

AN4006: Contemporary Directions in Anthropological Theory

Convener: Robin Rodd, robin.rodd@jcu.edu.au



Tony Albert – Pay Attention, 2011

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where James Cook University is located, that sovereignty was never ceded, that genocide occurred, and that colonialism is an ongoing process.

Times and Places

Mondays 1-3 pm all weeks *except weeks 11 & 13* which are scheduled for 10am-12pm

By Zoom Only

Readings available here: <https://espaces.edu.au/critical-theory/anthropological-theory-2020>

Week , Date, Discussant		Seminar Topic	Seminar Discussion Questions	Readings/Preparation
1 24 February	Robin Rodd JCU	Public anthropology and critical theory: Theory, normativity, and praxis	<p>How does Adorno understand the relationship of thinking to other forms of action?</p> <p>What forms of critique should anthropologists engage in?</p> <p>What does public anthropology, as Borofsky conceives of it, entail?</p> <p>What does it mean to decolonize?</p>	<p>Adorno, Theodor W. 2005. Critique. Resignation. <i>Critical models: Interventions and catchwords</i>. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. 282-293.</p> <p>Walsh, Catherine. 2018. Insurgency and decolonial prospect, praxis, and project. In Mignolo, Walter & Walsh, Catherine (eds.) <i>On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis</i>. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 33-56.</p> <p>Borofsky, Robert. 2019. <i>An anthropology of anthropology</i>. Ch. 3: Shifting the paradigm toward a public anthropology. Center for Public Anthropology. Pp. 123-172. (book available freely online)</p>
2 2 March	Ton Otto Aarhus University	Impermanence, Emergence, Intervention and/or Correspondence Contemporary anthropological practice and the search for new theoretical concepts	<p>What are the challenges for understanding a world under constant transformation?</p> <p>What does this mean for anthropological research practice?</p>	<p>Marcus, G.E & Saka, E. 2006. Assemblage. <i>Theory, Culture & Society</i> 23(2-3): 101-106</p> <p>Otto, Ton. 2016. History In and For Design. <i>Journal of Design History</i> 29(1): 58-70.</p> <p>Otto, Ton and Rachel Smith 2013. Design Anthropology: A distinct style of knowing, in: Gunn, Wendy, Ton Otto and Rachel Charlotte Smith (eds). <i>Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice</i>. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 1-29.</p>

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				Gatt, Caroline and Tim Ingold 2013. From description to correspondence: Anthropology in real time, In Gunn, Wendy, Ton Otto and Rachel Charlotte Smith (eds). <i>Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice</i> . London: Bloomsbury, pp. 139-158.
3 9 March	Don Kulick Uppsala University	Rejection The arc of the readings is to move from seeing rejection as an individual experience that one should "get over" and "move beyond" to thinking about it as a structuring feature of social, institutional, political, economic and psychological relations. The final article by Connell provides some context for the culture of rejection experienced by academics.	Is rejection constitutive of subjectivity, i.e. is it necessary and inevitable? What is the relationship between "rejecting" and "being rejected"? What are the various technologies of rejection? What are the valences of rejection? Non-acknowledgment, being ignored, indifference: are those modalities of rejection? How do they differ in structure, force and consequence? What is the social distribution of rejection? What kinds of people does rejection affect more than others? How should we think about that? How can we think about rejection as both a force that limits and a potential to enable?	Please read in the following order: 1) Weir, Kirsten. 2012. The pain of social rejection. <i>American psychological association</i> . 43(4):50. 2) Grant, Adam. How to bounce back from rejection. <i>New York Times</i> . 19 April, 2019. 3) Kulick, Don. 2006. Theory in furs: Masochist anthropology. <i>Current anthropology</i> . 43(6):933-952. 4) Fanon, Franz. 2008 [1952]. The so-called dependency complex of colonised people. <i>Black skin, white masks</i> . Pluto Press. Pp. 61-81. 5) Connell, Raewyn. 2016. What are good universities? <i>Australian universities review</i> 58(2):67-73.

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4 16 March	Franca Tamisari Ca'Foscari University of Venice & University of Queensland	Performing ethnography and the directionality of performance: "Welcome to country ceremonies" as diplomatic encounters		Fabian, J. 1990 Power and Performance. Ethnographic Explorations Through Proverbial Wisdom and Theater in Shaba, Zaire, University of Wisconsin Press. Kapferer, B. 1986 Performance and the Structuring of Meaning and Experience, in The Anthropology of Experience, (a cura di) V.W Turner and E. Brumer, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp.188-203. Tamisari F. 2005, Responsibility of performance. The interweaving of politics and aesthetics in intercultural contexts, Visual Anthropology Review, 21,1:47-62. Merlan, F. 2014 Recent Rituals of Indigenous Recognition in Australia: Welcome to country, American Anthropologist 116, 2: 296-309.
TEACHING PAUSE			TEACHING PAUSE	
6 30 March	Rosita Henry JCU	Practice Theory – Agency and Power	Discuss some of the ways anthropologists have theorised 'articulations between the practices of social actors "on the ground" and the big "structures" and "systems" that both constrain those practices and yet are ultimately susceptible to being transformed by them' (Ortner 2009: 2). In what sense can water or rivers be treated as a social actor? Discuss ways of engaging with and knowing water, and their effects on the production of place in its intimate connection to imaginaries of the future.	Ortner, Sherry B. (2006) <i>Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power and the Acting Subject</i> . Durham: Duke University Press. Gagné, K., & Rasmussen, M. (2016). Introduction – An Amphibious Anthropology: The Production of Place at the Confluence of Land and Water. <i>Anthropologica</i> , 58(2), 135-149. Strang, V. (2014). Fluid consistencies: material relationality in human engagements with water. <i>Archaeological Dialogues</i> , 21(2), 133-150.

