



# The Australian Anthropological Society Newsletter

Number 107, September 2007

REGISTRATION NO. Y02862.32 ABN 27 776 118 160 INCORPORATED IN NSW 1988

## Contents:

'Society without Opposition?'	1
Permits Cancellation	6
Remote Communities	6
AAS Executive: Two Initiatives	7
AAS Annual Conference 2007	7
Changing Places	14
News from the Programs	14
Australian Network of Student Anthropologists	14
Postgraduate Events	15
Life after a PhD	15
Modernities: Radicalism, Reflexivity, Realities	16
Asia Pacific Week 2008	16
Conferences Past	17
Forthcoming Conferences	17
Recent Theses in Anthropology	19
New Publications	22
Les Hiatt papers	24
AAS Newsletter Contributions	26

## ANSA / AAS TRAVEL GRANTS

The Australian Network of Student Anthropologists and AAS are offering 4 grants of \$300 and (NEW) 2 scholarships at \$350 to subsidize the travel costs of postgraduate students who will be presenting papers at, or attending, the AAS Annual Conference 2007.

For further details see page 14  
of this issue of the AAS Newsletter

## THE ASIA PACIFIC JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Routledge is pleased to announce that in 2008 Australian Anthropological Society members are entitled to a 20 percent discount on personal subscriptions to *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*.

For further information visit the News & Offers section of the journal homepage at [www.informaworld.com/tapja](http://www.informaworld.com/tapja)

### 'Society without Opposition?'

Ute Eickelkamp

Charles Darwin University (August 4, 2007)

The release of the June 2007 Wild-Anderson report *Little Children are Sacred* on child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory (NT) presented the Federal Minister for Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Mal Brough, with the political opportunity to launch in an election year a comprehensive make-over of Indigenous Affairs in remote areas. This may be seen as a follow-up of the 'mainstreaming' of rural and urban Indigenous Affairs, which arguably began with the 2004 announcement of the abolition of ATSIC. The step is but one on the long historical road towards ending the distinctive Aboriginal ways of life, now targeting the artifice 'remote community', which, despite

its external point of origin, is nevertheless a social fact and integral to the self-understanding and reproduction of Aboriginal societies.

However, if the current measures are consistent with the 'logic' of assimilation from a broader historical perspective, the practical measures themselves are not so coherent. As many observers have noted, the Federal Government's proposed and implemented measures, allegedly aimed at eradicating the social pathologies of remote Aboriginal communities, are inconsistent, with irrational and contradictory elements that can worsen the situation (see eg 'Jon Altman and John Taylor: A drift towards disaster', *The Australian*, July 11, 2007). Moreover, not only do the Brough measures ignore the recommendations of the report; the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Bill allegedly has nothing to do with children (although this might not be the case

---

for other associated bills). According to Muriel Bamblett, chairwoman of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, the words 'child' or 'children' are not mentioned anywhere in the Bill. Instead, Bamblett concludes, the Bill 'takes control away from indigenous communities. It allows government bureaucrats to force themselves into our boardrooms. It takes over our land. ... It places bureaucrats in charge of our lives' ('Let's fight these laws together', Muriel Bamblett, *The Age*, 13 August, 2007). This is a very significant statement. It goes to the heart of the relationship between society and the state.

As I understand it, the present 'broad strategy' and 'drastic measures' affecting about 70 communities in the NT include the following: temporary control of communities by the Australian armed forces and government-appointed administrators; suspension of the freehold title status of townships and forced leasing of Aboriginal land to the government in return for the provision of public services; proposed abolition of the permit system for Aboriginal townships; prospective privatisation of home and land ownership; increased police presence; abolition of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme, which had been established to facilitate work in government-sponsored jobs, and replacement by a less generously-funded work-for-the-dole scheme; compulsory health checks for children; partial (50%) quarantining of welfare benefits for everyone, regardless of whether the person is fulfilling responsibility as carer; and the expansion of alcohol free zones. Taken together, these measures and a declared long-term commitment to improve health, education, employment and housing through service provision by non-Indigenous bodies (and increasingly private enterprise) are supposed to ultimately produce a society without problems.

\* \* \* \* \*

The formula for rationalising the changes is not new: first define the problem, then measure its extent, and finally intervene to remove it. The difficulty, however, lies in the fact that it is now much more costly in fiscal and political terms to eradicate whole societies through the re-education of their members towards the socio-economically and hence psychologically adjusted citizenry of 'ordinary Australians'. Or at least, that is, it seems it would have been easier in the era of 'Bungalows' – prior to the circulation of mass media, and when religious organisations and industrious missionaries were prepared to do the bulk of the work.

One contemporary approach is to set up 'pathways' towards paid employment that establish the individual rather than interest groups (that is, a conglomerate of families that, however precariously, constitute a community) as the elementary unit of productivity. For example, the new training facilities in regional centres such as the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation in Darwin and the Desert Peoples Centre in Alice Springs will be instrumental in assimilating Indigenous productivity into the mainstream technologized process of

knowledge creation, transmission and application. While the pedagogy of school and post-secondary education and training has always targeted individuals, the socio-economic infrastructure of the new training centres will arguably weaken the flow of local knowledge within families and across the generations, as the students 'migrate' to the regional facilities. Visiting the Desert Knowledge Australia precinct on the outskirts of Alice Springs on its Open Day in July 2007, I asked if the residential educational Desert Peoples Centre – a consortium of the Institute of Aboriginal Development (IAD), the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) – could be seen as an Indigenous university. Not so, I was told, because the Aboriginal community of Alice Springs considers itself mainstream and wants to do away with separatist institutions. This, I thought, does not necessarily coincide with the ideas of Aboriginal educators in remote communities. But not daring to dig any further, I was left pondering the relationship between the clearly conscious decision not to include the word Aboriginal or Indigenous in the organisational title, and the implication of social inclusion – that we are all, by virtue of living in the same environment and by virtue of a commitment to the same technology-sustained future, 'Desert Peoples'. The deliberate omission of either the word Indigenous or Aboriginal would seem to imply that if we only ever talk about 'Desert Peoples', then no matter your cultural history, ethnic background or socio-economic practices, we are all, essentially, one and the same. If this interpretation is correct, we have here another instance of what anthropologist Bruce Kapferer, in his *Legends of People, Myths of State*, calls 'individual egalitarianism', a proto-Australian social ideology that purports to grant everyone the same difference. At the time, Kapferer thought that the formula exempted Indigenous Australians deemed to be different in a different way. It seems that this is precisely not the case anymore. In my example above, a contradiction arises in that only Indigenous students are eligible to enrol. Does this mean, then, that the Desert Peoples Centre is an organisation that renders difference – for enrolment purposes, at least – in terms of the same? Or does it promote Aboriginality as mainstream?

Concomitant with the assimilation *qua* technologisation and institutionalisation of Aboriginal lives is the segregation of the economic and the social from the cultural – notwithstanding the revenues that the culture industry so clearly secures. So that, while on the one hand, the Australian public is simultaneously and consistently faced with imagery intended to demonstrate the dysfunction of Aboriginal social life, we also encounter frequent talk about the preservation and maintenance of Aboriginal 'culture' – an unquestionable socio-economic and national good – on the other. Witness, for example, the rhetoric of 'cultural safety' in the workplace, particularly at sites of knowledge production such as universities, or the establishment of a 'culturally affirmative learning environment' such as the

new Darwin training facility (David Tollner, Member for Solomon, cited in Media Release 30 July 2007, Office of the Minister for Vocational and Further Education). Then there is the recent funding boost for Indigenous Cultural Heritage projects, and the Desert Peoples Centre's proposal to offer both a Stolen Generation museum and a host of programs aimed at fostering cultural and emotional well being. On the other hand – and here is a good example of the inconsistencies mentioned earlier – customary law has been removed as a mitigating factor in determining the seriousness of offences. Also, there are claims that the use of Indigenous languages – spoken by only a 'couple of hundred people' – rather than English deprives children of 'a survival mechanism for the 21<sup>st</sup> century' (Norman Swan, Health Report, ABC Radio National, 6 August 2007). Admittedly, it can be difficult to distinguish between cultural preservation on the one hand and assimilation on the other. (Among other things, this would require a careful analysis of the role of organizations such as land councils, national park and wildlife, cultural heritage authorities and academic projects.) However, the point to be made is that cultural protection in legalistic and institutional forms goes hand in hand with the assimilation of Aboriginal societies. When culture ceases to be objectified in the social and economic organisation at the local level, and in the lived experience and psyche of the people (with the latter proving a lot harder to colonise than the former), it becomes re-defined in narrower terms that fit its representation in designated institutions such as the law, and cultural and historical museums – in and outside communities, or online. Externalised and managed (often by Indigenous owners), certain elements of culture enter the general society and become part of the 'national heritage' and even 'Australian icons'. Displayed and further represented in the forms of replicas, tourist items, guided tours and language courses, cultural elements can also be marketed as a global commodity. The history and benefits of Aboriginal cultural tourism and the art movement in particular cannot be reviewed here (but see Myers 2002, *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*, Duke University Press, Durham & London). However, it is raised as an issue in the present context because the seemingly positive appreciation of civilizational achievements sits side by side with a negative assessment of lived cultural practices deemed detrimental to the social and economic integration of Aboriginal subjects. In this context, much will depend on the status of remote Aboriginal communities and their capacity to define sustainability in their own terms.

\* \* \* \* \*

At this point, it remains unclear whether the Federal Government will abandon its recent definition of small remote communities as 'economically unviable'. It is a precarious position because nothing can possibly be organised to replace them. Already there are increasing concerns that migration to towns is shifting the anti-social behaviours (especially drinking) rather than resolve them, with the towns of Cairns, Katherine, Darwin and Alice

Springs already saying that they are not equipped to deal with the influx of remote Aborigines. Meanwhile, the latest injection of \$34 million of Federal funds for housing on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands in South Australia – an area of 102 thousand square kilometres in the northwest corner of the state held under freehold title (and also bearing rich as yet untapped resources of nickel and copper) – would seem to suggest the Government has had a change of heart. Yet this most likely represents an interim measure on the way to the ultimate goal of 'real' estate for all Australians. For, as Mr Brough says, 'unless we have a fundamental change to the way in which we look at housing – and that goes to land tenure – then all we're going to do is to throw more good money after bad and the next generation will be in the same overcrowded situation' ('Brough announces Aboriginal housing package for SA', ABC News Online; <http://abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/08/03/1996624.htm?section=australia>, accessed 3/08/07). Leaving aside both the more immediate question of how the homeloan crisis in the USA and Australia will impact on prospects for Indigenous home ownership, and the somewhat deeper question of what kind of life the new property relations precipitate, Mr Brough claims, albeit indirectly, that private home and land ownership is the only means by which adequate housing for Aboriginal people can be ensured. Thus, regardless of the perceived viability or otherwise of remote Indigenous communities, there is little doubt that the thrust of the proposed and applied interventionary measures is to render inconceivable any alternative models.

By and large, those Aboriginal people who have responded publicly welcome many of the Federal Government's interventions in the NT, except for the quarantining of welfare payments, the abolition of the permit system, and forced suspension of freehold title. It seems that the last remaining vestiges of the Aboriginal rights movement are now to stand the test of time in the face of Prime Minister John Howard's 'practical reconciliation' politics. This is registered with concern, including by those who are in the business of delivering intervention programs in Aboriginal communities. As my colleague Gary Robinson (The manufacture of crisis, CDU public lecture series, 29 September 2006, <http://owl.cdu.edu.au/newsup/news/2006/Sep/C16CDF8401/>, accessed 27/04/2007) recently pointed out:

Policy in Australian Aboriginal affairs has yielded to a pragmatic orientation to social outcomes, driven by the engines of the 'new welfare' including service-led community development, 'reciprocal obligation' and a growing list of national benchmarks. ... In this world, Aboriginal societies are communities, but societies no longer. They are increasingly defined, not by distinctive cultures and social processes, but by their need for partnership with government to deal with symptoms of dysfunction and social failure.

At present, the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion are shifting from the 1970s and 80s view of full citizenship

---

and equality through special rights for Aborigines, to the egalitarian position that 'all Australians are to be treated equal [read 'same'] before the law'. Given the current state of national politics and the almost complete absence of international pressure on the Federal Government to secure Indigenous self-governance, it seems more unlikely than ever that a special legal status for Aborigines in Australia will be sought. In response, Indigenous real politics have shifted to pragmatic consent, even though it is by no means evident that the majority of remote Aborigines share the views of publicly prominent figures. Exemplary are the programmatic and political challenges for Cape York's Hope Vale intellectual, Noel Pearson. His model of economic and social reform that calls for urban-based elite education and abolition of CDEP programs for communities on Cape York Peninsula centres on a 'social norms deficit' view of Aboriginal lives that is seen to originate in the dependency on 'passive (*sic!*) welfare'. Re-defining 'dysfunction and poverty as behaviours' that cannot be changed by historical explanation alone, the Cape York reform wants people to 'internalise a set of revitalised social norms, which mandate personal responsibility for work, education and the welfare of children' ('From handout to handup: Cape York welfare reform project Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge – Design recommendations', posted 25/07/2007 on Australian Policy Online). The trial package – which, however, is not entirely congruent with the national emergency response package – just won \$48 million of Federal funds, after it spearheaded the current interventions by the Federal Government in the NT. Indigenous initiatives of social and emotional adjustment that draw on mainstream programs (also in progress on the Tiwi Islands and in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands) are an under-researched topic. And while I make no attempt to address this topic here, it is difficult not to see these programs as well as the Government-led interventions as an alignment of political with individual needs and aspirations, the satisfaction of which, as Herbert Marcuse noted long ago in his *One-Dimensional Man* (1966, p. ix), 'promotes business and the commonweal, and the whole appears to be the very embodiment of Reason'.

