

POWER AND THE AGGLUTINATIVE SOUL

WINTER 2013-14

Instructor: Dr Richard Fox
rfox@eth.uni-heidelberg.de
Office Hours: Mon, 11-13:00; Rm 104

Wednesdays, 15 - 17 ct.
Room 8021, Bergius Villa

Contemporary trends in cultural anthropology owe much to poststructuralist insights regarding the relationship between language, the subject and power. Taking this relationship as its point of departure, we will be asking whether the nature of power, and of the subject, depend in any significant way on the sort of language being spoken. It is often noted that the languages of Southeast Asia differ in important ways – ‘structurally’ – from their Indo-European counterparts. But what of the subject and power? As we shall see, the ethnographic literature on Southeast Asia provides several examples of what might be described as a decentered, or internally complex, human subject. Here agency tends to be understood as the product of sustained endeavor, and often ceremonial work. As with the rites of *ngulapan* in Bali, the *pralung* in Cambodia, and the *kwihan* among the Thai-Lao, one’s well-being is closely tied to the comings and goings of a certain spirit, or ‘soul stuff’ that is more amenable to *quantification* than simple absence or presence. Its relative concentration, or dissipation, is seen to determine health and illness, vigor and lassitude, serenity and distress. Accordingly, the gathering-up of these constituents is at the center of a series of rites directed to healing and invigoration, safety and protection. This seminar sets out to explore the role of language in articulating a relationship between this understanding of the human subject and its concomitant theories of power. Key ethnographic concepts under discussion will include *sakti*, *sumangé*, *atma*, *roh*, *nyawa*, *mandala*, *karya*, theatricality, exemplary centers, men of prowess, animism and spirits of the place. These ideals will be juxtaposed critically with debates on the relationship between language, the subject and power in broadly poststructuralist thought and some of its more important precursors.

A Course in Three Parts:

The seminar is organized into three parts reflecting the three primary issues under discussion: language, the subject and power. Following an introductory session, the course breaks down as follows:

PART ONE: OF LANGUAGE AND ITS LIMITS

- 2) Language and the Problem of Determination
- 3) The Anthropological Idea of Meaning
- 4) Translating Between Silence and Exuberance
- 5) The Strangely Elusive Notion of Ecology

PART TWO: PERFORMING THE FRAGMENTED SUBJECT

- 6) The Luwu Subject and the Fluidity of Power
- 7) Balinese Technologies of the Unbounded Self
- 8) Gathering the Agglutinative Soul Among the Thai-Lao
- 9) Embodying the Fragmented Person in Java and Madura
- 10) Performativity, Citationality, Ritualization

PART THREE: POWER AND THE ARTICULATION OF POLITY

- 11) Java/Power
- 12) Tattoos, Invulnerability and Efficacy
- 13) Centering the Galactic Polity
- 14) Tying the Whole Room Together



A Balinese amulet drawing: 'The god Panukuping Bhuwana (World Coverer) offers resistance' (Hooykaas 1980:101).

Course Requirements:

- Complete and careful reading/viewing of all required course material.
- Regular attendance and active participation in seminar discussion.
- *At least one in-class presentation*, consisting of **(a)** reading out a 2000-word written response to the Essay Question listed for a given week, and **(b)** responding to questions from the instructor and other members of the class. This written response is a rough draft for one of your two essays (as below).
- **Two essays** of 2000 words apiece (approximately 8 A4-sized pages each, in double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman). At least one of these essays will be read out to the class in the form of a rough draft (as above). Final drafts for both essays will be due in my email inbox (rfox@eth.uni-heidelberg.de) on 14 April 2014. Please plan accordingly. Further details will be distributed in class.
- All work must be completed on time; **no extensions** will be granted for this course, except on grounds of major life disruption.

On In-Class Presentations and Written Work

The written work for this seminar will take the form of two (2) essays of approximately 2000 words apiece. This word-count does **not** include direct quotations, which ought to be kept to a minimum. At least one of these essays will respond directly to one of the Essay Questions listed for our weekly sessions (see below). This essay will be read aloud to the seminar group for discussion. If scheduling permits, the second essay may also be presented in this form. Students will have the opportunity to revise their essays in light of feedback from both the instructor and other students. Final drafts are due 14 April 2014, as indicated above.

