

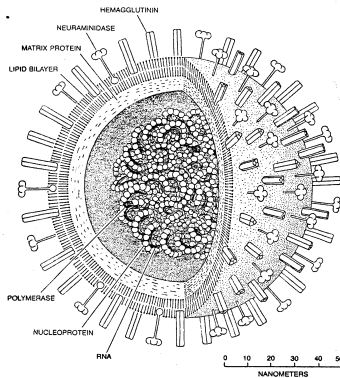
PRACTICAL MATTERS

Thursdays, 15 - 17 ct.
Room 0019, Sandgasse 1-9

WINTER 2012-13

Instructor: Dr Richard Fox
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Office Hours: Friday, 10am - noon; Room 1904



A drawing of the influenza virus.

Europe has long cultivated an ambivalent relationship to *matter*. Our religious traditions warn against the dangers of the material world, tending to favor the more ethereal pleasures of the transcendent. Yet we harbor a suspicion that everything, from aesthetics to romantic love, might be explained through reference to one sort of material or another—from the economic foundations of production to brain chemistry and DNA. So what is this thing called matter? And why should we care? (Why does it *matter*?) Under what conditions might matter, or material, become intelligible to us as an object of study, or critical frame of reference? Is its analysis properly part of the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*)? The human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*)? Perhaps both? Or could it be that a more nuanced approach would challenge our received assumptions regarding the dichotomy of minds *versus* material bodies? The anthropological study of ‘material culture’ has tried to address these questions, drawing on fields as diverse as museum studies and the philosophy of the natural sciences. This course offers a critical introduction to the central issues.

Course Requirements

- Complete and careful reading/viewing of all required course material (see below for further specification).
- Regular attendance and active participation in seminar discussion.
- Three short essays, for a total of 4000 words (approximately fifteen A4-sized pages in double-spaced 12pt Times New Roman). The due dates for these papers are listed below in the schedule. Please plan accordingly.
- All written work must be submitted on time; **no extensions** will be granted for this course, except on grounds of major life disruption.

Reading Materials

All required readings for the course are available through **Moodle**, and/or on reserve through the library.

Reading and Discussion

For each weekly session there is a required **TEXT** (or **TEXTS**, and, in at least one case, a **FILM**) which will comprise the focus for our seminar discussion. For each session a series of **SEMINAR QUESTIONS** has also been provided. These are meant to guide your reading/viewing and to help you prepare for in-class discussion. The questions are deliberately challenging, and often open-ended. Their primary aim is to spur reflection, and so critical conversation. You are encouraged to formulate answers to these questions ahead of our meeting, and to bring questions of your own for the group to consider. The **BACKGROUND READING** is **not** required; these references are provided for those who wish to develop a deeper understanding of the issues.

Background Reading on the Study of Material Culture

The following résumé of background reading is provided purely for reference, and can be found in hardcopy in the library, or online through HEIDI. Please contact the instructor for assistance should you have any difficulty in locating a specific chapter, article or book.

