

Call for Panels:

Anthropology and the Community to Come

The Organising Committee for the 2010 Conference hereby calls for panels for its annual conference. In 2010, the conference is entitled "Anthropology and the Community to Come".

Over a decade ago, the French collective of authors and activists Tiqqun (whose name derives from the Hebrew "reparation" or "redemption") declared society to be dead, as it had been replaced by "a tangle of norms and mechanisms through which THEY hold together the scattered tatters of the global biopolitical fabric" (Tiqqun 2010: 1). For the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, with whom the collective as well as its offshoot The Invisible Committee (author of *The Coming Insurrection* 2009) display clear intellectual affinities, this death of society derives in large measure from "an era in which [power] confronts the most docile and cowardly social body that has ever existed in human history" (Agamben 2009: 22). For Agamben, this situation derives from the accumulation and proliferation, in the conditions of capitalism, of a multiplicity of apparatuses that realise activities of governance, producing through processes of subjectification (and desubjectification) "harmless citizens of postindustrial democracies" (ibid.). "THEY" in the Tiqqun statement would refer to the producers of these apparatuses.

Tiqqun's response is to call for a new ethics of friendship — a community to come. With obvious utopian overtones, the community to come resonates with certain arguments in anthropology, such as Terry Evens' insistence on a non-dualist ethics (Evens 2008) and the critique of reductionism made by a number of authors in the volume edited by Bruce Kapferer (2005) *The Retreat of the Social*. It also resonates with the social and scholar-activist movements emerging not only within certain postindustrial democracies, but more powerfully in expanding (less docile and cowardly) industrial democracies such as Brazil, Mexico and India, as well as on the edges of other cultural and political communities.

The conference will explore the extent to which Anthropology in Australia is mindful of these calls for a community to come and mindful of how current anthropological theories address or not the situation of the discipline and the role it can play in new social movements. The recent appeal decision in the Australian Federal Court in *Bardi and Jawi* offers an interesting start in the way it prompted a brief discussion on AASnet regarding the possible precedent in jurisprudence of new and seemingly more embracing concepts of society and, with that, corporation. However, does this represent anthropology (and the Australian legal system) calling for (perhaps simply engaging with) the community to come? Or is it yet another apparatus that will further articulate the "scattered tatters of the ... biopolitical fabric"? To what extent, therefore, is anthropology, both in Australia and more broadly, engaging in and with social movements rather than simply engaging in the proliferation of apparatuses?

The 2010 conference invites participants to take up the issues of the retreat of the social and of the community to come. It asks participants to reflect upon the role of the discipline as an apparatus

and, with that, to reflect upon the comfortable complacency with which these apparatuses proliferate and go global. It asks if any life exists for the discipline outside of Empire—that "rhythm that imposes itself, a way of dispensing and dispersing reality [in all of its] sad, heavy and militaristic liquidation" (The Invisible Committee 2009: 13)?

For many anthropologists, though, this level of liquidity is a good thing, above all a necessary thing for the professional sector to "move forward". The utopian anarchism espoused by Tiqqun and the Invisible Committee is simply impractical and inappropriate for anthropologists happily entangled (embedded?) in the apparatuses of the current corporate state, which include, of course, the academy. But how does this conservatism impact upon their science and how does it impact upon their relationships with others? In 2010, anthropologists are invited to reflect on these questions and to ask themselves what the study of humanity might contribute if there has indeed been a retreat of the social and if there is to be a community to come.

Potential Conference Panel Topics may include some (but not all) of the following:

- Anthropology Confronts the Death of the Social
- Biopolitics and the Wars on Abstractions
- Reductionism and Anthropological Ethics
- Anthropological Sub-Disciplines: Preserving Comparison or Facilitating Reduction?
- Corporate Anthropology and the New Sovereignities of Global Governance
 - Global warming and Other forms of Crisis Management
 - The Corporate State
 - Universities and the Inter-disciplinary nexus
- Surveillance and Anthropology: Growing the World Prison
- Anthropologies of the Sacred and other Modes of Transgression
- New Utopias, Social Movements and Anthropological Millennialism
- Anthropology and the Local Specificities of Global Civil War
- Committees, Collectives and the New Modes of Authorship

References

Agamben, Giorgio. 2009. *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays* Trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella. Stanford, Calif. Stanford University Press.

Evens, T.M.S. 2008. *Anthropology as Ethics: Nondualism and the Conduct of Sacrifice*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

AAS 2010 Deakin: Conference Title and Theme

Kapferer, Bruce (ed) 2005. *The Retreat of the Social: the Rise and Rise of Reductionism*. Critical Interventions 6. New York: Berghahn Books.

The Invisible Committee, 2009. *The Coming Insurrection* Semiotext(e) Intervention Series #1

Tiqqun, 2010. *Introduction to Civil War*. Trans. Alexander R. Galloway and Jason E. Smith. Semiotext(e) Intervention Series #4 (NB publication of this translation is imminent, the quotation above is taken from the MIT website:

<http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=12085>)

Submission of Panel Proposals

Please submit your proposals for panels to Rohan Bastin at Deakin University

Rohan.Bastin@Deakin.edu.au

PLEASE WRITE "AAS 2010 Conference" in the subject line of any email to ensure a prompt response.

Conference Venue

The conference will be held over three days (September 22-4) at the Waterfront Campus of Deakin University, Geelong. The campus is located in the heart of Geelong town in the renovated wool store buildings overlooking Corio Bay. Located thus, conference participants will have access to the accommodation and facilities of Victoria's second largest city, one hour by road or by train from the Melbourne CBD and in striking distance from the Victorian south coast, Great Ocean Road and the Bellarine Peninsula.

Anthropology at Deakin University is one of its establishment disciplines dating from 1976. However, 2010 will be the first time Deakin Anthropology has ever hosted the AAS conference. Therefore, the members of the 2010 conference committee warmly invite you to attend the conference and to celebrate with them Deakin Anthropology's long participation in the formation of the discipline in Australia, especially through Deakin's original role as Australia's open or distance education university whose students are located all over the country and throughout the world.

More information regarding the conference venue, accommodation, etc. will be available shortly on a separate conference website (URL to follow).

Registration

Registration for the conference will be available in due course via the AAS website.

Rohan Bastin (on behalf of the conference committee).