Background Reading on the History & Ethnography of Southeast Asia

- Vickers, A. (2005) *A History of Modern Indonesia*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Swearer, D.K. (2010) *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Soedjatmoko (1965) *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Wolters, O. W. (1999). *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. (No. 26). Ithaca, NY: Cornell SEAP Publications.
- Cœdès, G. (1968). *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press.
- Ricklefs, M.C. et al. (2010) *A New History of Southeast Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chandler, D. P., & D. J. Steinberg (1987). *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Multatuli [Dekker, D.] (1967) *Max Havelaar; Or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company*. Leiden: Sijthoff.
- Koentjaraningrat (1975) *Anthropology in Indonesia: A Bibliographical Review*. The Hague: M. Nijhoff.
- Keeler, W. (1987). *Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Geertz, C. (1976) *The Religion of Java*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Zoetmulder, P.J. (1974) *Kalangwan; A Survey of Old Javanese Literature*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Kitiarsa, P. (2013) *Mediums, Monks, and Amulets: Thai Popular Buddhism Today*. University of Washington Press.
- Hayashi, Y. (2003) *Practical Buddhism Among the Thai-Lao: Religion in the Making of a Region*. Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press.

Background Reading on Poststructuralism and Critical Theory

- Dosse, F. (1998) *The History of Structuralism: The Rising Sign: 1945-1966*. Volume One. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dosse, F. (1997) *The History of Structuralism: The Sign Sets: 1967- Present*. Volume Two. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Young, R. (ed., 1981) *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*. London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan, Paul.
- Foucault, M. (1990) 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx'. In Ormiston, G.L. & A.D. Schrift (eds.) *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*. Albany: SUNY Press. 59-67.
- Culler, J. (1982) *On Deconstruction; Theory and Criticism After Structuralism*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Colebrook, C. (1999) *Philosophy and Poststructuralist Theory: From Kant to Deleuze*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Sturrock, J., ed. (1979) *Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cusset, F. (2008) *French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Macdonell, D. (1986) *Theories of Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Williams, R. (1983) *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Flamingo.
- Ormiston, G.L. & Schrift, A.D., eds. (1990) *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Henriques, J. et al. (1984) *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity*. London: Methuen.
- Inden, R. (n.d.) 'Human Agency and the Social Sciences'. Unpublished essay; copies available from instructor.
- Morson, G. S., & Emerson, C. (1990) *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Volosinov, V. N. (1973) *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. New York: Seminar Press.
- Said, E.W. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- King, R. (1999) *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and the Mystic East*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Young, R. (1995) *Colonial desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. London & New York: Routledge.



A Balinese depiction of the human person with his or her four 'spiritual siblings' (*kanda mpat*) who, having been ignored, have taken on a potentially malevolent form.

COURSE SCHEDULE

1. Course Introduction

Wednesday, October 16. 2013

PART ONE: LANGUAGE AND ITS LIMITS
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2. Language and the Problem of Determination

Wednesday, October 23. 2013

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- von Humboldt, W. (1988 [1836]) *On Language: The Diversity of Human Language-Structure and its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind*. Trans. P. Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Sections: 1,3,7,8,14 & 19.
- Whorf, B.L. (1956) 'An American Indian Model of the Universe'. *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. ed. J.B. Carroll, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Pages 57-64.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- How is language related to the world and why should anthropologists care?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What do you find easy to say in German but that is difficult to say in English? And *vice versa*? On reflection, what might be some of the implications of this difference?
- On what grounds do we most commonly judge another conception of the world as 'strange', 'mystical' or simply unfounded? Under what conditions would these grounds be tenable?
- What would be entailed in taking as one's object of study the sort of 'metaphysics' described by Whorf? What bearing might this have on our own self-understanding?
- How might an 'agglutinative' language differ from an 'inflected' language in its articulation of agency (e.g., person and life), time (e.g., occasion and duration) and space (e.g., location and extension)?