- Collingwood, R.G. (1945) *The Idea of Nature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Foucault, M. (2001 [1966]) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Latour, B. (2007) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hodder, I. (2012) *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*. Oxford: John Wiley and Sons.
- Kuper, A. (1998) 'Objects of Desire'. *The Times Literary Supplement*. 4960: 7. (Offers a critical review of D. Miller's work on material culture; on which, see below.)
- Herzfeld, M. (2002) 'The Social Life of Reality. A Review Article'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 44(1): 186–195.
- Hahn, H.P. (2012) 'Words and Things: Reflections on People's Interaction with the Material World'. In: Maran, J. and P. Stockhammer (eds.): *Materiality and Social Practice: Transformative Capacities of Intercultural Encounters*. Oxford: Oxbow.
- Appadurai, A. ed. (2011) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. 9th ed, Cambridge [u.a.]: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Harman, G. (2009) *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics*. Melbourne: re.press. (Open access edition available online at http://www.re-press.org/book-files/OA_Version_780980544060_Prince_of_Networks.pdf)
- Harman, G. (2002) *Tool-Being: Heidegger & the Metaphysics of Objects*. Peru, IL: Open Court.
- Bourdieu, P. (2010) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Brown, B. (2001) 'Thing Theory'. *Critical Inquiry*. 28(1): 1–22.
- Dant, T. (1999) *Material Culture in the Social World*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Gombrich, E.H. (1979) *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*. London: Phaidon.
- Gell, A. (1998) *Art and Agency; An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hansen, K.T. (2004) 'The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture'. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33(1): 369–392.
- Hartz, G.A. (1985) *The Problem Of Matter's Inherent Nature (Leibniz, Kant, Locke, Materialism, Atomists)*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Syracuse University. (Available through ProQuest Dissertations.)
- Hodder, I. (2007) 'The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture'. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, pp. 393–402.
- Mauss, M. (2009) 'Conceptions Which Have Preceded the Notion of Matter'. In N. Schlanger, ed. *Marcel Mauss: Techniques, Technology and Civilisation*. Durkheim Press/Berghahn Books, pp. 141–145.
- Miller, D. (1995) 'Consumption and Commodities'. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, pp. 141–161.

- Miller, D. (2008) 'Material Culture'. In T. Bennett & J. Frow, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*. Los Angeles: Sage, pp. 1–21.
- Miller, D. (2005) 'Materiality: An Introduction'. In D. Miller, ed. *Materiality*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, pp. 1–50.
- Miller, D. ed. (1998) *Material Cultures; Why Some Things Matter*. London: UCL Press.
- Shapere, D. (1998) 'Matter'. In E. Craig, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 192–196.
- Tilley, C. (2001) 'Ethnography and Material Culture'. In P. Atkinson et al., eds. *Handbook of Ethnography*. pp. 258–272.
- Zukin, S. & Maguire, J.S. (2004) 'Consumers and Consumption'. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30(1), pp.173–197.

COURSE SCHEDULE

1. Course Introduction

Thursday, October 18

2. On the Matter of Gold and Cocaine

Thursday, October 25



TEXTS

- Preface and Pages 1-75, from: Taussig, M. (2004) *My Cocaine Museum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- How would you describe Taussig's writing style? And why might it matter? For instance, what do you make of the emphasis on sensory experience? The division of chapters? And the juxtaposition of ethnography with photographs and reflections on literature and philosophy?
- Does this book appear to present a unified argument? If so, what is it? If not, why might this be the case?
- Why do you think Taussig chose to organize the book around gold and cocaine?
- What does it mean to say these materials are *fetishized*? And how does this relate to *money*?
- Wherein lies the irony of a 'cocaine museum'?
- What is Taussig's ethnographic project? What is his ethical, or political, project? And how are they related?
- Does it matter whether one reads this as an ebook, paperback or photocopy?

BACKGROUND READING AND VIEWING

- Tilley, C. (2001) 'Ethnography and Material Culture.' In P. Atkinson et al., eds. *Handbook of Ethnography*. Pages 258–272.
- Also see *Background Reading on the Study of Material Culture*, above.

3. How to Treat Objects Like People

Thursday, November 1

TEXT AND WRITING

- Kopytoff, I. (1986) 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process'. In A. Appadurai, ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 64–91.
- Prepare a 1000-word biography of an object of your choosing. Due in my email inbox (rfox@eth.uni-heidelberg.de) **before** the beginning of class. Details TBA.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- On what grounds do we differentiate between people and things? And with what sorts of consequences?
- What did Kopytoff mean by the 'moral economy', which 'stands behind the objective economy of visible transactions' (p.64; cp. 71)?
- Why did Kopytoff approach the problem of the commodity by way of *slavery*? How did this help shape his approach to a 'cultural biography of things'?
- What would be a 'well-lived life' for an anthropologist? A doctor? A lion? A dog? An automobile? A diamond ring? A book of poetry?
- What are the defining qualities of 'the commodity'? And what would it mean to approach a commodity *culturally*?
- Can you think of another example of a 'specially focused morality' for comparison with Kopytoff's discussion of African art among American Africanists (pp.78f)?
- What is the relationship between Art and commodification? In the light of this relationship, how would you interpret Andy Warhol's paintings of soup cans and other 'household items'?
- How does the tension between singularization and commodification play out in vintage clothing stores? Antique auctions? Market stalls selling ethnic objects and New Age paraphernalia? Pawn shops? And on eBay?

