



ICS SEMINAR SERIES

Thinking in Common: Anticipation

JUAN F. SALAZAR, TIMOTHY NEALE, CATHERINE PHILLIPS AND CHRIS VASANTKUMAR

ABSTRACT

The first 'Thinking in Common' panel will focus on the theme of 'anticipation,' with four speakers presenting short interventions on the topic. We have chosen this theme as it brings together a timely set of concerns: the diminishing prospects of the ecological systems on which we rely; the discourses that place our presents and futures in radical discontinuity; and, the practices that manifest those presents and futures as avowedly knowable. These correspond also to another set of anticipations that we, as researchers, mobilise in our work: knowledge, project, events and disclosures to come.

Speculative Fabulation as Method: Researching Worlds to Come in Antarctica – Juan F. Salazar

In this intervention I reflect on my experience experimenting with speculative narratives of worlds to come in Antarctica. The focal point is the experimental documentary film *Nightfall on Gaia* (2015), which, I suggest, enacts a form of generative ethnography through which to speculate futures with. Drawing on Donna Haraway's ambiguous notion of speculative fabulation, I argue that the film enacts a realism of the possible to account for how the Ice, as an everyday extreme, confronts its inhabitants with problems of survival that make visible big quandaries about the future of habitable conditions for earthly life. Modulated by the speculative, this provocation invites a recalibration toward a future-facing cultural inquiry that enables research to follow forked directions, to both respond to and anticipate phenomena that may not simply be held, observed and acted upon.

Digging for Fire – Timothy Neale

Drawing attention to the growing scholarship on the anticipatory governance of hazards such as biosecurity and counter-terrorism, geographer Ben Anderson has called for the study of 'anticipatory regimes'; formations or assemblages contingent on the manifestation of as-yet unrealised futures in order to justify interventions designed to preclude or mitigate their occurrence. Drawing on fieldwork in southwest Victoria and the Northern Territory, I will discuss how practices of anticipation are reconfiguring logics of intervention in bushfire management. In these two cases, I suggest, attention to the work of models and other 'objective' voices in these sociocultural worlds reveals the extent to which management is a historicist practice, paradoxically linking avowedly unprecedented disasters to aleatory futures.

Remaking for Absence: Varroa's Force in Australian Beekeeping – Catherine Phillips

How do futures become discernable and governable? How does envisioning, calculating, and preparing for the not-yet (and may-never-be) shape present worlds? These questions inform recent work on anticipation, which draws together interests in spatiality, temporality, and affect (see Anderson 2010; Aradau and van Munster 2011). This scholarship points to how casting the future as unpredictable and dangerous provides impetus to develop new means of prediction, preparation, and protection. Building on this work, I will discuss biosecurity measures in Australian beekeeping. Provoked by non-native mites (*Varroa destructor*), and their predicted effects, a wide-ranging reconfiguration of beekeeping biosecurity is underway that involves reordering authority, revaluing honeybees, and rearranging participants. Understanding these measures as anticipatory practices points to the force of *Varroa* and the drive to prolong its absence; however, governing as if only this future matters neglects understandings and possibilities that may matter even more.

DATE

Thursday 28 April

TIME

11.30am – 1pm

VENUE

EB.2.02, Parramatta Campus (South)

NEXT SEMINAR

Friday 6 May

Daniel Miller

Why We Post: the Anthropology of Social Media

Please check

westernsydney.edu.au/ics/events
for the latest details.

Title TBC – Chris Vasantkumar

BIOGRAPHIES

Juan F. Salazar is an Associate Professor in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts and member of the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University.

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Catherine Phillips is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University.

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