



AAS / IUAES / ASAA NZ CONFERENCE 2011
Knowledge and Value in a Globalising World
Disentangling Dichotomies, Querying Unities
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Call For Panels is open until October 22nd, 2010

Please send panel proposals to: conference2011-anthropology@uwa.edu.au

The conference Organising Committee welcomes proposed panels for the joint conference of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES), Australian Anthropological Society (AAS) and the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa / New Zealand (ASAA NZ) **to be held July 5-9, 2011, The University of Western Australia**

Knowledge and Value in the Globalising World: Disentangling Dichotomies, Querying Unities

'Anthropology, sometimes, is the voice of discomfort.' (Gusterson and Besteman, 2005)ⁱ

As anthropologists have sought to argue for the relevance and efficacy of their discipline in the globalizing world, they have been both guided and constrained by its constitutive key concepts. Increasingly, culture and ethnography have been appropriated by self-proclaimed pundits, while popular paradigms have explicitly depended upon such time-worn dichotomies as modernity and tradition, society and community, hybridity and unity, among others. Throughout the history of anthropology itself such dichotomies and unities have undergone substantial internal critiques, but that history has been remarkably unheeded in the texts through which these concepts have entered popular parlance. In part because of analytic interest in a putative globalised 'knowledge' society or 'economy', even questions of knowledge, its production, and distribution that have been at the forefront of recent anthropological work, risk reducing its complexities. Knowledge becomes reduced to commodity form or in technoscience merely a device that permits action. Similarly such debates as those between substantivists and formalists and advocates of 'moral economy' and 'rational economy' have revealed how basic dichotomies have structured understandings of even the concept of value. More recent work, which resurrects a theory of value drawing from Marxist, Simmelian, structuralist and exchange theory sources, has sought to bridge the dichotomy of meaning and desire.

This joint conference of the Australian Anthropological Society (AAS), Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa / New Zealand (ASAA/NZ), and the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) seeks to catalyse a global discussion on our basic categories of understanding, both as they have informed developments in anthropology and its

various subdisciplines and as they have informed popular discourse regarding the contours and trends of our globalizing world. Of course, critically evaluating popular uses and promoting strategies to transcend oversimplifications in public discourse also requires critical examination and re-evaluation of the uses of key concepts within anthropology itself. While such revaluations have certainly been forthcoming within the various traditions of anthropology throughout the world, there is often little sense of the resonances across anthropology's diverse theoretical trajectories, and within heterodox writings that have not fitted snugly within various national and regional traditions of anthropological production.

By convening a conference that seeks to bring together practitioners of three associations, two of which are national and one of which is global in its orientation, we seek to encourage critical perspectives upon the genesis, development, deployment, diffusion and reception of anthropological traditions in various regions throughout the world. We are particularly keen to promote comparisons not only of the theoretical concepts of different regions, but also of traditions of anthropological practice, exploring, for example, the diversity of ways in which academic and applied anthropology have been conceptualized (e.g. along axes of purity) and deployed (with either overlapping or complementary distribution of practitioners across such lines). We also invite exploration of such topics as the divergences and convergences in the theorizing and practices evident in anthropological associations of academic and public orientation in various regions, and how these have intersected with such dichotomies as Stocking's positing of anthropologies of nation-building and anthropologies of imperialism. As such rubrics certainly do not exhaust the full range of topics encompassed by a concern with 'disentangling dichotomies' and 'querying unities', we invite panels and papers from across all subdisciplines. In particular, we seek those that address epistemological and ethical issues arising from the use of constitutive concepts whose value derives not only from their relations with each other, but also from their engagement with other disciplines, and in the practice of applied and public anthropology.

In keeping with the wide scope of our theme, we shall seek to be inclusive rather than restrictive in our evaluation of panels and papers.

References:

ⁱGusterson, Hugh & Besteman, Catherine (2005) 'Introduction.' In *Why America's Top Pundits are Wrong: Anthropologists Talk Back*, California Series in Public Anthropology, ed. C. Besteman & H. Gusterson. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Please email your panel proposals to us at the email address below, by **Friday October 22nd, 2010**.

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Organizing Committee

IUAES/AAS/ASAANNZ Conference 2011

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