BACKGROUND READING AND VIEWING

- Film: *The Big Lebowski*. (The rug may tie the room together... but what would it mean to say it had 'agency'?)
- Wiener, M.J. (2007) 'The Magical Life of things', in: Pieter ter Keurs (ed.), *Colonial Collections Revisited*, pp. 45-70. Leiden: Research School CNWS. [Mededelingen van het Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde Leiden 36, CNWS Publications 152.]
- Hauser-Schäublin, B. (2012) 'The Diversion of the Village Gods; A Criminal Turn in the Biography of Balinese Copperplate Inscriptions'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 168(1): 74–99.
- Schnapp, J.T. (2001) 'The Romance of Caffeine and Aluminum'. *Critical Inquiry*. 28(1): 244–269.
- Appadurai, A. (2006) 'The Thing Itself'. *Public culture*. 18(1): 15–21.
- Thompson, M. (1979) *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Langness, L.L. (1965) *The Life History in Anthropological Science*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Rivers, W.H.R. (1910) 'The Genealogical Method of Anthropological Inquiry'. *Sociological Review*. 3:1-12.

4. All That is Solid Melts into Air...

Thursday, November 8

TEXT

- Chapter 1: Commodities, from: Marx, K. (1990 [1867]) *Capital; A Critique of Political Economy*. Volume I. Trans. B. Fowkes. London: Penguin Books.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- What, or *when*, is a commodity? Compare Marx's account with what we found in last week's chapter from Kopytoff.
- Define the following terms as they appear in Marx's critique of political economy: use value, exchange value, value, abstract labour, commensurability, the money form, fetishism.
- What is the nature of the relationship between matter, or material, and the commodity?
- Of what significance, if any, is Marx's use of material metaphors for labour (e.g., as 'condensed', 'congealed' or 'crystalized' in the commodity)?
- Map the steps through which Marx derives his interpretation of 'the money form'. How does this relate to *commodity fetishism*?
- In what ways—and in which senses of the word—does Anthropology tend to fetishize its object of study? And, reflecting on Marx's analysis of the commodity, how might one work against these tendencies?
- Returning to our earlier reading, how does Marx's description of *commodity fetishism* line up with Taussig's analysis of gold and cocaine? Is a museum inherently fetishistic? What about a 'cocaine museum'?

BACKGROUND READING AND VIEWING

- Lecture One from David Harvey's online course on reading Vol. I of Marx's *Capital* (<http://davidharvey.org/reading-capital/>); or his short book, *A Companion to Marx's Capital*.
- Singer, P. (2001) *Marx: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pietz, W. (1985-7) 'The Problem of the Fetish I'; '- II' & '-IIIa' *Anthropology and Aesthetics*. 9: 1-14; 13: 23-45; 16: 1-21.
- Balibar, É. (2007) *The Philosophy of Marx*. New York & London: Verso.
- Eagleton, T. (2011) *Why Marx Was Right*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Smith, A. (1904 [1776]) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edwin Cannan, ed. 1904. Library of Economics and Liberty. <<http://www.econlib.org/library/Smith/smWN.html>>.
- Baudrillard, J. (1975) *The Mirror of Production*. St. Louis: Telos Press Publishing.

NB: THERE WILL BE *NO SEMINAR MEETING* ON THURSDAY NOVEMBER 15

Please use this time for background reading AND the preparation of the following week's short writing assignment.