Yet within this rationality looms the irrationality of a false consciousness, and contradictions are bound to emerge. For instance, the Cape York leader, if self-mockingly, is now registering his complaint with regard to certain urban Indigenous leaders (*The Weekend Australian*, 28-29 July 2007). Outraged by an alleged 'breach of indigenous protocol', Pearson criticises the federally funded 'uptown blacks' for stealing the satellite licence of Alice Springs-based community broadcaster ICTV for the new National Indigenous Television (NITV), a Sydney-based network. Pearson laments that these new Uncle Toms are talking 'ominously about "production values"' and emulating American Black Entertainment Television. One might ask if these 'blackfellas in bed with the Howard Government' are any more paradoxical than the black social reformer who publishes his agenda with the neo-liberal think tank, The Centre for Independent Studies. One could ask if

there is not a kind of internal colonisation at work. I have in mind here also certain spokespeople of Indigenous organisations who welcome the Government interventions and who are indeed satisfied that their calls for law and order are finally being heard (or so it appears), hence affirming their power over Aboriginal subjects (clients).

\* \* \* \* \*

Underneath both the old and the new 'packages' lurks the enduring project of a one-dimensional society. Yes, Marcuse's classic analysis of how advanced technological society totalises itself makes for chilling reading in the here and now: it can be read as a vivisection of Australia today, as an analysis that is profoundly more liberating (because revolutionary and not reformist) and, I would argue, more relevant, than the work of Amartya Sen championed by Pearson. From a Marcusean perspective, Pearson's reform and all the other 'remote possibilities' that build on the naturalised formula of future-oriented education, training and cutting-edge technology transmitted in centralised institutions, are manifestations of a society that contains change by channelling it along a single path of wellbeing through techno-economic progress. Here, technological process and political process are one, which makes it extremely difficult to imagine alternatives. Most Australians, black or white, remote or urban, believe in the good of the good, as a colleague of mine once remarked. Voluntarily or by structural force of the moral and political paradigms, they accept with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition the 'National Purpose, bipartisan policy, the decline of pluralism, the collusion of Business and Labour within the strong State' (Marcuse). In short, the soup of necessities is cooked with ingredients that integrate opposites: while historical agents for genuine change are dissolving, all we are left to desire is improvement within the accepted status quo (i.e. middle class sub/urban existence). This may be regarded as a further manifestation of individual egalitarianism. And it is not a covert agenda. There are now Aboriginal powerbrokers, parliamentarians and 'leaders' who accuse anyone who insists on the possibility of radical difference and the legitimacy of cultural autonomy for Aboriginal people of promoting apartheid, of trying to 'arrest' Indigenous social progress for the sake of their own middle class intellectual or romantic interests. But even if we disregard the claims of (non-Indigenous) anthropologists, linguists and other liberals, surely we cannot overlook the thousands of Aboriginal people who have spent their lives maintaining their languages, their practices, their social and emotional constitution and their societal visions? Are they too to be told that the formerly colonialist evolutionary paradigm and assimilationist agenda are now the good things, the building blocs, as it were, of the new anti-colonial program?

The muting of oppositional voices in the current debate is directly proportional to the degree to which crisis talk prioritises safe bodies of children over and above cultural difference – the implication being that cultural practices breed child sexual abuse. Here then is the twist through

---

which Indigenous Affairs is being stood on its head: under the banner of social anomie caused by economic destitution and cultural perversion, hitherto affirmative options of the law (land rights, Native Title) are morphed into a legalistic normative system that tries to criminalize lawful Indigenous practices. If the use of Aboriginal languages in the white domain was prohibited in the past, the symbolic reproduction of society through male initiation rites in the bush is now under scrutiny by the Australian Crime Commission ('Crime watchdog probe on initiations', *The Australian*, 21/07/2007). According to the national newspaper, the investigators want to find out if 'homosexuality is involved' – are they implying that this would be a crime? In response, an Aboriginal mother in Central Australia promptly assured the journalist that homosexual practices are unheard of, and she is not alone with this view. Given that homosexuality has been widely reported in the older ethnographic literature (for an overview see SO Murray 1992, 'Age-stratified homosexuality: introduction', in SO Murray (ED), *Oceanic Homosexualities*, Garland Publishing, New York, pp. 3-23), the claim must be seen as a denial in the face of both external scrutiny and judgement on the one hand, and changing forms of internal censorship on the other. While, personally, I find this to be a repressive move towards a much more *primitive* notion of normative sexuality than the elaborate symbolic system of 'man-making' ceremony offers, at the same time I am left wondering where the protest against this latest incursion is from gay supporters and, insofar as circumcision will be targeted, I also wonder why no protest can be heard from the Judeo-Christian and Muslim communities, or the medical community concerned about sexually transmitted diseases.

\* \* \* \* \*

As I write these lines, the Federal Parliament passes the legislation to install the 'emergency measures'. This is not surprising, despite protest from Aboriginal people, lobbyists, the police and others brave enough to risk being labelled apartheid, separatist, or even abusers themselves. Dissenters include a delegation of influential NT Indigenous leaders who travelled to Canberra, in the hope that the Federal Government would delay the passing of legislation allowing a Federal take-over of NT Indigenous communities. The Chief Executive of the Police Federation of Australia, Mark Burgess, also registered his opposition to the Federal Government's plan to abolish the permit system, reportedly stating that, 'The Australian Government has failed to make the case that there is a connection between the permit system and child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities'. Meanwhile, the President of the NT Police Association, Vince Kelly, has suggested that the 'national emergency' operation might be compared to 'sketches from Monty Python's quest for the Holy Grail' ('Re-invasion of a nation', *Live Journal* 13/08/2007, at <http://pro2.livejournal.com/2613793.html>, accessed 14/08/07). Such criticism by the executive combined with the blatancy with which the government seeks to ensure political authority makes me wonder if

this is not where the real crisis is to be found. In Australia, the question of political authority is inextricably linked to social wellbeing *qua* economic 'safety'. So rather than mere suppression of cultural difference, the rhetoric of crisis and concern regarding unsafe childhoods (symbolising the future) may also obscure the reality of social conflict. After all, it is well established at a global level that economic progress and the incorporation of Indigenous peoples into the world market economy have dramatically lowered Indigenous living standards (see eg Richard H Robbins, *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, Boston: Pearson, 2008).

Perhaps there is a further link to be uncovered. Not only does crisis present an opportunity to assert authority, authority – if it is to be held in the long term – also requires trust. I was familiar with observations on the importance of 'sincerity' that the Australian public expects from representatives of the state. But I had not compared this with the concern that Anangu also have for trust. Some people, as I learnt on my last visit to the APY lands in July, were searching Mr. Brough's eyes for signs of his sincerity. I don't know what they found, but to the best of my knowledge, many residents on the APY lands in South Australia feel little inclined to trust any government, partly because the reiterated sincerity of their State Government has proven illusory. Premier Mike Rann has been not so 'fair dinkum' in his dealings with Anangu. In the most recent past, for example, his government, conceivably under much pressure from Canberra, altered the *Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act* 1981 in such a way as to effectively weaken self governance. It also de-funded the oldest community on the lands. So, if indeed Anangu place trust in any (non-Indigenous, institutional) 'body', I would suggest that it is in the Churches. This points to a whole other set of questions about the general process that is recalibrating the relationships between Indigenous people, the Church and the state. And while I do not intend to explore these here, I might add that the concern with sincerity and trustworthiness as a measure of legitimacy in the Australian public sphere appears – to the eyes of an originally European observer – rather odd. For surely it is not faith in the motivations of government and its executors but capacity to govern and the consequences of actions that count. If one were to re-introduce a dialectic or adopt for a moment a psychoanalytic stance, then we would interpret things not at face value but as their direct opposite. From this perspective, this is what might be heard: the louder the proclamations of sincerity, the more dishonest the speaker; the stronger the claims to efficient measures, the weaker the actual capabilities; and, the bigger the crisis in Aboriginal communities, the deeper the crisis in Australian society at large.

At this stage of incorporation into the nation-state, it would seem unrealistic to envisage autonomy for Aboriginal people, even if that is what some groups may desire. But it is equally unrealistic to deny that autonomy is lost to all of us. For civil liberty is not the same as freedom, which needs to be re-imagined altogether.

---

**Permits Cancellation**  
**A Letter to John Howard (Prime Minister) & Mal Brough (Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs)**

**Maïa Ponsonnet**

Université Paris VIII, France (August 1, 2007)

Dear Mr Howard, Dear Mr Brough,

In June, your government declared a state of “emergency” in the Northern Territory. The related report on child abuse, the emergency plan and its measures were echoed in the French media.

Many points in this plan have been discussed at length and have found supporters and detractors amongst different groups, Aboriginal and others. But all members of remote Aboriginal communities, and all those who know remote Aboriginal communities and their members, unanimously disagree with one point: the dismantling of the permit system.

I am a French philosopher and am working on Dalabon language of Central Arnhem Land. I now live in Paris but I lived in Weemol (Central Arnhem Land) between 1998 and 2003. I know this community well and I am appalled at the idea that foreigners will be able to enter this area freely. These communities, as well as Gulin-Gulin (Bulman), Wugularr (Beswick) and Barunga are located on the Central Arnhem Road, the main road between the Stuart Highway and Nhulunbuy/Gove. If the permit system is scrapped, there is a high risk that the impact of “wild” non-organized tourism becomes drastic. Further more, at the moment, the need for permits helps local police in preventing importation of alcohol by illegal dealers. It also helps prevent all sorts of illegal business and disastrous abuse (in the broader sense of the world) of communities and their members. Last but not least, thanks to the existence of the permit system, community members feel “at home”, a feeling which makes a considerable difference as compared to being in town, where feeling ill at ease has a very negative impact on the welfare of Aboriginal populations.

The correlation between child abuse and cancellation of the permit system has never been clearly explained by your government. Having a deep knowledge of the situation in Central Arnhem Land, I am sure that dismantling the permit system cannot have any positive effect on the communities in that region. On the contrary, it might have terrible consequences. I hardly dare think about what these communities might become if the permit system is demolished. And this region is not exceptional: I believe many areas would suffer the same drastic disorders if there were no permit system.

I understand the permit system revision will soon be submitted to Parliament. In the name of all the Aboriginal community members I know, I can only beg you and your government to renounce to this part of the emergency plan.

I thank you very much for your attention.

Respectfully,

**Maïa Ponsonnet**

Ponsonnet, M. (2007) Recognizing Victims without Blaming Them: A Moral Contest? *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 2007/1.

**Remote Communities**

**A Letter to Mal Brough, Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs**

**Gillian Cowlishaw**

University of Technology, Sydney (August 3, 2007)

Dear Mr Brough and fellow Ministers,

The state of emergency declared by your government in June has filled many who are familiar with remote Indigenous communities with some anguish, but here I express only my own views.

For the last thirty two years I have closely followed the history of one southern Arnhem Land community at Bulman, known as Gulin Gulin, as well as nearby Weemol, associated outstations and some related communities to the north. I know many of these people well and have researched and published a detailed account of their history over the 100 years of contact with Europeans. They have numerous difficulties, but not the least of these is due to lack of stability in the relationship with Australian institutions and authorities. They have seen numerous policies come and go. Just as people understood and adjusted to one policy or practice, another government or another fashion would see a reversal of the themes, the language and the outcomes.

I applaud your apparently committed plans for better policing, better health delivery, and better community governance, because failures in these areas have made it very difficult for these communities to develop and become more self-sustaining, and for capable leadership to emerge. Past efforts to integrate Indigenous peoples into the Australian society and economy have often been clumsy and counter productive because failing to take account of the people’s history, habits and knowledge. Time is required to properly negotiate appropriate policies with people who are being asked to make radical changes in their lives. The fear now is of further failure and thus further alienation and disillusionment, especially for those Indigenous people with visions of a different future. These are people with access to the outside world, but who are barred entry into it.

Three features of your policy are of great concern to me.

1. Education seems the key to the kinds of changes you are envisaging but I have heard little about education since the policy was announced. Were you to ensure excellence in the area of education alone, enormous benefits would flow to the community and to the wider society. I visited Bulman in June and discovered that, despite the availability of schooling for twenty years, some young adults and some children were totally illiterate. (I was not there long enough to ascertain the levels of literacy). The reasons for this failure may be complex. To provide excellence in

---

education would require your commitment to provide truly skilled teachers and the best resources and support over the long term to ensure that all children acquire literacy and numeracy. I cannot believe that Australia does not have skilled people who could rise to the challenge to equip these wonderfully imaginative and lively children with what they need to join the wider Australian society on their own terms.

2. The scrapping of CDEP scheme may appear to make sense because it appears not to have led to the acquisition of skills, or not at the rate we might hope. At Bulman in the 1970s, the adults all firmly believed that their own young people would soon take up the jobs in the community. But the failure of the education system means the young adults are ill equipped to take these limited few jobs. I documented attempts at training that took place at Bulman in the 1980s which failed miserably. Have these failures led to improvements in the training available? If there is no CDEP and continuing failure to train people properly to work anywhere, then further depression, self destructiveness and hopelessness will likely result. At least a longer lead-in to the demise of CDEP would make sense to allow alternative arrangements to be properly introduced and explained.

3. The plan to scrap the permit system seems quite senseless and counter productive, even from the point of view of policing those sexual predators and grog runners that your policies are supposed to control. While the permit system has not stopped travellers, police, mineral exploration and those on business from entering Arnhem Land and other Aboriginal areas, it has provided some measure of control and protection from exploitative people and the idly curious public. The Bulman people have some sense of being able to manage their social environment and some protection from those who might prey on the young and the vulnerable or who might be defying alcohol restrictions. Bulman is particularly vulnerable because it lies on the Central Arnhem Highway, the main road from Katherine to Gove. The permit system has caused no inconvenience to the mining company or the residents of Gove and Yirrkalla, but it does allow Bulman residents to know who is in the area and what their purpose is as is the right of other Australians in relation to their own land. I, as well as the Bulman people, dread the thought of the kind of travellers who might pour through this area if there is no restriction. Further, there are likely to be accidents, road damage, stranded tourists as well as increased problems of law enforcement. I thus strongly urge you to reconsider the scrapping of the permit system.