FURTHER READING:

- Lakoff, G. & M. Johnson (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. London & Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Salmond, A. (1982) 'Theoretical Landscapes: On a Cross-Cultural Conception of Knowledge'. Parkin, D. (ed.) *Semantic Anthropology*. ASA22. London: Academic Press.
- Koerner, E.F.K. (2000) "Towards a "Full Pedigree" of the "Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis:" From Locke to Lucy'. In Pütz, M. & M.H. Verspoor, eds. *Explorations in Linguistic Relativity*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Black, M. (1962) 'Linguistic relativity: the views of Benjamin Lee Whorf'. *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

3. The Anthropological Idea of Meaning

Wednesday, October 30. 2013

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Geertz, C. (1973) 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture'. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. USA: Fontana Press. Pages 3-30.
- Hobart, M. (n.d.) 'Beyond the Whorfs of Dover: A Balinese Account of Meaning'. Unpublished Essay.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- Do the practices of ethnography require a theory of meaning? If so, what sort of 'meaning' is best suited to ethnographic enquiry? If not, how might a 'farewell to meaning' transform the work of ethnography?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is meaning? How is it related to language? To context? And use?
- What was Geertz's point in saying that anthropology is 'an interpretive science in search of meaning'? To what was this interpretive ideal opposed? And, practically speaking, how might it inform anthropological enquiry?
- How do Balinese sensibilities regarding language and truth compare with their broadly Euro-american counterparts?
- What sorts of relationship might be forged between ethnographic enquiry and philosophy?

FURTHER READING:

- Ricoeur, P. (1971) 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text'. *Social Research*. 38: 529-62. Reprinted in Rabinow, P. & W.M. Sullivan, eds. (1979) *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*. Berkeley etc.: University of California Press and in his *Hermeneutics and the Social Sciences*.
- Parkin, D., ed. (1982) *Semantic Anthropology*. London etc.: Academic Press.
- Lyons, J. (1977) *Semantics*. 2 Volumes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Palmer, R.E. (1969) *Hermeneutics; Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

4. Translating Between Silence and Exuberance

Wednesday, November 6. 2013

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Becker, A.L. (1995) 'Silence Across Languages' & 'Beyond Translation; Esthetics and Language Description'. *Beyond Translation: Essays Toward a Modern Philology*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. Pages: 283-315.
- Zurbuchen, M.S. (1989) 'Internal Translation in Balinese Poetry'. In Becker, A.L. (ed.) *Writing on the Tongue*. Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia. Number 33. USA: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, The University of Michigan. Pages 215-79.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- What are the qualities of a good translation, and under what conditions are they attainable?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are some of the 'silences' and 'exuberances' you have experienced in moving between German and English? And *vice versa*? And how might these disjunctures affect our understanding of translation?
- To what extent does Becker's account of 'silences between languages' commit him to a form of linguistic relativism? And how might we tie this back to our discussion of von Humboldt and Whorf?
- How do the sensibilities of Balinese 'internal translation' differ from broadly western ideals of translation and meaning?
- What might these reflections on translation tell us about language more generally?

FURTHER READING:

- Asad, T. (1986) 'The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology'. Clifford, J. & G. Marcus (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley & London: University of California Press. Pages 141-164.
- Schleiermacher, F. (1813) *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*. Translated into English as 'On the Different Methods of Translating'. Venuti, L. ed. (2002) *The Translation Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Quine, W.V.O. (1960) *Word and Object*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.
- Fox, R. (2003) 'Substantial Transmissions: A Presuppositional Analysis of "the Old Javanese Text" as an Object of Knowledge, and its Implications for the Study of Religion in Bali'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 159(1): 65-107.

5. The Strangely Elusive Notion of Ecology

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Siegel, J.T. (1986) Intro + Chs. 1 & 2. *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pages 1-58.
- Haugen, E. (2001 [1974]) 'The Ecology of Language'. Fill, A. & P. Mühlhäusler (eds.) *Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology and Environment*. London & New York: Continuum. Pages 57-66.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- What makes up the 'ecology' of the Javanese language in Solo?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How is Javanese language related to other aspects of life in Solo?
- How should we delimit language as an object of study? Put another way, to what precisely does the term 'language' refer? And what would it mean to say there was something beyond its limits?
- What would Javanese stand to lose should they stop speaking their mother tongue? And, conversely, what it might mean to speak, read or write Javanese in the absence of its traditional milieu?
- In what ways might efforts to preserve the Javanese language transform traditional Javanese practices?

FURTHER READING:

- Errington, J.J. (1988) Chapters 2 & 3. *Structure and Style in Javanese; A Semiotic View of Language Etiquette*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Sneddon, J.N. (2003) *The Indonesian Language: Its History and Role in Modern Society*. Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Mühlhäusler, P. (1992) 'Preserving Languages or Language Ecologies? A Top-down Approach to Language Survival'. *Oceanic Linguistics*. 31(2): 163-80.
- Fill, A. (2001) 'Ecolinguistics: State of the Art 1998'. Fill, A. & P. Mühlhäusler (eds.) *Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology and Environment*. London & New York: Continuum. Pages 43–56.

