideas, news and items of interest to Jennifer Selby at jselby@mun.ca.