**Gillian Cowlshaw**

President, Australian Anthropological Society

## **AAS Executive: Two Initiatives**

The Australian Anthropological Society is establishing a distinguished lecture series beginning in 2008. It will be delivered by an eminent anthropologist who has worked in an Australian university or conducted research in Australia for a substantial part of their careers. The lecture is intended to demonstrate the significance and relevance of anthropology in the world today to other scholars and to the public. The AAS Executive invites suggestions from members for presenters and topics and venues. The executive will then choose the speaker and fund the event in cooperation with a university in one of the capital cities. Please e-mail suggestions to [aas@anu.edu.au](mailto:aas@anu.edu.au)

The Australian Anthropological Society is also inaugurating an annual AAS essay prize to be chosen from articles published in Australian Anthropology journals each calendar year beginning in 2007. Editors of these journals will be invited to submit two articles each before April the following year, and a committee appointed by the AAS Executive will judge the winner. The prize (yet to be decided) will be awarded at the annual conference.

## **AAS Annual Conference 2007**

**October 30 – November 2, 2007**

**Australian National University**

**Transforming Economies, Changing States**

*Conference web site:* <http://www.aas.asn.au/conf07/>

Radical changes in the economic and political aspects of human life-worlds characterize the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Although the economy has always been at the heart of social life, both national and local economies have taken on an increasingly monetary character, transforming the social fabric and leading to a widespread economization of cultural practice. Neoliberal claims about the receding state notwithstanding, it is increasingly apparent that these transformations have depended on a growth and consolidation of state power, particularly as exerted around the object of 'economy' and the practices of 'economic development'. Growth of state influence has occurred through the emerging framework of international institutions, through the 'outsourcing' of state functions, and through the increasing incursion of state policies and programs into daily life and subjective experience.

At the same time, it is clear that many places remain either at the periphery or beyond the ambit of the state, whilst new spaces of 'exception' have also emerged as part of contemporary changes in state organization and economic practice. Similarly, various forms of 'customary' economic practice and political organization persist, even in the face of current transformations. At least some of these practices offer forms of local resistance to or transformation of what are often presumed to be monolithic or homogeneous forms of global capitalism or governance.

---

This conference aims to provide a forum for contemporary anthropological engagements with 'the economic' and 'the state', 'government' and 'the political' more generally. The conference seeks to foreground the role of the economy in relation to the late-modern social transformations.

### *Keynote Address*

The conference will begin with a keynote address by **Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing**, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, on the evening of 30 October.

Conference dinner: Vanillabeen café, Garran Road, November 1. Panels and plenaries: October 31 to morning of November 2. Heads of Departments and AAS Annual General Meeting: morning of November 2.

### *Proposed Panels*

#### **1. Institutionalising anthropology in Australia and the Asia Pacific: The role of anthropological societies, museums and other institutions of professionalisation, dissemination and display in the regional development of the discipline**

Convener: **Greg Acciaioli**, Anthropology, University of Western Australia ([acciaioli@cyllene.uwa.edu.au](mailto:acciaioli@cyllene.uwa.edu.au))

Many treatments of the history of anthropology in Australia and other nation-states of the surrounding region have focussed on the role of particular individuals (e.g. Elkin, Koentjaraningrat, etc.), emphasizing how their theoretical perspectives and moral commitments have informed ethnographic practice and its impact. This panel seeks instead to focus on the institutions that have played a role not only in fostering communication among academics and professional practitioners, but also with the wider public. The panel welcomes papers dealing with the history and contemporary roles of such institutions as the various national professional associations that have functioned in the history of the discipline in Australia (including AAS!) and the Asia-Pacific region, state anthropological societies, anthropological museums, and other institutions that have contributed to the development and dissemination of anthropology in the Australian and regional context. Particularly welcome are contributions that focus not only on historical trends in these institutions' treatments of applied issues and academic topics, but also on how such institutions are responding to contemporary opportunities and pressures in their organisational priorities and presentations.

#### **2. Anthropological perspectives on the impact of global warming on human societies: Processes of adaptation and mitigation**

Coveners: **Hans Baer** - University of Melbourne ([hbaer@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:hbaer@unimelb.edu.au)) and **Megan Jennaway** - University of Queensland ([m.jennaway@sph.uq.edu.au](mailto:m.jennaway@sph.uq.edu.au))

While anthropologists have long examined the impact of environmental factors on human societies, only a few have discussed the impact of global warming upon human

societies. The vast majority of climate scientists argue that global warming has been induced largely by various human activities, particularly the emission of greenhouse gases associated with the burning of fossil fuels, since the Industrial Revolution. As organisers of this session, we invite our colleagues to submit papers that touch upon the impact of global warming on humanity in various local, national, regional, and international contexts. While various multi-national corporations with their commitment to economic expansion have contributed to greenhouse gas emissions, some corporations and politicians have come to advocate various forms of "green capitalism" that would include technological innovations, reliance on alternative forms of energy, and carbon trading schemes. However, are such schemes sufficient to adapt to and mitigate global warming over the long run, or is humanity in need of a new global political economy to reverse the treadmill of production and consumption that contribute not only to global warming but also to social disparities, population growth, depletion of natural resources, and environmental degradation?

#### **3. Neo-liberalism and its vernacular variants**

Conveners: **Nick Bainton**, University of Queensland ([nbainton@gmail.com](mailto:nbainton@gmail.com)); **John Cox**, University of Queensland ([jccox@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jccox@unimelb.edu.au)); **Mary Patterson**, SSEE, Univ. of Melbourne ([marycp@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:marycp@unimelb.edu.au))

Studies of neo-liberalism have tended to focus on the impacts of economic and political restructuring on communities in both developed and developing countries. Anthropologists have only recently begun to engage with the embedding of neo-liberal language and ideology in daily life.

In the context of 'late capitalism', anthropologists are now often finding different cultural manifestations of distinctively neo-liberal global capital within the local setting. This process is not geographically confined, though interesting cases continually surface within Melanesia where an earlier anthropological tradition saw some Melanesians as 'pre-adapted to capitalism'.

In this session we invite papers that address the possibility that, in Melanesia and elsewhere, there are now 'multiple neo-liberalisms'. We aim to investigate the processes surrounding the vernacular expression of neo-liberalism within varied settings, and whether these are obscured by the politics of representation and the sympathetic engagement of most of us with the anthropology of resistance to the excesses and consequences of neo-liberal ideology.

#### **4. Global Yokels: Transnationalism, assimilation and the limits of multicultural governance**

Convener: **Ashley Carruthers**, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University ([ashley.carruthers@anu.edu.au](mailto:ashley.carruthers@anu.edu.au))

The trajectory of migrant assimilation imagined by modernist nation builders did not go as planned. The pressures of assimilation still act on first generation migrants and their descendants, but the cultural

identifications of such groups are increasingly unpredictable and dynamic. The transnationalisation and superdiversification of migrant flows and identifications means that existing multicultural policy no longer necessarily addresses or even recognises its targets. One way of thinking about the new multicultural subjects is under the playful yet provocative rubric of Global Yokels. This term is put forward as a beginning point for thinking about the contemporary identity paradoxes of migrants in Australia and other Western liberal multicultural nations (it may prove to be useful as a way of thinking about other contexts also). It attempts to encapsulate on the one hand the established nature of migrant claims to belonging and the reality of migrants' local cultural becomings and hybridities; and on the other the importance and intensity of migrants' extraterritorial belongings, identifications, mobilities and knowledges. Global Yokels are cosmopolitan but parochial, transnational but local, different but familiar. They occupy cultural worlds that are insular and resistant yet nevertheless have multiple points of articulation to the "mainstream" and to other minoritarian cultural spaces. These subjects dwell between assimilation and transnationalism in a way that poses significant challenges to existing conceptions of multiculturalism and the governance of cultural difference. This panel invites speakers to present ethnographically grounded case studies exploring these governmental and identitarian dynamics in Australia and elsewhere.

### 5. Wine, tourism, and the economy of food

Conveners: **John Claridge**, Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide ([jccjc62@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jccjc62@yahoo.com.au)); **David Raftery**, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University ([raftery@octa4.net.au](mailto:raftery@octa4.net.au))

In order to understand the significance of food and drink in contemporary society, scholars such as Mintz (1985) and Roseberry (1988) have underscored the importance of mapping the complex socio-economic and historical terrain over which food travels. Such themes highlight the relations of power that structure the usually taken-for-granted economic concerns that exist between the production, and eventual consumption of food and drink in diverse communities.

Food and wine tourism are social practices that bridge the gap between local communities and transnational forms of consumption. Discourses concerning naturalised and bioorganic foodways products make the integrity of the entire production process their central marketing feature. However, conflicts surrounding the sustainability of traditional rural livelihoods and water on the one hand, and the globalised movement of people and economic interests on the other, speak of the demise of rural social capital.

Of particular interest are papers that explore socio-economic practices and social relationships, in relation to changes in the environment, and global practices of foodways consumption. This includes discussions that examine the larger role of the state, local authorities and

corporate bodies in marketing and legitimating particular discourses and practices surrounding places, rural lifeworlds, and their relationship to food, drink and wine.

### 6. Ethnographies of governing and the anthropology of states

Conveners: **Assa Doron**, National University of Singapore ([sasda@nus.edu.sg](mailto:sasda@nus.edu.sg)); **Andrew Kipnis**, RSPAS, Australian National University ([andrew.kipnis@anu.edu.au](mailto:andrew.kipnis@anu.edu.au)); **Pal Nyiri**, Macquarie University ([Pal.nyiri@scmp.mq.edu.au](mailto:Pal.nyiri@scmp.mq.edu.au))

Political anthropology has recently been reinvigorated by a wide variety of theoretical approaches including Michael Herzfeld's conception of cultural intimacy, Michael Taussig's studies of state terror and the governmentality school's depictions of neoliberalism. Recent studies of state-society relations have further argued for the need to veer away from a Weberian understanding of the state as an autonomous, reified organization with a unified will and consciousness. All of these theorizations work to open up studies of contemporary political institutions in a manner that focuses beyond elite actors or the few specially designated sites favored by political scientists. This panel will highlight papers that are sensitive to the local, everyday relationships that people have with multiple state institutions, agencies and officials, tracing the ways the state has historically produced and altered concepts of personhood, work, economic and power relations at the level of everyday life. We hope to raise questions about how older institutions and values, articulated through cultural idioms of morality, reciprocity and patronage are intermingling with newer constructions of power and the state, derived from universal notions of social justice, equality, and the impersonal rule of law, as well as to illuminate how the state is conceptualized, represented, legitimized and its actions contested at the grassroots level. Finally, we are interested in the relationships between transnational processes of governing and national contexts. How do globally circulating policies, institutions, ideas about governing and political strategies move across national boundaries and what acts of translation occur in their movement and localization? Conversely, how do particularly nationalized governing agents import, export, localize and regulate technologies and discourses of governing?

Those interested in participating on a panel dedicated to such problems should email their queries or abstracts to any of the three organizers listed above.

### 7. Anthropology Inc.

Conveners: **Colin Filer** ([colin.filer@anu.edu.au](mailto:colin.filer@anu.edu.au)) and **James Weiner** ([James.Weiner@anu.edu.au](mailto:James.Weiner@anu.edu.au))

Resource Management in Asia-Pacific Program, RSPAS, Australian National University

Most anthropologists would probably agree with Joel Bakan's assertion that the modern corporation is a pathological monster. However, there seems to be an increasing variety of circumstances in which corporate

---

executives engage anthropologists as employees, consultants or advisers; and even those anthropologists who eschew this kind of engagement still find themselves working as employees, consultants or advisers in organisations (including universities) that increasingly behave *as if they were* corporations. In this session we aim to address the following questions:

- How, when, where and why do corporate interests value the products of anthropological research?
- Is there anything distinctive about the pattern of anthropological engagement with ‘real’ corporations as opposed to other corporate forms of organisation?
- How does the process of engagement with real corporations or their corporate shadows affect the theory and practice of our discipline?
- In what sense, and with what effects, is the discipline itself being corporatised, both within and beyond the walls of the Ivory Tower?

### **8. Things are looking up: Researching the rich, the powerful and those in-between**

Conveners: **Michael Gilding**, Swinburne University of Technology; **Tess Lea**, Charles Darwin University; **Martin Forsey**, University of Western Australia ([mforsey@cyllene.uwa.edu.au](mailto:mforsey@cyllene.uwa.edu.au))

It is more than thirty years since Nader exhorted social researchers to ‘study up’, to cease gazing at the colonized in favour of research focused squarely on the rich and powerful on their home turf. She named access, attitudes, ethics and methodology as the main obstacles identified by her colleagues, but dismissed these objections either as issues faced in all types of fieldwork, as untested propositions, or as something we had to side-step if we are to really make a contribution to understanding the human condition. And yet, the project suggested by Nader has been barely touched by social researchers. Anthropologists in particular remain fixated on championing the subaltern, a focus that continues to hamper our ability to describe and comprehend relations of power and the social production of inequality. In calling for papers focused on the methodological, ethical and epistemological implications of conducting research among elites and the middle classes, we invite potential participants from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, those who have conducted research with upward inflections, those who are thinking of it and those who would not even consider it and are prepared to say why.

### **9. Postgraduate showcase**

Conveners: **Klara Hansen** ([klara@ansa.asn.au](mailto:klara@ansa.asn.au)), **Jovan Maud** and **Jennifer Gabriel**

At the 2005 AAS Conference in Adelaide, Kirrilly Thompson organised a Postgraduate Showcase session. Its success, and that of the Postgraduate Symposium at JCU in 2006, has inspired us to run this session at the 2007 conference. It is also intended to complement, but not repeat, the activities of the Postgraduate Colloquium to be held the day before the main conference. This session will be an opportunity for postgraduate students to showcase their research projects. Presentations are called for which

outline the fundamentals of the project according to its stage of development. Presenters can also include those who have recently submitted their dissertation or graduated. This is an excellent opportunity for postgraduate scholars to present their research in a professional environment, gain conference experience, form contacts with peers and benefit from the advice of others in a supportive environment. The intention of this session is to encourage postgraduate scholars to view themselves as part of the Australian academic and anthropological community and to inspire them to consider the potential of their research beyond the purposes of the dissertation. This session will showcase the diversity of postgraduate research directions and new talent across Australia. Presentations will be grouped according to general sub-themes if they arise.