PART TWO: PERFORMING THE FRAGMENTED SUBJECT

6. The Luwu Subject and the Fluidity of Power

Wednesday, November 20. 2013

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Errington, S. (1983) 'Embodied Sumangé' in Luwu'. *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 42(3): 545-70.
- Foucault, M. (1997) 'Technologies of the Self'. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*. New York: The New Press. Pages 224-51.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- What sort of 'self' is cultivated in Luwu, and by what means?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is a 'technology of the self'?
- What is *sumangé*? And in what ways is it associated with self-cultivation or transformation?
- How do Luwu ideals of personhood articulate with their notions of language, power and polity?
- What comparisons might we draw between ideals of power, self and language in Luwu and Solo? Or in the Graeco-Roman world described by Foucault?

FURTHER READING:

- Taylor, C. (1989) *Sources of the Self; The Making of Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobart, M. (n.d.) 'The Subject of "the Subject;" A Working Paper'. Available online at <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/7142/>
- Errington, S. (1989) *Meaning and Power in a Southeast Asian Realm*. Princeton: PUP.
- Descombes, V. (1987) 'Je m'en Foucault'. *London Review of Books*. 3 March 1987, pp. 20-1.

Please note there will be no seminar session on Wednesday, November 27. 2013

7. Balinese Technologies of the Unbounded Self

Wednesday, December 4. 2013

PRIMARY TEXTS & FILM:

- Connor, L. H. (1982) 'The Unbounded Self: Balinese Therapy in Theory and Practice'. Marsella, A. J. & G. M. White (eds.) *Cultural Conceptions of Mental Health and Therapy*. Dordrecht, Boston and London: D. Reidel Publishing Company. Pages 251–67.
- Connor, L.H. et al. (1996) Chapter Eight. *Jero Tapakan: A Balinese Healer; An Ethnographic Film Monograph*. Revised Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Ethnographics Press. Pages 159-89.
- Film: *The Medium is the Masseur*.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- How do Balinese ideas personhood articulate with practices of healing and care for the body?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Compare the Balinese ideas of *urip* and *bayu* with some of the other life principles (e.g., *sumangé*) we have encountered in the ethnographic literature.
- In what ways are a person's *uat*, or *urat*, related to their well being?
- How might the techniques of massage be linked to the idea of the person as a 'nexus of interacting forces'?
- Given the more broadly Hindu or brahmanical character of the rites she performs, how might Jero's apprenticeship with a Muslim healer inform our understanding of tradition?

FURTHER READING:

- Foucault, M. (1965) *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Random House, Inc.
- Leslie, C.M. ed., (1976) *Asian Medical Systems: A Comparative Study*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Lovric, B. J. A. (1987) *Rhetoric and Reality: The Hidden Nightmare; Myth and Magic as Representations and Reverberations of Morbid Realities*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Sydney.
- Weck, W. (1937) *Heilkunde und Volkstrum auf Bali*. Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke.

8. Gathering the Agglutinative Soul Among the Thai-Lao

Wednesday, December 11. 2013

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Phra Rajadhon Anuman (1962). 'The Khwan and Its Ceremonies'. *Journal of the Siam Society*. 50(2), 119–164.
- Tambiah, S.J. (1970) Chapters 4 & 13. *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-east Thailand*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pages 53-61 & 223-51.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- With reference to our ethnographic readings to date, how might ideals of personhood and efficacy be related to such things as economy and polity?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are the *khwan* and how are they related to ideals of personhood and efficacy?
- What sorts of virtues are cultivated through the performance of the *sukhwan* rites?
- How do the *sukhwan* compare with the rites we have seen from Bali and Luwu?
- Is the idea of *khwan* commensurate with the Buddhist doctrine of non-self (P. *anatta*; S. *anātman*)? Why might it matter?

FURTHER READING:

- Terwiel, B.J. (2012 [1975]) *Monks and Magic: Revisiting a Classic Study of Religious Ceremonies in Thailand*. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i/NIAS Press.
- Thompson, A. (2004) *Calling the Souls: A Cambodian Ritual Text*. Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture.
- Heinze, R.I. (1982) *Tham Khwan: How to Contain the Essence of Life; A Socio-Psychological Comparison of a Thai Custom*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Hayashi, Y. (2003) *Practical Buddhism Among the Thai-Lao: Religion in the Making of a Region*. Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press.