5. Myth Today: On the Nature of Things Historical

Thursday, November 22

TEXT AND WRITING

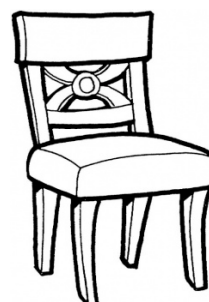
- Selected short essays & 'Myth Today' Barthes, R. (1972 [1957]) 'Myth today' and selections. *Mythologies*. NY: Hill & Wang. (Read essays on: *Soap-powders and Detergents; Operation Margarine; Toys; Wine and Milk; Steak and Chips; Ornamental Cookery; Plastic; The Great Family of Man.*)
- Write a 500-word essay à la Barthes, centered on one of the shop windows along the Hauptstraße (e.g., the Apotheke, Jack Wolfskin, organic food marts, or any of the bakeries or tobacconists). Your essays are due in my email inbox (rfox@eth.uni-heidelberg.de) **before** the beginning of class. Details TBA.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- What sorts of things were the focus of Barthes' analysis? And why?
- What is 'myth'? And why did Barthes call it a 'system of communication'?
- In what ways did Barthes' analysis of 'myth' prefigure Kopytoff's approach to the 'biography' of things?
- What are the leading myths regarding contemporary Europe? Or America? To what extent are they susceptible to analysis in the terms described by Barthes (inoculation, the privation of history, identification etc.)?
- What is the nature of the relationship between *Nature*, *History* and *criticism*? And how might this affect our approach to *materiality*?
- Compare and contrast Barthes' analyses of consumer items with Marx's critique of political economy. Pay special attention to the *social character* of 'the commodity'.

BACKGROUND READING

- Culler, J. (2002) *Roland Barthes; A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hawkes, T. (1997) *Structuralism and Semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Young, R. (1981) 'Post-structuralism: An Introduction'. *Untying the Text; A Post-structuralist Reader*. Boston, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- de Saussure, F. (1983) *Course in General Linguistics*. Trans. H. Harris. Chicago & La Salle, IL.: Open Court Classics. (Especially: Introduction: Chapters 1 & 2; Part One: Chapters 1 to 3; Part Two: Chapters 1 to 6.)
- Culler, J. (1986) 'The Man and the Course' & 'Saussure's Theory of Language'. Ferdinand de Saussure. Revised Edition. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pages 21-64.
- Stafford A. (2006) 'Afterword'. In R. Barthes. *The Language of Fashion*. A. Stafford and M. Carter (eds.). New York: Berg. Pp. 118-64.
- Douglas, M. (2008 [1966]) *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge.



6. The Bourgeoisie in Space: Consumption and the Allure of Identity

Thursday, November 29

TEXT AND FILM(S)

- Chapter 1, 6 & 8. Fischer, J. (2008) *Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping Among the Malays in Modern Malaysia*. Denmark: NIAS Press.
- One or more short films of your choice from the website for the 15 Malaysia project: <http://15malaysia.com/films/>

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- Is capitalism driven by the mode of production? By consumption? Both? Or perhaps by something else entirely?
- What are the practices that make up 'proper Islamic consumption'? And how do they compare, for instance, with shopping 'green' in Europe and America?
- How does 'proper Islamic consumption' play out spatially? In the home? The shopping mall? And elsewhere?
- Is suburbia the same everywhere? How does the idea of 'the family' organize spaces, objects and bodies? And does it matter if the family is Hindu, Confucian or Muslim? Indian, Chinese or Malay?
- What is *choice*? And what sort of *agency* is involved in the choices that make up consumerism?
- To what extent does the study of consumption lead us (yet again?) away from the *materiality* of commodities? Is this unavoidable?