### **10. Development and the wild: State, economy, and nature**

Conveners: **Chris Haynes**, Charles Darwin University; **Holly High**, University of Sydney ([holly.high@deakin.edu.au](mailto:holly.high@deakin.edu.au))

A concerted effort at transforming economies is underway in the form of international development aid and attempts to “make poverty *history*.” But how do these efforts conflict or overlap with concurrent efforts to make a sustainable *future* in the form of environmental sustainability and protection? While environmentalism and development can appear at odds with one another, they can also appear complementary. This is particularly apparent in their parallel effects in terms of “transforming states,” especially insofar as they are instrumental in rearticulating “governmentality” and establishing “states of exception”. Both rely on constructing persuasive images of the global and the local, and both operate through transnational networks.

Biodiversity conservation zones, nature reserves, and protected areas are particularly telling spaces where competing claims for poverty reduction and environmental protection intersect. Environmentalism has always carried with it an aspect of class: there is frequently a positive relationship between economic prosperity and nature loving, despite the contradictory fact that prosperity is often premised on environmental degradation. Likewise, the development industry has a preoccupation with nature. Contemporary trends such as land titling, eco-tourism and “sustainable development” express the urge to both conserve and to transform. With these considerations in mind, this panel invites papers that utilize ethnographic data to examine the intersection between state, economy and nature.

### **11. Dynamic nation-states and encrypted landscapes: Australia**

Convener: **Tanya J King** ([tanya.king@deakin.edu.au](mailto:tanya.king@deakin.edu.au)), School of History, Heritage and Society, Deakin Univ.

Anthropologists recognise efforts to define and express understandings about the nation-state as necessarily dynamic, often contested, and evolving with changes in political, economic, philosophical and civil trends. As

well as being reflected in laws, iconic symbols, folklore and in the bodies and temperaments of a nation-states' citizens (to name but few), nations are etched into the natural and built environments people encounter. Presenters are invited to explore expressions of Australia, 'the nation', in relation to physical spaces and, particularly, to reflect upon the various political and economic circumstances in which meanings emerge, are transformed and transform those who encounter them. Papers might consider definitions of 'natural' and 'built' spaces and places; migrant interpretations of iconic features such as 'the outback' or the Port Melbourne Pier; the role of the Commonwealth in legitimising particular expressions of 'the nation'; the patriotic meanings gleaned from experiences in environments outside of Australia, such as Gallipoli, Turkey or Earls Court, London; indigenous experiences of environments in relation to occupied Australia, or the ways in which physical movement through environments inform, and are informed by, corporeal experiences of the Australian nation.

## 12. Australian anthropology in the public sphere – An open discussion

Conveners: **Tess Lea** and **Ute Eickelkamp** ([Ute.Eickelkamp@cdu.edu.au](mailto:Ute.Eickelkamp@cdu.edu.au)), School for Social and Policy Research, Charles Darwin University

We seek four contributors to an interdisciplinary panel discussion on the role of Australian anthropology in the public sphere and specifically, whether anthropology can be imagined as a vehicle for public education outside academia. In other words, how can anthropology get out into society when and where it counts?

We have in mind two approaches: how anthropology (or an anthropological mode of thinking) could be brought into the classroom; and how it can inform public discourse about social issues in a way that forgoes the defensive position of counter-opinion making.

Rather than presenting papers, the four selected panel members are expected to address the following questions in a chaired 60-minute panel debate that will then be opened to the audience (30 minutes):

1. Why is anthropology in Australia only marginally active in the public arena? Is this an old problem? What are the costs of involvement? What's at stake?
2. If schools are a site to influence cultural understandings, where does anthropology as a scientific project of the enlightenment stand in relation to the national school curriculum planning that wants to define education in terms of science without interpretation?
3. What could anthropological thinking mean in the school classroom? Are there international examples to draw on?
4. How can anthropology contribute to an education towards not only 'employability', but towards social and political imagination?
5. What does the planned scoring system and the hyper-focus on performance levels in education

suggest about the nature of social relationships that are in the making?

Following a 5-minute introduction by the convenors, each panelist is invited to make a position statement (5 minutes) on the general question of where anthropology is at in the public arena. During the remaining 35 minutes, each panelist may respond to the more specific questions and/or to the comments made by others.

We anticipate a lively debate around some of the 'big picture' questions - the place of anthropology in the making of social thought and practice and its role in the education of Australian people – but also insist on concrete applications of proposed ideas.

People who would like to participate in the discussion as panelists should contact Ute Eickelkamp ([ute.eickelkamp@cdu.edu.au](mailto:ute.eickelkamp@cdu.edu.au)) with a brief description of their background in the areas to be discussed and the points they wish to raise.

## 13. Critical perspectives of femininities and masculinities

Conveners: **Adelyn Lim** ([adelyn.lim@anu.edu.au](mailto:adelyn.lim@anu.edu.au)) and **Ana Dragojlovic** ([ana.dragojlovic@anu.edu.au](mailto:ana.dragojlovic@anu.edu.au)), Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University

This panel focuses on the changing representations of femininities and masculinities in the contemporary world. Rapid development and modernisation coupled with globalisation has resulted in vast changes in all aspects of life, including how men and women look at themselves, and respond to their identity, sexuality, marriage and family. We aim to situate critical perspectives of femininities and masculinities within broader processes of cultural and economic globalisation, elucidating the following:

- How are identities being recreated and renegotiated as a result of the global cultural supermarket? Are representations of femininities and masculinities simply a consumer choice?
- How does migration shape and reshape gender relations of both hetero and homo sexual peoples?
- How are various social movements engaged with the global changes, challenges and crises in the social organisation of gender, as well as the politics of femininity and masculinity?
- What are the globally circulating discourses on gender and sexuality in literature, the media and popular culture? How are these discourses localised?

More importantly, are these femininities and masculinities new? Or are current celebrations of diversity in the lived experience and performance of men's and women's identities largely Eurocentric? How do constructions and contestations of femininities and masculinities reflect gender inequalities embedded within global/local geographies of social and economic change? We encourage broad participation from scholars looking at different perspectives of femininities and masculinities from different countries and from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.

---

#### 14. The economics of culture and power

Convener: **Gaynor Macdonald**, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Sydney  
([gaynor.macdonald@arts.usyd.edu.au](mailto:gaynor.macdonald@arts.usyd.edu.au))

The economy as well as the state have been conspicuously missing from Australian Aboriginal anthropology over many years, a situation now being turned around as we recognise the crises confronting communities in every part of the nation. This is an important moment to address paradigms of power and economy in anthropological theory and practice that can inform analyses of the marginalisation of Aboriginal and other people's contemporary experiences within the state. This session calls for papers which address not only the situations being confronted in the intersections of local and state economies, but also the crafting of anthropologies of power and economy that can articulate with grounded understandings of contemporary social and cultural experience. The session aims to place 'economy' (at macro and micro levels) firmly back into anthropological understandings of cultural practice – in the practices of those with and without power or economic autonomy. Papers addressing these issues for minority or indigenous peoples in other parts of the world are welcome.

#### 15. Australian medical anthropology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Convener: **Robyn Mobbs**, University of Queensland-Herston ([r.mobbs@uq.edu.au](mailto:r.mobbs@uq.edu.au))

After two and a half decades of gestation, medical anthropology is now visible within some Australian academic institutions and the eclecticism of the sub-discipline is already reflected within the endeavour. The intention of this session is to showcase the range of current work from critical medical anthropology to the applied, from within the academy and outside: from the contemporary engagement of health and biomedicine with 'the state', 'government and policy', 'the economic' and the political' in Australia and globally to ethno-medical systems in indigenous and pre-capitalist state societies. Papers on contemporary indigenous health and policy, cultural change (including changes in the notion of science) as well as the application of medical anthropology to service delivery are especially encouraged but not to the exclusion of others.

#### 16. Religion and region as agents of change in Southeast Asia.

Conveners: **Elizabeth Morrell**, Flinders University ([liz.morrell@flinders.edu.au](mailto:liz.morrell@flinders.edu.au)); **Minako Sakai**, University of New South Wales ([M.Sakai@adfa.edu.au](mailto:M.Sakai@adfa.edu.au))

Decentralisation processes in several Southeast Asian nations are empowering local stakeholders to explore alternative forms of socio-economic development, and some of these are impacting on relationships with the state. At the same time, religion has become an increasing political force in many areas. In Indonesia, for example, regionalism and Islamism have emerged as compelling ways of understanding the changes affecting state power and policies. The growing influence of Islam on state

policies in Malaysia is marginalising some minority groups. In southern Thailand and the southern Philippines, religion and regional socio-economic disparities are having far-reaching impacts. This panel will explore the independent yet interconnected forces of regional dynamics and religious politics as drivers of change in Southeast Asia. Within this framework, case studies will examine state-society and centre-periphery relations surrounding local development issues, assertions of identity, and their influences upon national integration.

#### 17. Anthropology and the issue of nationalism

Convener: **Barry Morris**  
([Barry.Morris@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Barry.Morris@newcastle.edu.au)), School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Newcastle, Callaghan Campus

There is much to be cautious about in the issue of nationalism. The modern state exists as an enigma. It has operated as the source and guarantor of the social and civil rights of the individual for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but, at the same time, it is also the greatest transgressor and perpetrator of systematic violence against individuals and groups. The modern nation-state often demands cultural and racial homogeneity of its population. Such demands have been punctuated by outbursts of jingoism that have tended to harden borders and accentuate differences between people and exclude and discriminate against those who are perceived not meet nationalist racial and cultural criteria. Conversely, nationalism affirms a belief in the progressive qualities of the nation and guarantees of freedom and social justice through a political system and institutions that encompass its citizens. The nation and nationalism established common bonds and purpose that bring people together. Nationalism's shadow extends across a number of areas of anthropological research and animates debates from national commemorative ceremonies to government policies affecting the politics of refugees, Native Title, multiculturalism...

Theoretical and ethnographically based papers are welcomed.

#### 18. Metaphor, precedence and the poetics of social life: Papers in honour of James J. Fox

Conveners: **Kathryn Robinson**, Dept. Anthropology, RSPAS, Australian National University ([kathryn.robinson@anu.edu.au](mailto:kathryn.robinson@anu.edu.au)); **Greg Acciaoli**, Anthropology and Sociology, University of Western Australia ([acciaiol@cyllene.uwa.edu.au](mailto:acciaiol@cyllene.uwa.edu.au))

James J. Fox has made an enduring contribution to the understanding of Austronesian social relations and culture through his work on ritual language and social classification in Roti and on the understanding of structures of precedence in the wider Austronesian world. His articles and books have ranged across issues of symbolic classification and dualism, metaphor, ritual language, concepts of locality, and architectural idioms, especially as these are related to social ordering and the dynamics of precedence, a term his work elevated into a major tool of analysis for understanding Austronesian

---

social structure, reconceptualising the study of alliance and descent in eastern Indonesia and beyond. This panel seeks to extend these analytics by inviting papers that address these themes. This panel is intended not only to display the influence of Professor Fox's work on these issues, itself only part of his legacy, but also to survey new developments in these fields. Papers that explicitly build upon the contributions of Professor Fox are sought, as well as those that pose critiques and complementary modes of analysis that engage with these themes.

### **19. For ethnography**

Conveners: **Sanjay Srivastava**, Deakin University ([sanjay.srivastava@deakin.edu.au](mailto:sanjay.srivastava@deakin.edu.au)); **Jonathan Marshall**, University of Technology Sydney ([Jonathan.Marshall@uts.edu.au](mailto:Jonathan.Marshall@uts.edu.au)); **Gillian Cowlshaw**, University of Technology Sydney ([Gillian.Cowlshaw@uts.edu.au](mailto:Gillian.Cowlshaw@uts.edu.au))

With ethnography both diminishing and expanding, emerging in new forms in new contexts (in corporations, across the internet, without demarcated place, as a form of autobiography, and in other disciplines), how does anthropology justify its claims to determine what ethnography should be? We are calling for papers that explore the claims anthropology makes to ethnographic practice based in an essential relationship between intensive fieldwork and writing. What is the theory and practice of ethnography? Is there a role for an explicit psychology and epistemology, or a theory of imagining or of language in ethnographic practice? How could such reflection affect psychology, epistemology or linguistics, and how would it affect anthropology?

We want to recognize ethnography for its desire to explore the complexities of the present, while avoiding simplistic representations of contemporary cultural, social and political dynamics, which assume either that it is just a method, that there is an 'outside', or that everything is merely 'subjective'. We also welcome examples of new kinds of ethnography which demonstrate its relevance to understanding the complexities of a globalising present.

### **20. The process of policy development and the production of development policy: Anthropological approaches to politics, administration and street-level implementation**

Convener: **Patrick Sullivan**, AIATSIS ([Patrick.Sullivan@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:Patrick.Sullivan@aiatsis.gov.au))

In recent years AAS has hosted sessions proposing new approaches to the anthropology of contemporary indigenous people. These approaches suggest viewing intercultural relations as occurring within, rather than between, social fields (Hinkson and Smith 2005; Sullivan and Bauman 2006). One consequence of these approaches in the Australian context is the ability to study other actors within these social fields on the same terms as Aboriginal subjects. Aid and development is one ground on which various state and community players establish cultures of interdependency. Aboriginal social and economic development is pursued by complex intersections of bureaucracies and community sector

organisations within diverse governance arrangements and political influences. Yet the organization of development policy and implementation rarely receives anthropological attention in Australia. The papers in this session will contribute to the anthropology of development policy and development bureaucracies through ethnographic and theoretical studies of organizations for Aboriginal community development. The papers will critically address the generation of Aboriginal affairs policy, contradictions in its implementation, the production of cultures of development, and manifestations of inter-cultural alignments in Aboriginal development contexts.