9. Embodying the Fragmented Person in Java and Madura

Wednesday, December 18, 2013

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Retsikas, K. (2010) 'Unconscious Culture and Conscious Nature: Exploring East Javanese Conceptions of the Person through Bourdieu's Lens'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. Volume 16, Issue Supplement S1: pages S140–S157.
- Retsikas, K. (2008) 'Knowledge from the Body: Fieldwork, Power, and the Acquisition of a New Self. In N. Halstead, E. Hirsch & J. Okely (eds.) *Knowing How to Know: Fieldwork and the Ethnographic Present*. Oxford: Berghahn. Pages 110-29.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- Why might questions of person and body push one to the point of 'almost articulating the unsayable'?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Compare and contrast the notions of *halus* and *kasar* as we have encountered them in the work of Siegel, Errington and Retsikas.
- What is 'the socially informed body'? And under what conditions might it be taken as an object of study?
- What does it mean to say that 'being a person and acting and perceiving in a specific way are the same thing' (or that they are 'closely connected')?
- What is the nature of the relationship between knowledge, the body and social inequality? Why might ritual and repetition be important?

FURTHER READING:

- Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The Logic of Practice*. Trans. R. Nice. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jenkins, R. (2002) *Pierre Bourdieu*. Revised Edition. London and New York: Routledge.
- Keeler, W. (1987) *Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves*. Princeton: PUP.
- Levinas, E. (1982) 'Translator's introduction', 'The face' and 'Responsibility for the Other'. *Ethics and infinity*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University press. Pages 1-15, 82-101.

Official Winter Break: 23 December 2013 - 06 January 2014

10. Performativity, Citationality, Ritualization

Wednesday, January 8, 2014

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Butler, J. (1999 [1990]) 'Preface (1999)'. *Gender Trouble; Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York & London: Routledge. Pages vii-xxvi.
- Hollywood, A. (2002) 'Performativity, Citationality, Ritualization'. *History of Religions*. 42(2): 93-115.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- How might the idea of performativity inform an ethnographic approach to personhood and agency?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is performance? What is performativity? And how do they differ?
- Why were ritual and repetition important for Butler's critique of gendered identity?
- How are technologies of self-cultivation and transformation (recall our reading from Foucault) related to the idea of performativity?
- What is the nature of the relationship between the subject, performativity and power?

FURTHER READING:

- Osborne, P. And L. Segal (1993) 'Gender as Performance: An Interview with Judith Butler.' *Radical Philosophy*. 67: 32-9.
- Austin, J.L. (1962) *How to Do Things with Words; The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Derrida, J. (1987) 'Devant la loi'. In: A. Udoff (ed.) *Kafka and the Contemporary Critical Performance: Centenary Readings*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Colebrook, C. (2007) 'Feminism and Autonomy: The Crisis of the Self-Authoring Subject.' *Body Society*. 3: 21-41.



PART THREE: POWER AND THE ARTICULATION OF POLITY

11. Java/Power

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Anderson, B. O'G. (1990 [1972]) 'The idea of Power in Javanese Culture'. *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press. Pages 17-77.
- Excerpts from Worsley, P. (1972) *Babad Buleleŋ; A Dynastic Genealogy*. The Hague: M. Nijhoff.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- How are ideas of power related to those of the subject?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- In what sense is the term power used to describe a relationship? And how does this differ from saying that power simply 'exists' in its own right?
- How do European ideals of *kesaktén* differ from their Javanese counterparts? And of what broader significance is this question?
- Where, and to what extent, are the Javanese ideals of power and efficacy described by Anderson evident in the Balinese *Babad Buleleŋ*?
- Is a sword ever just a sword?

FURTHER READING:

- Foucault, M. (1982) 'The Subject and Power'. In Dreyfus, H. & Rabinow, P. M. *Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Brighton: Harvester Press.
- Koentjaraningrat (1985) *Javanese Culture*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Soemarsaid Moertono (1968) *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16th to 19th Century*. Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program.
- Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1991) *This Earth of Mankind*. New York: Morrow. [This is the first book in the author's Buru quartet, which also includes *Child of all nations*, *Footsteps* and *House of glass*.]