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7 6 April	Mike Wood JCU	New stories about relations with non-human subjects	What kind of responsibilities are generated by inter-species anthropology? Are such responsibilities clarified or burdened by inter-species ethnographer's emphasis on relations?	<p>Country, B., Suchet-Pearson, S., Wright, S., Lloyd, K., Tofa, M., Sweeney, J., Maymuru, D. (2019). Goŋ Gurtha: Enacting response-abilities as situated co-becoming. <i>Environment and Planning D: Society and Space</i>, 37(4), 682–702.</p> <p>Thom van Dooren, Deborah Bird Rose. 2016. Lively Ethography: Storying Animist Worlds. <i>Environmental Humanities</i> 8 (1): 77–94</p> <p>Maurstad, A., D. Davis and S. Cowles. 2013. 'Co-being and Intra-action in Horse–Human Relationships: A Multi-Species Ethnography of Be (Com) ing Human and Be (Com) ing Horse'. <i>Social Anthropology</i> 21 (3): 322–335.</p>
8 13 April	Public Holiday Easter Monday	Student Seminar Presentations will be presented on Tuesday or later this week at a time to be advised.	Presentation of research topics/proposals	
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9 27 April	Robin Rodd JCU	Implication, domination, and emancipation	<p>What is an 'implicated subject', and why does Rothberg see them as 'the transmission belts of domination'?</p> <p>Come to class ready to present a five-minute analysis of implicated subjects in relation to a specific historical or contemporary space of exploitation and violence. What does implication entail?</p>	<p>Rothberg, Michael. 2019. <i>The implicated subject: Beyond perpetrators and victims</i>. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Pp. 1-58.</p> <p>Amsler, Sarah & Hanrahan, Nancy. 2018 Relearning Liberation: Critical Methodologies for the General Crisis. <i>Berlin journal of critical theory</i> 4(2):55-73.</p>

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			<p>What sorts of relations, negations, or responsibilities are at stake?</p> <p>What new political imaginaries and spaces for solidarity and justice could open by thinking through implication?</p> <p>Around what terms should we imagine emancipation in the 21st century?</p> <p>How can anthropology and critical theory productively inform each other?</p>	
10 4 May Public Holiday – Labour Day	Instead we meet on Friday 8 May	Distribute 2020, a virtual/in-person conference. https://distribute.utoronto.ca/ AN Honours, HDR students, staff and visiting scholars will form a JCU 'node' to participate in this international online conference.	The unequal distribution of power and wealth is growing by the day, fascism and racism are on the rise across the world, and entire ecosystems are dying. But, even as threats to life as we know it multiply, revolutionary new forms of redistributive politics are emerging.	How might anthropology respond to these crises? How might we imagine another anthropology into existence?
11 11 May 10 am-12pm	Kirsten Bell University of Roehampton	Moral anthropology	What is moral anthropology? Does it present a continuation of earlier conceptions of anthropology or a radical break with them? What is the difference, if any, between morals, values and ethics? Should anthropological research be driven by moral values? Can it ever be otherwise?	Kapferer, B. & Gold, M. (2018) Introduction: Reconceptualising the discipline. In Kapferer, B. & Gold, M. (eds), <i>Moral Anthropology: A Critique</i> . New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 1-24. Kierans, C. & Bell, K. (2017) Cultivating ambivalence: Methodological considerations for anthropology. <i>HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory</i> , 7(2): 23-44.

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			In preparation for the seminar, consider a topic that pushes all your buttons. (The kind of topic you have shouting matches with people about.) Would you study it anthropologically? <i>Should</i> you study it? If so, how?	Teitelbaum, B.R. (2019) Collaborating with the radical right: Scholar-informant solidarity and the case for an immoral anthropology. <i>Current Anthropology</i> , 60(3): 414-435.
12 18 May	Jennifer Deger JCU	Collaboration and Creative Practice in Anthropology	<p>What are the arguments for a 'new' anthropology?</p> <p>What does it mean to claim a book as a 'relational technology'?</p> <p>What kind of relationships does this book produce and promote?</p> <p>How does 'theory' work within the pages of this book?</p> <p>Does the book work on its own terms?</p> <p>How does it compare to a 'traditional' ethnography?</p>	<i>Phone & Spear: a Yuta Anthropology</i> , Miyarrka Media. Goldsmiths Press.

Week , Date, Discussant		Seminar Topic	Seminar Discussion Questions	Readings/Preparation
13 25 May 10am-12pm	Kirsten Bell University of Roehampton	Mundane infrastructures and material politics	<p>What are infrastructures? What is the relationship between standards and infrastructures? Are classifications and standards conceptual or material? In what ways are standards and infrastructures visible and invisible?</p> <p>Choose a mundane object – it might be a plastic water bottle, or your Instagram account, or your tax return, or a road. Now consider the infrastructures and standards it is entailed within and their material-semiotic consequences.</p>	<p>Bowker, G.C. & Star, S.L. (2000) Invisible mediators of action: Classification and the ubiquity of standards. <i>Mind, Culture, and Activity</i>, 7(1&2): 147-163.</p> <p>Larkin, B. (2013) The politics and poetics of infrastructure. <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i>, 42: 327-343.</p> <p>Bell, K. (2020) Signs, things and packaging: Recovering the material agency of the cigarette packet. <i>Social Studies of Science</i>, 50(1): 30-49.</p>