### **21. Change and continuity in the Aboriginal societies of Taiwan**

Conveners: **Mark Mosko**, Australian National University ([mark.mosko@anu.edu.au](mailto:mark.mosko@anu.edu.au)), **Ying-Kuei Huang** (Academia Sinica), and **Shu-Ling Yeh** ([shu-ling.yeh@anu.edu.edu](mailto:shu-ling.yeh@anu.edu.edu))

Taiwan is widely recognized as the homeland of the Austronesian peoples now living throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Knowledge of the surviving Austronesian-speaking peoples of Taiwan is thus critical to our understanding of the cultures, languages, and histories of Asia and the Pacific generally. However, the most authoritative ethnographical and historical knowledge of the Taiwanese Aboriginal Austronesians has been accumulated by Chinese and Japanese scholars with the voluminous results of this research inaccessible to most English-speaking investigators. For similar reasons the research and recent disciplinary advancements of English-speaking anthropologists of Asian and the Pacific societies have enjoyed relatively restricted opportunities for influencing the work being conducted by the Taiwanese.

This session seeks to bridge this lacuna by presenting a forum whereby the five leading Taiwanese anthropologists on aboriginal cultures will be attending the AAS conference to share their current research with Australian anthropologists similarly interested in comparisons of Austronesian-speaking societies in Asia and the Pacific. The visiting Taiwanese scholars who are based at Academia Sinica will be addressing a wide range of topics ('house' organisation, urbanisation, hierarchy, history and 'reinvention', Christian conversion, globalization, etc) in several indigenous Taiwanese societies. Additional presentations by AAS members on the general theme of continuity and change among Austronesian (especially aboriginal Taiwanese) societies are most welcome.

*In association with AAS Conference 2007*

**Practice and Practicality: Anthropology in Indigenous Australia**

**Indigenous Workshop, Australian National University**

9.00 am – 5.00 pm, Monday October 29, 2007

See under 'Forthcoming Conferences' in this issue of AAS Newsletter.

---

## Life after a PhD

### Postgraduate Workshop held in association with the Australian Anthropological Society Annual Conference, Australian National University

9.00 am – 3.00 pm, Tuesday October 30, 2007

See under 'Postgraduate Events' in this issue of AAS Newsletter.

## Changing Places

### From AAS Executive

**Monique Skidmore** has resigned from the Executive at the conclusion of her term as secretary. An election to fill the position of secretary is currently underway.

### From The University of Melbourne

In January 2008, anthropologist and social theorist **Ghassan Hage**, currently Professor of Anthropology at The University of Sydney, will take up an appointment as a Future Generation Professor in the Faculty of Arts, The University of Melbourne.

### From The University of Western Australia

Professor **David Trigger** is on secondment to the University of Queensland where he is Professor and Chair of Anthropology in the School of Social Science.

Associate Professor **Sandy Toussaint** left The University of Western Australia in July 2007 to concentrate on research, writing and review. She will be taking up an Adjunct position with the School of Social and Environmental Enquiry at The University of Melbourne.

## News from the Programs

### La Trobe University

The Sociology and Anthropology Program has established an annual La Trobe anthropology lecture series, The **Joel Kahn Lecture**, as a tribute to Professor Kahn's contribution to anthropology at La Trobe University. Professor Kahn will be retiring at the end of 2007 but will continue to be affiliated with La Trobe as an Honorary Fellow. Professor Diane Austin-Broos, Radcliffe-Brown Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney delivered the inaugural Joel Kahn lecture on 'Anthropology, Economy and the Social: Notes on a Discipline, and Remote Indigenous Communities' on July 2 2007.

On 20-22 November 2006 Dr **Helen Lee** convened an international conference, 'Pacific Transnationalism: Tracing Ties to the Homelands' at La Trobe's Institute for Advanced Study. More than 30 presenters, many of whom were Pacific Islanders, discussed the transnational connections between Pacific nations and their diasporic communities. Helen is currently working on an edited collection of papers from the conference.

**Alberto Gomes'** book *Modernity and Malaysia: Settling the Menraq Forest Nomads* (2007) has recently been published by Routledge.

## ANSA – The Australian Network of Student Anthropologists

If you are interested in becoming a member of ANSA, membership is free to current AAS members and the benefits are great! For information on how to join please visit [www.ansa.asn.au](http://www.ansa.asn.au)

### Grants and Scholarships

Date for submission extended to September 17, 2007

In late August AAS received some funds from an external source that is to be used for two new scholarships for postgrad members of AAS/ANSA giving a paper at, or attending, the Indigenous Workshop this year. These will be known as the AAS/ANSA Indigenous Workshop Travel Scholarships. The two scholarships, valued at \$350 each, can be applied for using an amended version of the application form for ANSA/AAS grants. The form is available on the ANSA website: [www.ansa.asn.au](http://www.ansa.asn.au)

There will still be three ANSA/AAS Postgraduate Student Travel Grants, valued at \$300 each, available to postgrad members of AAS/ANSA giving papers in any session at the conference. Two of these are funded by AAS, one by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) and one by an anonymous benefactor.

In order to allow time for people to apply for the new scholarships we have decided to extend the date for applications for the ANSA grants as well. If you have applied for an ANSA grant but would prefer to be considered for one of the new scholarships please send an email to [ansa@ansa.asn.au](mailto:ansa@ansa.asn.au)

Many thanks to everyone who has made funds available for these grants and scholarships.

### New Website

ANSA has a new website thanks to Jovan Maud. It has been designed to encourage discussion between postgrads so feel free to join in (you don't need to be a member). It is at our old address [www.ansa.asn.au](http://www.ansa.asn.au)

### AAS Conference: Postgraduate Showcase

Ten papers have been accepted for presentation in the session. We would like to encourage all postgrads attending the conference to attend this session and take advantage of the chance to hear about fellow students' projects, meet each other and join in the discussions that will follow.

### Postgraduate Colloquium

The postgrad colloquium is being run by the postgrads at ANU via the conference committee. It is being held the day before the main conference and will consist of a number of information sessions run by academics on topics relevant to postgrads.

### ANSA Meeting

ANSA will be organising a meeting at some stage during the conference. This will give postgrads a chance to discuss the future of ANSA and hopefully vote in new subcommittee members. In particular, Klara Hansen will be stepping down as Chairperson in order to give

---

someone else a chance to reap the benefits of the position. She will remain as a member of the subcommittee (if needed). Other subcommittee members will remain.

#### **Current Members of the ANSA Subcommittee**

Klara Hansen – ANU  
Jovan Maud – Macquarie  
Jenny Gabriel – JCU  
Nikola Kalamir - Sydney  
Nelia Hyndman-Rizik – ANU

#### **Join the ANSA Subcommittee**

The ANSA Subcommittee now includes students from institutions around Australia. However, some institutions are still sadly un- or under represented while others are well represented. If you would like to become a member of the ANSA subcommittee and ensure that your institution is represented, please contact [ansa@ansa.asn.au](mailto:ansa@ansa.asn.au)

## **Postgraduate Events & News**

### **Life after a PhD**

#### **Postgraduate Workshop held in association with the Australian Anthropological Society Annual Conference**

9.00 am – 3.00 pm, October 30, 2007

Coombs Lecture Theatre, Australian National University, Canberra

Doing a postgraduate degree in anthropology can be all-consuming, and it is easy to forget that life will continue after it is finished. But perhaps not life as we knew it before. Many of the things that postgraduates may be interested in pursuing after completing their studies have long periods between the time of application and taking up a position, and there is more to getting a job than just having a higher degree, so there are a number of things that can be done while still enrolled as a student that are likely to enhance prospects for employment.

The postgraduate workshop at the 2007 AAS conference differs from those convened at previous conferences, being aimed at providing a forum for discussion about strategies for pursuing careers in anthropology, both within and outside of academia. It is expected that the workshop will be of benefit to MA and PhD students, as well as recent graduates.

The workshop is organised into six sessions. In first session is an overview of employment prospects for anthropology postgraduates, and in each of the other sessions there will be an invited panel of 3-4 anthropologists who have specific experience and knowledge to share in relation to the panel topic. The panel members will give brief presentations, but the primary purpose of the workshop is to allow participants to ask questions and open discussion.

The session themes are:

- A. Overview: Employment prospects for anthropology postgraduates
- B. Careers for anthropologists in the public sector

C. Careers for anthropologists in the private sector, including as consultants

D. Careers in teaching anthropology

E. Post-doctoral research fellowships, and how to find money for your project

F. Getting Published

Session A.

9.00-9.40 am **Employment prospects for anthropology postgraduates** (Mandy Thomas)

9.40-9.45 am **What is ANSA?** (Klara Hansen)

Session B. 9.45-10.30 am

**Public sector** (Brad Armstrong, Julie Finlayson, Judith Robinson)

What sort of jobs are available in the public sector for people trained in anthropology?

What do I need other than a degree to have a successful career in the public service?

Session C. 11.00-11.45 am

**Private sector, and anthropologists as consultants** (Patrick Kilby, Dave Martin, James Weiner)

What sort of jobs are available in the private sector for people trained in anthropology?

What do I need other than a degree to be a successful consultant?

Session D. 11.45 am-12.30 pm

**Careers in teaching anthropology** (Nicolas Peterson, Debra McDougall, Monica Minnegal)

How many teaching jobs are likely to be up for grabs in the next 5 – 10 years?

Why teach?

The relationship between teaching and research

Audit culture in the university system – what sort of job will teaching become?

Australia compared with the USA

Session E. 1.30-2.15 pm

**Post-doctoral fellowships, and how to find money for your project** (Mandy Thomas, Yasmine Musharbash, Debra McDougall, Rozanna Lilley)

What is available?

What are the selection criteria?

What is the point of trying to get a post-doc? where will it take me?

ARC structure and processes

Community of Science (COS) funding alerts

Session F. 2.15-3.00 pm

**Publication** (Rozanna Lilley, Phillip Taylor, Nicolas Peterson)

What type of publications are most useful? useful for what?

What are publishers looking for?

Formal processes explained – peer review, editorial decisions

The politics of publishing, personal networks

Ranking of journals – “impact”

---

The workshop will be held in the Coombs Lecture Theatre at the Australian National University on Tuesday 30 October, from 9 am to 3 pm. The AAS Conference keynote address will be held on the same afternoon at University House at 5 pm, and there will be a social event at University House following the keynote address.

Participation in the workshop is free for AAS members and for non-members who register for the conference, however there is a registration fee for those who are not members of the AAS and who want to attend only the postgraduate workshop but not the conference of \$20 (early) / \$30 (late).

Please direct enquiries to Kevin Murphy [[kevin.murphy@anu.edu.au](mailto:kevin.murphy@anu.edu.au)] or John Carty [[john.carty@anu.edu.au](mailto:john.carty@anu.edu.au)].

### **Modernities: Radicalism, Reflexivity, Realities**

November 22 – 23, 2007.

The University of Melbourne

The Social Theory Postgraduate Association, under the auspices of the Ashworth Program for Social Theory at the University of Melbourne, and in association with the Department of Philosophy at Macquarie University, is holding an interdisciplinary conference titled Modernities: Radicalism, Reflexivity, Realities on November 22-23, 2007. Students from related disciplines are cordially invited to participate.

Recent theories of modernity suggest that a significant shift has taken place from simple, industrial modernity to a second (be it late, post-, reflexive) modernity. While this thesis suggests that industrial modernity is centred upon teleological narratives of progress, class-based theories of collective radicalism and the hegemony of the nation-state, the idea of second modernity is more associated with self-reflexivity and non-structuralist agency, global economic and political interconnections, and the delegitimation of totalising approaches to knowledge in both science and life-world. In light of these emerging narratives concerning modernity this conference aims to establish a forum whereby the validity and implications of this 'second modernity thesis', understood as a concrete-historical shift and/or a set of interpretive themes, can be tested and interrogated.

We welcome any 'genealogical' presentation, that is any partial (perhaps very partial) historical tracing of an idea, thing or value, which might shed light on the experiences, histories and theories of any number of modernities (regional, political, artistic etc.), and which could open up perspectives on the following questions:

Is second modernity, or its characteristic features, new? Or is it in fact 'modern-all-too-modern'?

If, as in recent approaches in sociology and anthropology, we conceptualise the self as a decentred subject, with multiple boundaries and overlapping identities, to what forms of sociality, sociability and unsociability might such a self correspond (e.g. network, virtual, sub-cultural forms of society)? What is becoming of agency,

autonomy, the subject-object dualism?

What possibilities for political contestation are emergent or receding in second modernity e.g. the possibility of contestation without grand narratives, the possibility of global social movements? Is democracy itself becoming more or less reflexive about its institutions and ethical-philosophical underpinnings?

As not only social but natural science engages in ongoing negotiations with the hermeneutic dimension to knowledge, what truths, axioms, paradigms are becoming evident or less evident? What special conditions are presented for knowledge by second modernity e.g. complexity, contingency, non-linearity, indeterminacy, informationality?

How are the dimensions of second modernity reflected in emerging art-forms or vice versa?

What changing roles or modes have aesthetic judgement in the contemporary world?

Confirmed keynote speakers are **Jean-Philippe Deranty** and **John Rundell** with others TBA. Further details at <http://www.ashworth-program.unimelb.edu.au>

### **Asia Pacific Week 2008**

Building Australia's Asia Pacific Expertise

ANU Campus 29 January – 1 February 2008

Scholarships Available: Apply before 2 October 2007

#### ***What is it?***

The College of Asia and the Pacific of the Australian National University with the support of the ARC Asia Pacific Futures Research Network, the International Centre of Excellence in Asian and Pacific Studies, the Japan Foundation is organising the fifth edition of Asia Pacific Week.