BACKGROUND READING AND VIEWING

- Film: *Arisan!*, *The Stepford Wives* or *Edward Scissorhands*.
- Zukin, S. & Maguire, J.S. (2004) 'Consumers and Consumption'. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 30(1): 173–197.
- Miller, D. (2001) 'Possessions'. *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*. Oxford & New York: Berg. Pp.107-21.
- Douglas, M. & B.C. Isherwood (1996 [1979]) *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*. London: Routledge.
- Baudrillard, J. (1998) *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage.
- Miller, D. (1998) *A Theory of Shopping*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Kuper, A. (1998) 'Objects of Desire'. *The Times Literary Supplement*. 4960: 7. (A review critical of D. Miller's approach to consumerism.)
- Pink, J. (2009) 'Introduction'. In *Muslim Societies in the Age of Mass Consumption*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. ix–xviii.
- Chua Beng Huat (2003) *Life Is Not Complete Without Shopping: Consumption Culture in Singapore*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- van Leeuwen, L. (2011) *Lost in Mall: An Ethnography of Middle-class Jakarta in the 1990s*. *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 255. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- Gillette, M.B. (2000) *Between Mecca and Beijing: Modernization and Consumption among Urban Chinese Muslims*.
- Fischer, J. (2011) *The Halal Frontier: Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Market*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Mahmood, S. (2005) *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

7. The Gift that Keeps on Giving

Thursday, December 6

TEXT

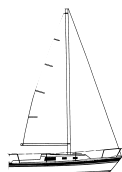
- Mauss, M. (1966 [1923-24]) *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Trans. I. Cunnison. London: Cohen & West Ltd.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- Are gifts coercive? (How do we *do things* with gifts?)
- How does a gift differ from a commodity? In what ways is it similar?
- What, ultimately, is Mauss' answer to his opening question? (*In primitive or archaic types of society what is the principle whereby the gift received has to be repaid? What force is there in the thing given which compels the recipient to make a return?*)
- What is the *potlatch*? And how is it related to other forms of giving and receiving?
- What is 'the spirit of the thing given'? And what is its significance for Mauss' general theory of prestation?
- What might it mean to say that 'the law of things remains bound up with the law of persons' (p.2; compare, e.g., pp.18,46)? How does this principle play out in Mauss' analysis of the ethnographic material from Polynesia, Melanesia and North America? To what extent can we see a similar sensibility at work in the contemporary study of 'material culture'? (Key points of reference might include our readings from Taussig and Kopytoff)
- Under what circumstances is it rude to turn down an invitation to dinner? And why? Do Mauss' reflections on archaic systems of exchange offer any insight into modern etiquette?
- How did Mauss envisage the 'moral' import of his study of archaic systems of exchange? In other words, why should contemporary society care what was being done by its 'primitive' counterparts?

BACKGROUND READING

- Malinowski, B., (1966) *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Strathern, M. (2001). *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*. Studies in Melanesian anthropology (3rd ed. Vol. 6, pp. XV–422 S.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1969) 'The Principle of Reciprocity.' *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Revised Edition. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Ekeh, P.P. (1974) *Social Exchange Theory: The Two Traditions*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Godelier, M. (1999) *The Enigma of the Gift*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Parry, J. (1986) 'The Gift, the Indian Gift and the 'Indian Gift'. *Man*, pp.453–473.
- Bataille, G. (1988) *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*. New York: Zone Books.
- Derrida, J. (1992) *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.





8. When (and Where) is Art?

Thursday, December 13

TEXTS

- Benjamin, W. (1968) 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. *Illuminations; Essays and Reflections*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Strassler, K. (2000) 'Currency and Fingerprints: Authentic Reproductions and Political Communication in Indonesia's "Reform Era."' *Indonesia*. 70: 71-82.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- Where should we look for the difference between an original painting by Picasso and a copy that, to the naked eye, is utterly indistinguishable from it?
- What is a work of art? Materially? Socially? Historically, or culturally?
- In what ways does mechanical reproduction change the work of art in each of these regards? How is quantity related to quality?
- What did Benjamin mean by 'authenticity', 'aura' and 'presence'? How are these related to materiality? To extension in time and space?
- In what ways can we be said to *make things*, such as art? And, reflecting on Benjamin's account of art and perception, how can *things* also be said to *make us*? Here one might wish to reflect more generally on the study of 'material culture'.
- What, for Benjamin, was so special about photography and film? How might his analysis play out with more contemporary media, such as Twitter or Facebook?
- To what precisely does the term *media* refer? What is the nature of its materiality?
- In what directions did Benjamin develop Marx's analysis of the commodity? And how might we tie this to themes prevalent in Mauss' discussion of the gift?
- How do *the work of art* and *the gift* differ, respectively, from *the commodity*? Can 'the same object' be all three? If so, precisely what is the distinction between them? And what can we say of its relation to *matter*?

