



# Wednesday Seminars

SOMMERSEMESTER 2017

**Aníbal G. Arregui**

***Embodying Climate Change: Some Thoughts from Amazonia***

Mittwoch 08.03.2017, 17.00, HS C, IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock



*Aníbal G. Arregui gained a PhD in social anthropology at the University of Barcelona (2013) with a dissertation on Lower-Amazonian sociotechnical systems. In his current project he explores*

*differences and intersections between "Amazonian" and "scientific" ways of addressing the notions of „environment" and "technology".*

## ...kommende Termine

15.03.2017 **Andrew Brandel**  
**Knowledge of Labor: SW Mintz and the Legacy of Ethnographic Theory**

22.03.2017 **Herta Nöbauer**  
**Von der Goldmine zum Gletscher-  
skigebiet: All Weather Snow als  
multiples Frontier-Phänomen**

29.03.2017 **Lina Masana**  
**Living with an invisible chronic ill-  
ness: body, conflicts and resistances**

03.05.2017 **Peter Rohrbacher**  
**Wiener Völkerkunde in der NS-Zeit:  
Pater Wilhelm Koppers, 1938–1945**

Is it possible to produce meaningful translations between different perspectives on 'climate change'? What kind of translative obstacles do the so-called 'radical' or 'ontological' differences pose to anthropologists that explore global processes of environmental degradation? In this seminar I will address such questions by focusing on an ecopolitical approximation, namely that of a Brazilian climatologist and a Yanomami shaman who are translating their concerns about the Amazonian rain-forest in order to reach the audiences they respectively represent. The example shows that the shaman's and the scientist's connective gestures do not undo their translative 'equivocations' (Viveiros de Castro 2004), but they do highlight some innovative forms of expressing a common concern about the rainforest. More specifically, it will be highlighted how the particular bio-graphies and bodies of these two spokespersons become the loci of what I term 'ecopolitical mimics': a translative experiment where relational modes such as 'naturalism' and 'perspectivism' disclose not only differences and equivocations, but also embodied forms of co-implication. The example aims at providing a provocative impulse for discussing, with other participants of the seminar, some analytical strategies to remain committed to both anthropological differences and the need of ecopolitically connected strategies against an environmental collapse that threatens human life on a planetary scale.



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**Andrew Brandel** is visiting fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, completing work on a monograph on literary culture in Berlin, co-authored with Clara Han (Johns Hopkins) on the inheritance of witness accounts of catastrophic

violence, and a co-edited volume with Anouk Cohen (Centre national de la recherche scientifique) on the anthropology of textual practices. From 2011-2013, he was the inaugural University Archives Fellow at the Hamburger Archives where he curated the papers of Sidney W. Mintz; his recent work on the history of anthropology includes the recent essay "The Art of Conviviality".

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Sidney W. Mintz (1922-2015) is widely considered one of the most influential American anthropologists of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and a key member of the tradition's third generation, building on the legacy of Boasian approaches to fieldwork that continue to shape global conversations on the historical transformations of culture. While his contributions to the study of Caribbean societies, peasant economies, and the anthropology of food, are well known, this lecture will explore the subtleties of his thinking about the methods of anthropological research. Drawing on his readings of his friends and teachers, importantly Alexander Lesser and Ruth Benedict, his occasional writings on ethnography, and his voluminous teaching notes, we will examine how at bottom, Mintz's conception of anthropological knowledge rested on a Marxian-inspired respect for the dignity of humanity and her labors. These ordinary forms of labor, from the women of Haitian market places to the sugar-cane workers of Puerto Rico, appear in Mintz's writings as definitive spaces of cultural knowledge and creativity. But in his careful attention to peoples' daily work, Mintz also shows how anthropology stands to learn and develop its own practices from the variety of human genius. This is perhaps most famously exemplified in his identification of Don Taso as a collaborator, in his descriptions of the latter's efforts at data collection, and in his reverence for his friend's analytical brilliance. Such people are not "average" or "exemplary" of some larger social collectivity, he writes, but are rather highly original thinkers in their own right, whose contributions to theorizing the ethnographer's task Mintz taught us to take seriously.