Asia Pacific Week is a container for 7 "Graduate Summer Schools" focusing on different areas of the Asia Pacific Region (Japan, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, East Timor, Pacific Islands and South Asia). During one week of activities graduate students from Australia and the region will have a chance to present their research interests, meet with other students and

academics, participate in a wide range of training activities, be introduced to the rich holdings on Asia and the Pacific at the ANU Library and at the National Library and participate in a stimulating program of events including cross-area workshops, keynote speeches, seminars and master classes, film screenings, cultural performances and social events.

The program of the 2006 Asia Pacific Week, that attracted over 300 participants, is available at

<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/asiapacificweek>

#### ***How to participate***

The organisers are providing a limited number of small grants to partially cover travel, accommodation and board while in Canberra. The number and amount of the bursaries can vary from program to program. Interested

students should apply directly with the individual programs' conveners.

A small number of bursaries will be made available for advanced undergraduate students to attend the event as observers.

Visit the web pages of the area groups to find information and application forms.

Deadline for applications: 2 October 2007.

Further details: <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/asiapacificweek>

## Conferences Past

### For Ethnography: Anthropology and the Politics of the Present

This cross-disciplinary conference, convened by **Sanjay Srivastava** and **Gillian Cowlshaw**, was held at University of Technology Sydney in April 2007. Contrasting ideas about ethnography emerged from cultural studies scholars and anthropologists with film maker David MacDougall providing a vivid example of visual ethnography. A session at the upcoming AAS conference will engage more fully with ideas about ethnographic practice.



Some 'For Ethnography' participants at dinner. L to r: Kay Donovan, UTS; Martin Thomas, USyd; Tess Lea, CDU; Katrina Schlunke, UTS; Catherine Driscoll, USyd; ?; Sanjay Srivastava, Deakin; Gillian Cowlshaw, UTS; David MacDougall, ANU; Vivienne Kondos, USyd; Jeremy Beckett, USyd; Verena Thomas. [Photo: Elijah at [image world](#).]

## Forthcoming Conferences

### Democracy, Development and Civil Society in India

20 – 21 September 2007

School of Social and Environmental Enquiry, The University of Melbourne

In 2007 India is celebrating its sixtieth year of independence. One of its most notable achievements is the endurance of its democratic institutions despite internal and external challenges to its democratic governance. As this multicultural state with over a billion people picks up pace at the start of the 21st century, international scepticism about its economic and political prospects is giving way to optimism about its future and increasing intellectual curiosity about its democratic developmental

experience.

This conference will address some of the challenges facing India and provide a forum for debating its unique democratic development with local and international speakers. It aims to go beyond discussions of procedural democracy and provide fresh perspectives by examining ways in which more inclusionary forms of democratic participation and development might be obtained.

*International guest speakers include:*

Professor **Akhil Gupta**, University of California, Los Angeles

Professor **Niraja G Jayal**, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Professor **Robin Jeffrey**, Australian National University, Canberra

Professor **Shalendra D Sharma**, University of San Francisco, California

Further details: <http://www.social-environmental.unimelb.edu.au/news/conferences/DDCSc onference/index.html>

### Practice and Practicality: Anthropology in Indigenous Australia

9am – 5pm, Monday October 29, 2007

Australian National University

In association with AAS Conference 2007

The workshop will consist of four interrelated sessions.

- The limits of and on anthropological practice
- “Making a difference” - intentions and effects
- Communicating anthropology
- Can anthropology speak to the Indigenous condition? In what contexts? And to whom?

Further details: <http://www.aas.asn.au/conf07/>

### Racism in a Global Context: A National Conference

9 – 11 November 2007

Murdoch University in partnership with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of Australia (HREOC), the Equal Opportunity Commission of Western Australia, the Office of Multicultural Interests, the WA Police, and the Office of Crime Prevention.

Following on from the UN World Conference against Racism (WCAR) held in Durban South Africa, the Murdoch conference will bring together delegates from a range of backgrounds and disciplines to review and extend themes and issues raised at WCAR, and to explore experiences and effects of racism. The conference aims to inform and encourage broad thought and debate about racism and discrimination, and to spark positive action. To ensure community engagement, community-targeted initiatives will run in conjunction with the academic conference. One of the key initiatives is a film festival that will screen movies with topics relevant to the conference's themes. The centrepiece will be a screening of 'Liyarn Ngarn', a new feature length documentary produced by Steve Hawke, directed by award winning director Martin Mhando, and starring Oscar nominee Pete Postlethwaite, respected Aboriginal leader Pat Dodson,

---

and renowned balladeer Archie Roach. The film festival will be open to the public, and timed to complement the conference program.

Further details: <http://ncrgc.murdoch.edu.au>

**Taboo: The Forbidden/Forbidding Subject of Anthropology – Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand**

Annual Conference 16 – 18 November, 2007

University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

‘Taboo’, originally a Pacific cultural complex with its various exemplars such as tapu, kapu, tabu, and tambu, is rare among ethnographic phenomena in terms of its impact upon a wider world. From the publication of James Cook’s account of his first visit to Tonga, ‘taboo’ steadily gained purchase not only within scholarly circles in the rise of anthropological thought but also within ‘Western’ popular and public cultures more generally. While remaining an unsurpassed sign of the maintenance of boundaries within specific societies, it simultaneously helped to reinforce boundaries between ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ peoples, thereby contributing to primitivist interpretations of the latter. Yet, despite the exoticism that has accompanied and underpinned this reception, ‘taboo’ has become one of humanity’s indispensable concepts, a true crossover hit that unites as well as it divides.

Issues and ideas suggested by the theme include, for example:

Analyses of the rise of taboo and related notions in the history of cross-cultural encounters in the Pacific and elsewhere, as well as in the history of anthropology and related disciplines.

Reflections on the theories of Mary Douglas, who died earlier this year, and/or on the writings of other theorists whose works impinge on the conference theme.

Ethnographic case studies of the past and present workings of taboo in social groups of all descriptions.

Theoretical and methodological considerations of ‘no-go’ zones in, and barriers to, anthropological thought and research.

Organisers: Michael Goldsmith and Judith Macdonald

Further details: [socisec2@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:socisec2@waikato.ac.nz)

**6th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities**

January 11 – 14, 2008

Honolulu Hawaii, USA. Sponsored by: University of Louisville, Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods

Further details: <http://www.hichumanities.org>

**ASAO (Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania)**

12 – 16 February, 2008

Coombs Bldg, RSPAS, Australian National University

Proposals for new Informal and Working Sessions are currently being solicited. Check the ASAO website (see below) for details. A number of sessions have already been proposed, including:

Research in West New Britain: Then and Now [Organizer: Naomi McPherson]

Constructing Human Difference in Oceania, 1500-1900 [Organizers: Bronwen Douglas & Chris Ballard]

Agency of the Past in Melanesia: Relating the Past to the Present [Organizers: Lissant Bolton & Liz Bonshek]

Christian Politics [Organizer: Matt Tomlinson]

From Free Choice to Autonomy: History and Challenges of the Free West Papua Campaign [Organizer: Andrew Moutu]

History and Movement in the Southern Lowlands of New Guinea [Organizers: Mark Busse & Joshua A. Bell]

Obesity and Oceania [Organizer: Margaret Mackenzie]

Pacific Anthropology through the Archival Lens [Organizer: Kathy Creely]

Further details: <http://www.asao.org/>

**Ownership and Appropriation**

**Joint International Conference of ASA, ASANZ and AAS**

December 8 – 12, 2008

University of Auckland, New Zealand

Centering on the core theme of *Ownership and Appropriation*, the conference aims to extend anthropological theory, by shifting the focus from ‘property’ and ‘property relations’ to notions and acts of ‘owning and appropriating’. It will explore a variety of dimensions of ownership and appropriation, being concerned with process rather than states of being, with dynamism rather than stasis, and with agency and creativity rather than with property and objects. This emphasis is highly relevant in a globalising world in which resources are at once being depleted and increasingly privatised or enclosed, and ideas about the very kinds of things that can be property are expanding. Anthropology, with its emphasis on agency and understanding actors’ perspectives, is well placed to advance colloquial understandings of such processes.

The deadline for proposals for workshops/panel sessions will be November 1<sup>st</sup> 2007. All members of the three associations are eligible to present papers at the conference. The deadline for paper abstracts will be May 1, 2008.

Further details: Veronica Strang [v.strang@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:v.strang@auckland.ac.nz) & Mark Busse [m.busse@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:m.busse@auckland.ac.nz)

**Previous listings** (see June 2007 AAS Newsletter)

The Archaeology of Aboriginal Missions [The University of Sydney, 21 – 26 September 2007]

Religious Innovation in East Asia [The Australian National University, 28 – 30 November 2007]

The African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific [The Australian National University, 31 January – 2 February 2008]

Is this the Asian Country? 17th Biennial Conference of ASAA [Monash Asia Institute, 1 – 3 July 2008]

---

## Recent Doctoral Theses in Anthropology

**Mary Ida Bagus**, Discipline of Anthropology, School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Newcastle, NSW

Title: From the Margins of History: A Long *Babad* of Jembrana (PhD, 2006)

Abstract:

The island of Bali, as the 'Hindu' region of Indonesia, has been well studied by anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists from all corners of the globe. The results of this intense focus have served the purposes of various regimes of power that have swept over an often silenced population. From the colonial Dutch, to post colonial nationalism, to the neo-colonial New Order, hegemonic forces contributed to shaping a Bali that was displayed to the world as a unitary Hindu domain in a sea of contrived Indonesian diversity. The current powerful discourse that represents Bali as a philosophical vassal of Indian Hindu origin, removed as it is from general everyday practice, has come to be accepted as yet another layer of praxis that shrouds complex understandings of Balinese identity. Further, this very discourse has often been harnessed and refined to redefine Balinese histories.

One area of Bali significantly excluded from these histories is the region of Jembrana in West Bali. Variously conceived as a 'gateway', 'buffer zone', 'interstitial zone', 'liminal zone' and 'empty field', Jembrana has been denied any serious representation as a place that displays Balinese history. This is clearly due to close proximity with Bali's binary Other, Java, as well as the mixed ethnic and religious population that inhabits the Jembrana landscape. Historic positioning in Bali revolves around centralised powerful courtly cultures and fans out to the regions in ever-weakening expressions of power and influence. The invisibility of Jembrana is itself historical and has been essential in telling the stories of central Balinese post-Majapahit power relationships. The unfolding of Balinese identity as grounded in derivative cultures tells of a series of successful colonisations that have been encapsulated in a powerful master discourse in spite of conflicting local practices.

This thesis reunites Jembrana with Balinese history as a place occupied by historical subjects. Dismantling the dominant discourse reveals processes of history. Subaltern experiences from the margins of Jembrana contribute to understanding the complexity and fragmented nature of Balinese experience, and provide a new framework for the analysis of religious and cultural diversity and conflict in Indonesia, and for anthropological theories of marginal experiences and places.

**Zhihong Bai**, Department of Anthropology, RSPAS, The Australian National University

Title: Difference-Making: Bai Identity Construction in Dali (PhD, 2007)

Abstract:

The Bai are one of the 55 ethnic minority groups (*shaoshu minzu*) officially demarcated in China between the 1950s

and 1979. It is difficult to pinpoint 'unique' Bai characteristics, yet the Bai have embraced the state-granted label, acted on it and experienced it emotionally, practically and politically. Unlike studies among other ethnic minorities such as the Yi, Miao, Hui and early English literature about the Bai, this thesis presents an alternative to a hegemonic and unilateral view of Chinese *minzu* by contextualising how the Bai people use the state-granted label to conceptualise Bai identities through historical studies, recent memories, religious practices and an annual social event. I argue that the English language anthropological term 'ethnicity' does not capture the dynamics of *minzu* in China.

The thesis deals with the social-historical layerings of Bai/state, Bai/Han and Bai/Yi relationships, and shows how Bai identities are produced and reproduced in-between these relationships. Most significant among my findings is the role of the legitimate name/term *Baizu*, which fits well into a Chinese context by being politically correct, economically valuable, and socially and historically embedded in local social life. This label has become a symbolic diacritic, which sets the basis for the sustainable reproduction of Bai identities based on features which are not necessarily ethnically distinctive but become so due to the legitimate label. And the Bai have utilised it as a manageable social and political unit for the expression of personal or collective identities under a projected monolithic and homogenous Bai Identity.

This thesis concludes that Bai identity is a new form of group affiliation, new in the sense that the Bai have entered the new world of a clear-cut *Baizu* category, but it is not completely unfamiliar to them. For anthropologists, this requires a new way of rethinking and theorising ethnicity.

**Beth Charles**, Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University

Title: The Koorie Heritage Trust's Cultural Centre: Unmasking the 'in-between' (PhD, 2007)

Abstract:

The Koorie Heritage Trust Inc was established in 1985 with the intention of protecting, preserving and promoting southeast Australian Indigenous culture and history. To fulfil this purpose, the Trust has developed a Koorie Cultural Centre. This thesis focuses on how the Cultural Centre has initiated ways for Koories and non-Koories to work towards a better understanding of a living Koorie culture. I uncover the ways in which Koories, involved in the Centre, have progressively begun to challenge pre-existing constructions of Koorie history, culture and social life. The thesis reveals the empowerment for Koories in representing their own historical experiences within colonialism and their endeavour to preserve their heritage, hence the title of this thesis, 'Unmasking the In Between.' The phrase 'between two worlds' was originally used in relation to the artist Albert Namatjira and reflects the contradictions of assimilation. Here the 'in between' is viewed negatively, but the post-colonial perspectives, presented in this thesis, offer a more

---

productive interpretation of the 'in between', which becomes a space for Koorie expression within the realm of the Trust's Cultural Centre. Within the Cultural Centre there is an important relationship between social structure and agency. The thesis reveals the existence of two types of 'structure': the physical structure of the Cultural Centre and the discursive structuring of Aboriginality. The two are inherently linked and in constant dialogue. By restoring a material matrix for that dialogue, the Cultural Centre has constituted a sense of 'home.' That is, it is a communal holding, which facilitates the expression of Koories' agency through their interrelationship with the physical arrangements of the Cultural Centre's structure. I have been closely associated with the Koorie Heritage Trust since its inception and this has enabled me to offer a subjective evaluation of the influences on and of the Cultural Centre. A post-structural theoretical analysis supports that evaluation. Ethnographic material documents the staff's engagement with the cultural and historical elements working within the Cultural Centre and the board members' involvement in that process. Employing that analysis and material, the thesis navigates critical perspectives in relation to the physical space of the Cultural Centre and the discursive structuring of Aboriginality in order to explain the construction of identity and the complexities of power relations in post-colonial society.

