Generative Anthropology Summer Conference 2013

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Call for Papers

Seventh Annual GA Summer Conference

Putting the Human Back into the Humanities

UCLA, June 27-30, 2013

Plenary Speakers: Jean-Loup Amselle (EHESS) and Eric Gans (UCLA)
Respondent: Richard van Oort (University of Victoria)

Across the university today, ideas of the "posthuman" and "transhuman" tempt scholarly attention away from the human as the meaningful center of rational inquiry. To the Humanities, however, still falls the crucial task of focusing on the human as the unifying principle of what all scholars do. The hosts of ***Putting the Human Back into the Humanities*** share a commitment to a core set of intellectual principles: anthropology is not reducible to biology; exchanges of symbolic signs are not reducible to neurological events; genuine knowledge may begin with data of various kinds but finally requires the structuring of the human scene. A restoration of the Humanities to a position of respect in knowledge production demands the explicit theorization of the categories of this human scene, categories such as representation, language, the sacred and the esthetic. From these in turn emerge concepts of textuality, resentment, desire, ritual, and the market.

Generative Anthropology hypothesizes a fundamental scene of representation, in which all meaning is produced at a center generated by the shared signs of the human beings around its periphery. Originating in the work of Professor Eric Gans and his students at UCLA and extended steadily since 1981 in the discussions and work of scholars from many disciplines and nations, this "new way of thinking" proposes a minimal framework of concepts situated at the intersection of the sciences and humanities. Since 2007, our annual Generative Anthropology Summer Conferences have encouraged a diverse group of scholars to explore how their own work can be strengthened through this thinking and to contribute to the ongoing development of the hypothesis.

How do we defend the study of texts--in particular sacred and esthetic texts--as producing knowledge of the human? How should we situate and valorize this knowledge in relation to that generated by the social and natural sciences? How is the knowledge generated by natural science to be understood in the context of the human scene of representation? As current trends continue to squeeze the "human" out of the scene of representation and the Humanities out of the curriculum, these are concerns for us all.

Established and emerging scholars are warmly invited to join our interdisciplinary conversations at UCLA. Both theoretical / conceptual and textual /applied approaches are welcome. A few suggestions to begin the conversation:

- **reading texts--secular and sacred--as sources of anthropological knowledge: e.g Girard, Eliade, Iser**
- **reconceptualizing the human scene as a unifying principle for the study of human institutions**
- **rethinking the animal/human boundary through language: e.g. Tomasello, Pinker**
- **theorizing the scenic aspects of ritual and market sociality: e.g. Polyani, Gellner, Appadurai, Baudrillard**
- **"anthropologizing" theories of representation: e.g. Derrida, Wittgenstein, Austin, Searle, Bateson**
- **debating the limits between science and scientism and Snow's "two cultures": e.g. Dawkins, Tallis**
- **writing History through esthetic history: e.g. Lukács, Auerbach, Goldmann, Deleuze**
- **situating gender and standpoint theories: e.g. Harding, Butler, Foucault**
- **mapping postcolonial theory and advocacy: e.g. Said, Bhaba, Amselle**
- **attending to the social scene: social epistemology, actor-network theory, ethnography: e.g. Fuller, Latour**

The **Generative Anthropology Society and Conference**, with the generous support of **UCLA's Department of French and Francophone Studies**, will host the sessions and exchanges.

Proposals for papers of 20 to 25 minutes should be sent by attachment in MS-Word to: **Ian Dennis, Department of English, University of Ottawa**, at **Ian.Dennis@uottawa.ca**.

Proposal Deadline: March 1, 2013. **Outlook/iCal | Google cal**

Last revised: November 8, 2012