BACKGROUND READING

- Gombrich, E.H. (1979) *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*. London: Phaidon.
- Goodman, N. (1984) *Of Mind and Other Matters*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Goodman, N. (1988) 'When is Art?' *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. 2nd ed. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett.
- Gell, A. (1998) *Art & Agency; An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Collingwood, R.G. (1965) *Principles of Art*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Benjamin, W. (1980) 'A Short History Photography'. In A. Trachtenberg, ed. *Classic Essays on Photography*. New Haven: Leete's Island Books; pp. 199-216.

9. At the Museum: The (Dis)Placement of Primitive Things

Thursday, December 20

TEXTS

- Chapters 1-4. Price, S. (1989) *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- Compare and contrast the *spaces, things* and *practices* that make up museums, high streets (e.g., the Hauptstraße) and shopping malls.
- For what reasons do we collect things? And to what effect?
- What sort of collection and connoisseurship do we tend to associate with museums?
- How do the purposes of Fine Art museums differ from those of a more ethnological bent?
- When is Primitive Art? (That is, under what specific conditions have various things been taken *as* Primitive Art?)
- How is Primitive Art related to its maker? Its material composition? And history? How does this compare with other forms of Art?
- What did Price mean by 'the *dehumanization* of Primitive Art and its makers' (p. 5)? How might you relate this back to Marx (and others) on fetishization? And Kopytoff's idea of writing 'biographies' of things?
- Can Primitive Art have a history? If not, why not? If so, how would it compare with other kinds of Art History?

BACKGROUND READING

- Film: *Nanook of the North*.
- Kreps, C. (2004) 'The Idea of "Pusaka" as an Indigenous Form of Cultural Heritage Preservation'. In F. Kerlogue, ed., *Performing Objects: Museums, Material Culture and Performance in Southeast Asia*. London: Horniman Museum and Gardens. Pages 1–18.
- Clifford, J. (1988) 'On Collecting Art and Culture'. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1968) 'Notes on Collecting'. *Illuminations; Essays and Reflections*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Stocking, G.W., ed. (1985) *Objects and Others; Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. History of Anthropology, Vol.3. Madison, WI: Univ. of Wisconsin Press.
- Errington, S. (1998) *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art; And Other Tales of Progress*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Lefèbvre, H. (1991) *The production of space*. D. Nicholson-Smith, ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

NB: Official Winter Holidays run from 22 December 2012 through 06 January 2013.

10. Embodiment: Durable Dispositions and Their Double

Thursday, January 10

TEXT

- 'Book I' (Pages 25-79) Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- How, if at all, does Bourdieu's double critique of subjectivism/objectivism map onto our reading to date?
- From both theoretical and political perspectives, what was Bourdieu's approach to *practice* designed to accomplish? What were the primary challenges as he understood them? And how did he aim to surmount them?
- What is the significance of Bourdieu's differentiation between theoretical and practical forms of knowledge?
- What sort of *thing* is the body? And how did Bourdieu conceive of the relationship between *habitus*, *history* and *the body*?
- Who made whom? Do people create material objects and organize spaces? Do objects and spaces organize people? Could it be both at once? Or perhaps neither? And how are bodies implicated in the process?
- Reflecting on our reading to date, why do you think Bourdieu has been so influential among scholars of 'material culture'?