**Julian C. H. Lee**, School of Social & Environmental Enquiry, The University of Melbourne

Title: *Dilemmas in Democracy: Islam, Politics and Activism in Malaysia* (PhD 2007)

Abstract

This thesis examines the nature of the relationship between civil society, democracy and Islam in Malaysia. Specifically, it examines how different groups of people seek to counter threats to civil liberties that result from political and legal Islamisation in Malaysia.

Couched in an examination of the civil society and the public sphere, this thesis examines in turn how three types of activists attempt to create political space and defend constitutionally enshrined liberties. The three types of activists examined are those that work with the realm of the law, those that engage in social activism, and those that operate with the sphere of opposition party politics.

The discourses and kinds of action that people use in their struggle for being are termed realms of efficacy. A realm of efficacy is a more or less circumscribed range of activities and actions that fall within a category of behaviour and which can be executed in order to bring about change in the world. The realms of efficacy made use of by Malaysian activists that are described in this thesis are the law, social activism, Islam and party politics. Each of these realms is an important component of Malaysia's democracy in that they enable citizens to express their views and to influence or participate in government, more and less directly. Different dilemmas attend action in each of the realms of efficacy examined and these are described along with people's responses to them.

**Christiane Keller**, Centre for Cross-cultural Research, Australia National University

Title: *Nane Narduk Kunkodjgurlu Namarnbom : This Is My Idea. Innovation and Creativity in Contemporary Rembarrnga Sculpture from the Maningrida Region* (PhD, 2007)

Abstract

This dissertation analyses innovation and creativity in contemporary Rembarrnga sculpture. It is an account of the ways in which Rembarrnga artists use contemporary sculpture as a medium to express their identity, social status and life experience. Of central concern is the range in choice of processes, materials and subject matters used in Rembarrnga sculpture-making, how they continue already existing practices and allow for creativity and innovation in intra-cultural and cross-cultural contexts. This thesis demonstrates that contemporary Rembarrnga sculpture produced for the art market has close ties to sculptural objects made for the ceremonial context. The concept of 'inside' – 'outside' associated with systems of knowledge in Rembarrnga society helps to explain how forms and subject matters are generated for consumption by public audiences. Rembarrnga artists use the genre of sculpture because it is less restrictive than other artistic genres, for example bark painting, and therefore allows for greater artistic freedom. Furthermore, they use subject matter from the 'outside' realm including everyday topics to generate new sculptural forms.

Semiotic analysis is used in this thesis to demonstrate that contemporary Rembarrnga sculptures are part of a Rembarrnga artistic system that can be understood as a system of communication in which art objects encode meaning. How meaning is generated in sculptures through the use of specific materials, particular forms and decorations is shown throughout this thesis. The semiotic analysis reveals that iconicity is a key principle employed by Rembarrnga artists to generate new sculptural forms and subject matter.

Innovation in Rembarrnga art takes place on many levels including the use of technology and the choice of material and subject matter. Current theory in cross-cultural aesthetics is used to investigate how Rembarrnga perceive the qualities of innovation and creativity. Through the analysis of innovation in Rembarrnga art this dissertation reveals that, in the Indigenous context, innovation and creativity are perceived as positive and important values by artists. Additionally, the use of natural materials is of great importance for Rembarrnga sculptors. Materials generated from their own environment are perceived as aesthetically pleasing and culturally important. They are part of a Rembarrnga aesthetic. Through the continuous production of new and innovative sculptures, Rembarrnga artists actively engage in the transmission of Indigenous values and aesthetic qualities to cross-cultural audiences. Over the years Rembarrnga artists have developed a sound understanding of the art market system and gained self-consciousness as artists working within such a system. In their art-making they self-confidently claim new subject matters, genres or techniques as their own

---

innovation and use them to assert their identity and status in their immediate social environment and the wider intercultural realm. They proudly proclaim: 'This is my idea'.

Similarities and differences between the Rembarrnga artistic system and that of other Arnhem Land cultures are continuously highlighted in this thesis and therefore this research contributes to a more complex picture of Arnhem Land societies.

**Robbie Peters**, Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University

Title: *From Revolution to Reformasi: the kampung in Surabaya* (PhD, 2007)

Abstract:

This thesis demonstrates how the kampung constitutes sovereign space, where its residents have been able to preserve the economic and political idiosyncrasies of their neighbourhoods and establish the limits of the supposedly determining apparatuses of state. It is argued that the official extra-kampung political and societal organisations and public space more generally serve to 'dislocate' kampung people from their own neighbourhood-based sources of power and recognition, which they re-assert via a powerfully defensible sovereignty based on territory. This argument begins with Surabaya in the 1920s when kampung boundaries were being hardened by European streetside developments. It then explores the softening of these boundaries by an expanding kampung population, their subsequent containment, the de-industrialisation of the inner-city and the more recent expansion of the modern service-economy during the 1990s. Through this exploration I develop an understanding of the potent territorialising of political sovereignty that emerged in the kampungs of Surabaya during the early reformasi period. My investigation here relies on an in-depth illustration of the informal neighbourhood-based institutions through which economic and political uncertainties were negotiated during the early reformasi period in Surabaya. It was in 1998 that I lived for twelve months in an inner-city kampung called Dinoyo, returning for an additional three months in 2000 following the national and municipal level elections.

Overall, this thesis develops an original and critical insight into the literature while maintaining a sustained and much-needed focus upon the kampung over approximately eighty years of Surabaya's broader political and economic history.

**Martin (Max) Richter**, Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University

Title: *Musical Worlds in Jogjakarta: Contexts, Genres, Identities* (PhD, 2007)

Abstract:

This thesis is an ethnographic account of musical life and social relations in the city of Jogjakarta in Central Java, Indonesia, at a time of great political change. Jogjakarta is renowned as the 'cultural heart' of Java, and is a major centre of cultural tourism, education, and political

activism. The densely crowded inner city bustles with residents, tourists, students, and street, shop and office workers. In this thesis, I explore the contingent nature of musical genres and social groups around and outwards from this setting. The thesis seeks to articulate context, genre, and identity variables that influence music performance and social relations. Accompanied by five field-recording and two commercial / compilation CDs, the analysis identifies patterns of relations between settings and event themes, songs and musical styles, and individuals, social groups and the identity themes that unite and separate them. The first part discusses relationships between street-based workers' musical practices and their social connections and boundaries. Part two analyses physical behaviors at commercial-zone and neighborhood musical events that influence and reflect gender, class and intergenerational relations. The third, final part discusses how musical performances at state institutions both serve political ends and, incidentally or otherwise, help to promote the appreciation of cultural diversity. By drawing on Bourdieu's theories of class, patriarchy and nationalism, the thesis identifies political dimensions of musical performance in Jogjakarta. It then seeks to show that comprehensive representations of social and musical life need to include issues of power and inequality, and yet not be restricted to them. It identifies cooperation amidst contestation by modifying Bourdieu's concepts into inter-group social capital, musical physicalisation and grounded cosmopolitanism respectively. Beginning with inner-city street workers and ending at the nearby Sultan's Palace, the thesis concludes that 'regional cosmopolitan' musical identities are important bearers of inter-cultural tolerance in Jogjakarta. While focused on a particular time and place, the thesis also concentrates on variables of wide cross-cultural applicability, and thereby attempts to fashion a model of contemporary urban musical life.

**Kirrilly Thompson**, Division of Anthropology, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Adelaide

Title: *Performing Human-Animal Relations in Spain: An anthropological study of bullfighting from horseback in Andalusia* (PhD, 2007)

Abstract

A fundamental concern of human-animal studies is the human-animal boundary. The rider-horse relationship challenges this boundary through a degree of intercorporeality that is symbolised by the centaur. The centaur is transformative and generative; it is part-horse, part-human but more than horse- plus-human. This dissertation employs the centaur metaphor together with embodied theories of human-animal relations to explore the intercorporeality of humans and animals, and the permeability of the human-animal boundary. Using actor-network theory, it also considers the technological mediation of human-animal networks such as the centaurian relationship.

The case study for this dissertation is rejoneo (bullfighting from horseback) in Andalusia (Southern Spain). It is based on fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in

---

Andalusia from 2000 to 2001. *Rejoneo* has been under-researched compared to *toreo* (bullfighting from foot, also known generically as the *corrida*). I consider its social development using the idea of invented traditions and suggest that its 're-invention' in the early twentieth century is related to broader socio-economic developments. This challenges the assumption that *rejoneo* is an anachronistic and elitist activity. I argue that *rejoneo* is not a performance by the upper-class but is more accurately a performance of the upper-class.

*Rejoneo* presents a complex triadic human-animal interaction of human-horse-bull and the network *rejoneador-horse-rejon-bull*. Contrary to existing dualistic arguments based on the *corrida* (the bullfight) from foot that assert an Andalusian segregation of humans from animals, I argue that *rejoneo* is a performance of boundary transcendence. As this argument is based on the human-horse-bull trichotomy, I assert that dichotomous interpretations are insufficient in understanding the multiplicity of human-animal relations and gender representations in *rejoneo*. This dissertation illustrates boundary crossing at the level of individual humans and animals, through the wider relationships, contexts and networks in which they exist, to their structured interactions in the plaza and the themes they perform.

I argue that *rejoneo* is a performance of human-animal relations; it performs the ways in which the human-animal boundary can be embodied and transcended and presents multiple ways of being human, animal, male and female. Thus, this dissertation challenges existing ethnographic research into human-animal relations in Andalusia, and contributes to an embodied and technologically mediated approach towards human-animal relations.

## New Publications

### Anthropological Forum

Vol. 17, Issue 2, July 2007

**Mary Edmunds & Monique Skidmore:** "Australian Anthropologists and Public Anthropology"

**Laurent Dousset & Katie Glaskin:** "Western Desert and Native Title: How Models Become Myths"

**Andrew Lattas:** "Cargo Cults and the Politics of Alterity: A Review Article"

*Applied Forum:* Responses to Sansom's Article on the Yulara Native Title Case [in *AF* 17(1)]

**Paul Burke:** "The Problem When Flexibility *Is* the System"

**Katie Glaskin:** "Manifesting the Latent in Native Title Litigation"

**Ian Keen:** "Sansom's Misreading of 'The Western Desert vs. the Rest'"

**John Morton:** "Sansom, Sutton and Sackville: Three Expert Anthropologists?"

**Lee Sackett:** "'A Potential Pathway'"

**Peter Sutton:** "Norms, Statistics, and the Jango Case at Yulara"

### The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology

Volume 8, Issue 2, 2007

**Wasan Panyagaew:** "Re-Emplacing Homeland: Mobility, Locality, a Returned Exile and a Thai Restaurant in Southwest China"

**Sin Wen Lau:** "Bodily Offerings of Belonging: Chinese-Australians in Perth"

**James F. Weiner:** "Anthropology vs. Ethnography in Native Title: A Review Article in the Context of Peter Sutton's Native Title in Australia"

### AsiaRights Journal

Issue 8, August 2007

Special Issue: New Media for Civil Society

**Ubonrat Siriyuvasak:** "New Media for Civil Society and Political Censorship in Thailand"

**Heather Anderson:** "Prisoners' Radio, Access for the Voiceless: An Australian case"

**Kirsty Martin, Deepak Koirala, Rupa Pandey, Sita Adhikari, Govinda Prasad Acharya & Kiran MS:** "Finding the Local Community in Community Media: Some Stories from Nepal"

**Michael Wilmore:** "The Digital Divide and the Social Divide in New Media Access and Their Implications for the Development of Civil Society in Nepal"

### The Australian Journal of Anthropology

Vol. 18, No.2, July 2007

Special Issue 19, Women and Agency: Asian Explorations [Editor: **Anne-Marie Hilsdon**]

**Anne-Marie Hilsdon:** "Introduction: Reconsidering Agency – Feminist Anthropologies in Asia"

**Kalpna Ram:** "Untimeliness as Moral Indictment: Tamil Agricultural Labouring Women's Use of Lament as Life Narrative"

**Santi Rozario:** "Outside the Moral Economy? Single Female Migrants and the Changing Bangladeshi Family"

**Anne-Marie Hilsdon:** "Transnationalism and Agency in East Malaysia: Filipina Migrants in the Nightlife Industries"

**Larissa Sandy:** "Just Choices: Representations of Choice and Coercion in Sex Work in Cambodia"

**Sachiko Sone:** "The Reversible World of Japanese Coalmining Women"

### Contemporary PNG Studies: DWU Research Journal

Volume 6, May 2007

**Evangelia Papoutsaki:** "De-westernising Research Methodologies: Alternative Approaches to Research for Higher Education Curricula in Developing Countries"

**Cecilia Nembou:** "Findings from a Student Evaluation Survey: A Case Study of the Teacher Qualification Upgrade Programs at Divine Word University"

**Roger Vallance:** "Flexible Learning as a Means to Increasing Access to Higher Education in PNG"

---

**Rodney Londari Itaki:** “Communicating Curriculum Reform to Students: Experience from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Papua New Guinea”

**Catherine Levy:** “HIV and AIDS Awareness Programs in Remote Areas of PNG: An Evaluation of VSO PNG Tokaut AIDS Impact in the Second Year of Activity”