12. Tattoos, Invulnerability and Efficacy

Wednesday, January 22, 2014

PRIMARY TEXTS:

- Tannenbaum, N. (1987) 'Invulnerability and Power in Shan Cosmology'. *American Ethnologist*. 14(4): 693-711.
- Patton, T. N. (2012) 'In Pursuit of the Sorcerer's Power: Sacred Diagrams as Technologies of Potency'. *Contemporary Buddhism*. 13(2): 213-231.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- What can the use of tattoos and amulets tell us about ideals of agency, person and power?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How are Buddhist texts related to the practices of Buddhists?
- What is the purpose of getting a tattoo among the Shan? In an American biker gang? As a student in Heidelberg?
- What is the nature of the relationship between writing and power?
- Scholars have made much of the 'amoral' character of power in Southeast Asia. But what would a 'moral' power look like? And why might it matter?

FURTHER READING:

- Crosby, K. (2000) 'Tantric Theravāda: A Bibliographic Essay on the Writings of François Bizot and others on the Yogāvacara Tradition'. *Contemporary Buddhism*. 1(2): 141–198.
- Bizot, F. (1976) *Le figuier à cinq branches: Recherche sur le bouddhisme khmer*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient.
- Harris, I. (2005) *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Connor, L. (1995) 'Acquiring Invisible Strength: A Balinese Discourse of Harm and Well-Being'. *Indonesia Circle*. 66: 124-53.

13. Centering the Galactic Polity

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

PRIMARY TEXT:

- Tambiah, S.J. (1976) Chapters Seven & Eight. *World Conqueror & World Renouncer*. Cambridge: CUP. Pages 102-160.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- How, and to what extent, does the galactic polity replicate the ideals we have seen on a smaller scale with Southeast Asian articulations of the human subject?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the galactic polity and how does it differ from the Weberian bureaucratic state?
- What is the significance of the 5-4 organization of space? And how might this be linked to the relationship between buildings, bodies and polity?
- What role did the "albino elephants and buffaloes, dwarfs and freak-humans" play in the power of the king?
- To what question did Tambiah's notion of 'the galactic polity' provide an answer? And of what significance is the galactic polity for an understanding of modern Thai politics?

FURTHER READING:

- Day, T. (2002) *Fluid Iron; State Formation in Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: U. of Hawai'i Press.
- Wolters, O.W. (1999) *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications/The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

- Geertz, C. (1980) *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali*. Princeton: PUP. But also Schulte Nordholt's review: Schulte Nordholt, H. (1981) 'Negara: A Theatre state?' *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 137: 470-476.
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14. Tying the Whole Room Together

Wednesday, February 5, 2014

PRIMARY TEXTS & FILM:

- Hobart, M. (2000) 'Cabbages and Kings? Balinese Rulers as Articulators of Worlds'. *After Culture: Anthropology as Radical Metaphysical Critique*. Denpasar, Bali: Duta Wacana University Press.
- Fox, R. (2011) 'Mpu Kuturan and the Three Sanctuaries'. *Critical Reflections on Religion and Media in Contemporary Bali*. Numen Series in the History of Religions, 130. Leiden: Brill.
- Film: *Mpu Kuturan and the Three Sanctuaries*.

ESSAY QUESTION:

- What is the nature of the relationship between theory (or philosophy) and ethnographic enquiry?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the underlying sensibility at work in Hobart's opening inversion ('the Tsew')?
- What sorts of statements are enabled by the anthropological category of ritual? And what is thereby obfuscated?
- What work (*karya*) do Balinese ceremonial rites (*upacara*) accomplish?
- Compare and contrast the ideas of *articulation* and *performativity*, with reference to *society* (or *polity*) and *the human subject* respectively. What new sorts of questions do these concepts allow us to ask of the existing ethnography?

FURTHER READING:

- Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (2001 [1985]) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy; Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London and New York: Verso. Chapter 3.
- Critchley, S. and O. Marchart, eds. (2004) *Laclau; A Critical Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hobart, M. (1999) 'The End of the World News: Articulating Television in Bali'. In R. Rubinstein and L. Connor, eds. *Staying local in the global village: Bali in the Twentieth Century*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. Pages 265-289
- Fox, R. (2010) 'Why Media Matter: Religion and the Recent History of "the Balinese"'. *History of Religions*. 41(4): 354-92.