BACKGROUND READING

- Bourdieu, P. (1990) 'The Kabyle House or the World Reversed'. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press. Pages 271-83.
- Althusser, L. (1971 [1970]) 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. B Brewster (trans.). London: New Left Books. Pages 121-176.
- Gramsci, A. (1971) 'The Study of Philosophy'. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Q. Hoare and G.N. Smith (eds. & trans.). London: Lawrence and Wishart. Pp. 323-77.
- Mauss, M. (2009 [1935]) 'Techniques of the Body'. In Schlanger, N., ed. *Marcel Mauss: Techniques, Technology and Civilisation*. New York & Oxford: Durkheim Press/Berghahn Books. Pages 77-95.
- Hirschkind, C. (2006) *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jenkins, R. (2002) *Pierre Bourdieu*. Revised Edition. London and New York: Routledge. (For a critical perspective on Bourdieu.)
- Special issue of *Ethnography* on 'Pierre Bourdieu in the Field'; 5(4) December 2004; published by Sage, London.
- Bourdieu, P. and L.J.D. Wacquant (1992) 'The Chicago Workshop'. In *An invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

11. Performativity: On Bodies That Matter

Thursday, January 17

TEXTS

- Prefaces, Chapter One and Conclusion. Butler, J. (1999 [1990]) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Film: *Paris is Burning*.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- Why might Butler have been critical of the idea of 'women' as the subject of feminism?

- What does it mean to say that 'gender is a kind of impersonation that passes for the real' (1999: xxviii)?
- What is performativity? How is it related to the idea of substance? And what is the significance of repetition for our approach to 'material culture'?
- With specific reference to the body and its materiality, how would you compare Butler's notion of performativity with Bourdieu on practice?
- Reflecting on your viewing of the film, *Paris is Burning*, can it be said that drag performances and voguing in the Harlem ballrooms 'produce subversive discontinuity and dissonance among sex, gender, and desire and call into question their alleged relations' (1999: xxx)? Why does it matter?

BACKGROUND READING

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12. Malleable Sensorium: Media, Meditation, Morbidity

Thursday, January 24

TEXTS

- Klima, A. (2001) 'The Telegraphic Object: Buddhist Meditation and the Redemption of Mechanical Reproduction'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 43(3): 552-582.
- 'Foulness as a Meditation Subject' (Chapter Six). From Buddhaghosa Bhadantācariya (1964) *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*. Bhikkhu Nyanamoli, trans. Colombo, Sri Lanka: A. Semage.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- In what ways, specifically, does a human body differ from a photograph of a human body?
- What are the material conditions under which we *view* bodies, both our own and those of others?
- Do visual images of bodily violence have a determinate effect on their viewers? If so, how might such an argument be substantiated (or falsified)? If not, how are we to interpret the proliferation of these images through contemporary media?

- On which of our senses do we rely as being the most accurate, or trustworthy? And how does this tend to play out in ethnographic writing? (Here one might compare Taussig with authors such as Malinowski or Geertz.)
- What did Klima mean by 'the metaphysics of presence'? How does this pertain to our conceptions of 'the body'? And what purchase might Derrida's critique (as described by Klima) have on our seemingly endless deferral as we pursue 'materiality'?
- What can Buddhist meditation on morbidity tell us about the relationship between personal identity, sensory experience and the body?
- To what extent is the human 'sensorium' malleable? To what effect? And how might this affect our approach to ethnographic enquiry?
- Reflecting on our readings from Bourdieu, Butler, Klima and Buddhaghosa, what does it mean to invoke 'the body' as an object of knowledge?

BACKGROUND READING

- Hirschkind, C. (2005) Review of D. Howes (2003) *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*. *American Anthropologist*. 107(2):293–294.
- Collins, S. (1996) 'The Body in Theravada Buddhist Monasticism'. In S. Coakley, ed., *Religion and the Body*. Cambridge Cambridge University Press; 185-204.
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- Csordas, T. (1994) *Embodiment and Experience. The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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- Scarry, E. (1985) *The Body in Pain; The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