**Nancy Sullivan:** “God’s Brideprice: Laissez Faire Religion, and the Fear of being left behind in Papua New Guinea”

**Edward P. Wolfers:** “Bougainville Autonomy – Implications for Governance and Decentralisation”

### **Journal of the Polynesian Society**

Volume 116, Issue 1, March 2007

**Vincent O'Malley:** “English Law and the Maori Response: A Case Study from the Runanga System in Northland, 1861-65”

**Michael P J Reilly:** “Transforming Mangaia’s Spiritual World: Letters from the Early Christian Community of Oneroa”

**F. Allan Hanson & Christian Ghasarian:** “‘The Land Belongs to Everyone’: The Unstable Dynamic of Unrestricted Cognatic Descent in Rapa, French Polynesia”

### **Social Analysis**

Vol. 51, Issue 1, 2007

**Judith Kapferer:** “Introduction: The Arts and State Power”

**Malcolm Miles:** “The Culture Industries: Symbolic Economies and Critical Practices”

**Monica Sassatelli:** “The Arts, the State, and the EU: Cultural Policy in the Making of Europe”

**Henri Beunders:** “The End of Arrogance, the Advent of Persuasion: Public Art in a Multicultural Society”

**Marina Fokidis:** “Hijacking Cultural Policies: Art as a Healthy Virus within Social Strategies of Resistance”

**Judith Kapferer:** “Constructing a Public Sphere: Materiality and Ideology”

**Karen Kipphoff:** “Self and the City: The Politics of Monuments”

**Jeremy Valentine:** “Political Art, Cultural Policy, and Artistic Agency”

**Inger-Elin Øye:** “The Feeling for Gray: Aesthetics, Politics, and Shifting German Regimes”

### **Biology Unmoored: Melanesian Reflections on Life and Biotechnology**

**Sandra Bamford,** University of California Press, 2007

[From the publisher’s announcement] *Biology Unmoored* is an engaging examination of what it means to live in a world that is not structured in terms of biological thinking. Drawing upon three years of ethnographic research in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, Sandra Bamford describes a world in which physiological reproduction is not perceived to ground human kinship or

human beings’ relationship to the organic world. Bamford also exposes the ways in which Western ideas about relatedness do depend on a notion of physiological reproduction. Her innovative analysis includes a discussion of the advent of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs), the mapping of the human genome, cloning, the commodification of biodiversity, and the manufacture and sale of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

### **Melodies of Mourning: Music and Emotion in Northern Australia**

**Fiona Magowan,** UWA Press in association with James Currey Limited, 2007

[From the publisher’s announcement.] *Melodies of Mourning* is a groundbreaking new title focussing on the songs, dances and emotional experiences of the Yolngu people of Northeast Arnhem Land. In revealing how sounds and the senses shape our feelings for the landscape, acclaimed anthropologist Fiona Magowan addresses intriguing topics such as: How is emotion embodied and performed in ritual? Why are the senses significant in song? and How do musical sentiments communicate in an interconnected world? *Melodies of Mourning* invites readers to rethink the place of ecology in music and emotion as well as how emotions transcend cultural difference. This is a must-read for all those interested in peoples’ connections with the environment.

### **Coercive Reconciliation: Stabilise, Normalise, Exit Aboriginal Australia**

**Jon Altman and Melinda Hinkson** (editors), Arena Publications, Melbourne, 2007

[From the publisher’s announcement.] In the wake of the release of Anderson/Wild Little Children Are Sacred report, the Howard government has declared a national emergency and mobilised a coalition of police, army and others in what they suggest will be the ‘first phase’ of a program to tackle child sexual abuse in remote Aboriginal Australia. Using both the language and strategic force of a military campaign, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs has described his government’s new approach towards Aboriginal communities in the terms: ‘stabilise, normalise, exit’.

Edited by Jon Altman, Director of the ANU Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, and Melinda Hinkson, Lecturer in Anthropology at the ANU, this book is an urgent critical response to the government’s actions. A wide range of authors contextualise the crisis facing remote Aboriginal communities and the government’s most recent response in light of the history of and wider policy towards Aboriginal Australia. The book considers how the rhetoric of emergency excludes such questions as whether the government itself is complicit in the state of remote Aboriginal communities; how the approach to tackling child sexual abuse dovetails with the government’s broader goals in Indigenous affairs; the long-term effects of the government’s actions; and alternative responses to the Anderson/Wild report.

---

Contributors include: Jon Altman, Ian Anderson, Judy Atkinson, Larissa Behrendt, Kay Boulden, Maggie Brady, Tom Calma, David Dalrymple, Megan Davis, Michael Dillon, Michael Dodson, Patrick Dodson, Bill Fogarty, Raimond Gaita, Olga Havnen, John Hinkson, Melinda Hinkson, Ernest Hunter, Melissa Johns, Michael Mansell, Joe Morrison, John Morton, Gregory Phillips, Tristan Ray, David Ross, Tim Rowse, Guy Rundle, Mathew Ryan, John Sanderson, John Taylor, William Tilmouth, Pat Turner, Nicole Watson and Rex Wild with artwork by Michael Leunig, Rod Moss and Bruce Petty.

Inquiries: [glenise@arena.org.au](mailto:glenise@arena.org.au)

### **Modernity and Malaysia: Settling the Menraq Forest Nomads**

**Alberto Gomes**, Routledge, 2007

[From the publisher's announcement] Bringing together over thirty years of detailed ethnographic research on the Menraq of Malaysia, this fascinating book analyzes and documents the experience of development and modernization in tribal communities.

Descendants of hunter-gatherers who have inhabited Southeast Asia for about 40,000 years, the Menraq (also known as Semang or Negritos) were nomadic foragers until they were resettled in a Malaysian government-mandated settlement in 1972. *Modernity and Malaysia* begins with the 'Jeli Incident' in which several Menraq were alleged to have killed three Malays, members of the dominant ethnic group in the country. Alberto Gomes links this uncharacteristic violence to Menraq experiences of Malaysian-style modernity that have left them displaced, depressed, discontented, and disillusioned. Tracing the transformation of the lives of Menraq resulting from resettlement, development, and various 'civilizing projects', this book examines how the encounter with modernity has led the subsistence-oriented, relatively autonomous Menraq into a life of dependence on the state and the market.

### **Modernity and Re-enchantment: Religion in Post-revolutionary Vietnam**

**Philip Taylor** (Editor), ISEAS Publications, Singapore, July 2007

[From the publisher's announcement.] The richness and vibrancy of Vietnamese spirituality are vividly portrayed in these twelve essays that shed light on the remarkable re-florescence of religion in this communist country. Ancestor worship, mediumship, sacrifices, and communal rituals have not only survived Vietnam's reintegration into the capitalist world; they are intrinsic to the dramatic reshaping of its contemporary social and cultural life. Transnational Buddhism and Christianity challenge the political status quo as they answer conflicting aspirations for enlightenment, justice, national development and cultural identity. Making conceptual contributions to anthropology, history and comparative religion, this book provides insights from post-revolutionary Vietnam into the diverse passages to re-enchantment in the modern world.

1. Modernity and Re-Enchantment in Post-Revolutionary Vietnam (**Philip Taylor**)
2. Returning Home: Ancestor Veneration and the Nationalism of Doi Moi Vietnam (**Kate Jellema**)
3. Ritual Revitalization and Nativist Ideology in Hanoi (**Horim Choi**)
4. Feasting with the Living and the Dead: Food and Eating in Ancestor Worship Rituals in Hoi An (**Nir Avieli**)
5. Unjust-Death Deification and Burnt Offering: Towards an Integrative View of Popular Religion in Contemporary Southern Vietnam (**Thien Do**)
6. Spirited Modernities: Mediumship and Ritual Performativity in Late Socialist Vietnam (**Kirsten W. Endres**)
7. Empowerment and Innovation among Saint Tran's Female Mediums (**Pham Quynh Phuong**)
8. 'Buddhism for This World': The Buddhist Revival in Vietnam 1920 to 1951, and its Legacy (**Elise Anne DeVido**)
9. The 2005 Pilgrimage and Return to Vietnam of Exiled Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh (**John Chapman**)
10. Nationalism, Globalism and the Reestablishment of the Truc Lam Thien Buddhist Sect in Northern Vietnam (**Alexander Soucy**)
11. Miracles and Myths: Vietnam Seen Through Its Catholic History (**Jacob Ramsay**)
12. Strangers on the Road: Foreign Religious Organizations and Development in Vietnam (**Andrew Wells-Dang**)

### **Les Hiatt papers**

A "finding aid" to the papers of Les Hiatt was launched by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies on May 1, 2007. The accompanying media release is provided below.

#### **AIATSIS gains Hiatt papers**

The papers of nearly seven decades of fieldwork by ANU post-graduate anthropologist, Dr Lester Hiatt will form a vital new addition to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) collection today in Canberra.

AIATSIS today launches the "finding aid" to the Hiatt collection, enabling interested researchers to easily search for the published and unpublished papers, which fill more than 48 boxes.

The papers cover Dr Hiatt's fieldwork amongst the Gidjingali people of northern Arnhem Land in the late 1950s and the debates that emerged from this fieldwork – his views often challenging the dominant anthropological models of the time.

On behalf of the AIATSIS, Principal Steve Larkin

thanked Dr Hiatt for the support he offered during the compilation of the finding aid.

“It’s a great honour for AIATSIS to have Dr Hiatt’s vast body of work included in our collection,” Mr Larkin said.

“These papers, field notes, letters, lecture notes and photographs form an invaluable resource for students, teachers and for the Gidjingali people themselves, who were the focus of so many years of his work.”

Kinship, marriage, land and politics remained Hiatt’s central interests but he also wrote on totemism, mythology, secret male cults, avoidance relationships, conceptualisation of the emotions and evolutionary biology.

The papers also cover Dr Hiatt’s work in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney; his Visiting Professorship at Harvard University, USA; his editorship of anthropological journals; and his involvement in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now AIATSIS) from the 1970s to the present.

The finding aid is available online at [http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/7427/MS4129\\_Hiatt.pdf](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/7427/MS4129_Hiatt.pdf)

#### *Words from the launch*



Referring to himself comfortably as a ‘Visiting Geriatric Fellow’, Dr Lester Hiatt thanks AIATSIS for safekeeping his papers. [Photo: AIATSIS]

A non-conformist who hated “political correctness” and “an exemplary scholar” are just two of the ways former Institute Chairman, Dr Lester Hiatt has been described.

Both were embellished upon by his long time colleague and friend, Professor Nicolas Peterson at the May launch of a Finding Guide to Dr Hiatt’s papers at AIATSIS.

“Les is an exemplary scholar,” Professor Peterson said at the launch.

“This archive will go a long way to ensuring that people come to realise the foundational role Les played in AIATSIS and in his field.”

A Foundation Member of the Institute (formerly Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies), Dr Hiatt was the AIAS President and Chairman of Council from 1974

to 1982. Since 1998, he has been an AIATSIS Honorary Visiting Fellow.

Dr Hiatt deposited more than 48 boxes of papers with the Institute, covering his fieldwork amongst the Gidjingali people of northern Arnhem Land in the late 1950s and the debates that emerged from this fieldwork.

After months of diligent sorting and filing, the AIATSIS Library created a Finding Guide for the Dr Hiatt’s collection, making it easy to search for the published and unpublished papers.

Addressing the crowd of about 30 people, Dr Hiatt said he was lucky that his scholarly materials were thought “too dry” to eat by the various bush animals that lived near the shed in which he had stored them for a few years at his brother’s farm in Dubbo, NSW.

“Eventually I dusted off the papers and handed them over for safekeeping to the Institute,” Dr Hiatt said.

“Their orderly relocation in termite-proof boxes and the painstaking indexing of the raw materials and rough drafts of my life’s work are a tribute to the professional skills of (Library curator) Jann Kirkham, to whom I owe a primary debt of gratitude for this archive.”

He went on to describe his relationship with Maningrida and its people over five decades, noting that 2007 was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town’s establishment and lamenting government policy on “outstations”. He said: “Unfortunately, the present government of Australia has lost patience with the outstations and may no longer support them. The future, they say, lies in the mainstream and the Aboriginal people must surrender themselves to a vortex that will suck them into it without further delay and waste of money. Of course, every encouragement should be given to young people to gain a school or higher education and to join the workforce at Maningrida or beyond if they wish to do so; but to deliberately erode the emotional and spiritual underpinnings of the community by refusing to support outstations would be callous and counterproductive.”

Kinship, marriage, land and politics remained Hiatt’s central interests but he also wrote on totemism, mythology, secret male cults, avoidance relationships, conceptualisation of the emotions and evolutionary biology.

The papers also cover Dr Hiatt’s work in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Sydney; his Visiting Professorship at Harvard University, USA; his editorship of anthropological journals; and his involvement with the Institute of Aboriginal Studies (now AIATSIS) from the 1970s to the present.

There could be no better wish for a scholar than to be able to reflect on his life’s work in the manner that Dr Hiatt did:

“It gives me great pleasure to look around and see people I have known and been associated with for most of my professional life. You have made it a good life, one I’m grateful for, and one I’d do again if given the chance.”

---

## **AAS Newsletter Contributions**

The Newsletter provides a vehicle for informing members about AAS matters and other issues of relevance. We welcome items such as Conference announcements; notable appointments, retirements or honours received; titles and abstracts of MA and PhD theses in anthropology that were awarded in the past 12 months; short book reviews or brief notices regarding important new publications; short articles on issues of importance to the discipline; reports on research-in-progress; postgraduate events of significance. The current editors are Peter Dwyer ([pddwyer@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:pddwyer@unimelb.edu.au)) and Mary Patterson ([marycp@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:marycp@unimelb.edu.au)), both at the School of Social & Environmental Enquiry, The University of Melbourne.

The next issue of the Newsletter will be published in December 2007. Some back issues are available on the AAS web site: <http://www.aas.asn.au>