13. Actor/Network: The Anti-Museum?

Thursday, January 31

TEXTS

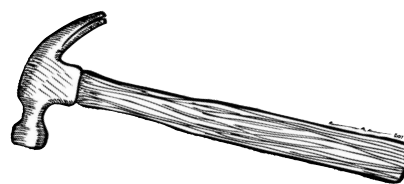
- Schaffer, S. (2008) *The Information Order of Isaac Newton's Principia Mathematica*. Uppsala: Salvia Småskrifter.
- Latour, B. (2011) 'Networks, Societies, Spheres: Reflections of an Actor-Network Theorist.' Keynote speech for the *International Seminar on Network Theory: Network Multidimensionality in the Digital Age*. 19th February 2010. Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, Los Angeles.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- How did Latour use the terms *network*, *agency*, and *the redistribution of action*?
- In what ways, specifically, does this 'redistributive' approach challenge our received notions of history and human agency?
- Who (or *what*?) wrote Newton's *Principia Mathematica*?
- And how might we compare this problematization of human agency with that of Bourdieu or Butler?
- What sort of network produced the syllabus you hold in your hands? Or read on your computer screen? (Does it matter which?)
- How might our approach to materiality, and ethnographic writing, be transformed by attention to networks?
- Why is the commonsense dichotomy between the individual and society deemed problematic? What is gained by abandoning such dichotomous thinking? And how might this be accomplished?
- What parallels, if any, do you see between Actor Network Theory and Kopytoff's approach to the 'biography' of things? Or with Butler on performativity and power? And the Buddhist notion of 'co-dependent arising' (*P. paticca-samuppāda*, *S. pratītya-samutpāda*)?

BACKGROUND READING

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- Harman, G. (2009) *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics*. Melbourne: re.press. (Open access edition available online at http://www.re-press.org/book-files/OA_Version_780980544060_Prince_of_Networks.pdf)
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- Latour, B. (1999) 'A Collective of Humans and Nonhumans'. In *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Pp. 174- 215.



14. OOO, Really? Taking an “Object Oriented Ontology” to Bali

Thursday, February 7

TEXT

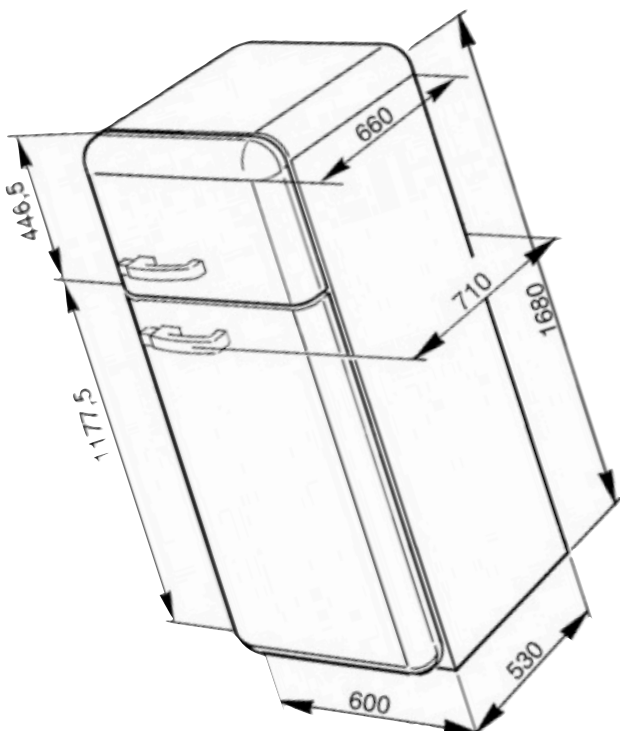
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BACKGROUND READING

- See entries for previous week, especially those by Latour and Harman.

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

- What is the critical significance of the honorifics (e.g., Ida Batara) used in reference to powerful objects such as copperplate inscriptions?
- What does it mean to say something is alive (B. *maurip*; *idup*)?
- In Balinese terms, how is the ‘life’ of human beings related to that of animals? Plants? Buildings? Syllables?
- How do names *matter*?
- How might an engagement with Balinese ideas be useful in our own thinking about the nature of agency, life and materiality?
- More generally speaking, what purposes might be served by critical inquiry in non-European societies? What forms of community and collective good are fostered by the pursuit of these ends?
- Following Latour or Harman, what would it mean to take an “object oriented ontology” to Bali?



FINAL ESSAYS DUE 15 APRIL 2013
Details to be announced.