



WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

Montag, 21.10.2019, 17:00 Uhr, HS-C
IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

Andrea De Antoni

The Beginning is the End is the Beginning—Embodied Memories, Imagination and Ontogenesis in Spirit Possession and Healing in Contemporary Japan and Italy

Andrea De Antoni (Ph.D.) is associate professor of anthropology and religious studies at Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto, Japan) and main editor of the *Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS) Newsletter*. He is author of *Going to Hell in Contemporary Japan: Feeling Landscapes of the Afterlife, Othering, Memory and Materiality* (Routledge forthcoming 2020), editor of *Death and Desire in Modern and Contemporary Japan* (Venice University Press, 2017, with M. Raveri), of “The Practices of Feeling with the World: Towards an Anthropology of Affect, the Senses and Materiality” (Special Issue of *Japanese Review of Cultural Anthropology*, 2017, with P. Dumouchel), and “Feeling (with) Japan: Affective, Sensory and Material Entanglements in the Field” (Special Issue of *Asian Anthropology*, 2019, with E. Cook). He is also the coordinator of the international research network “Skills of Feeling with the World: Anthropological Research on the Senses, Affect and Materiality,” based in Ritsumeikan University.

kommende Termine

30.10.2019 **Krisztina Fehervary**

16.+17.01.2020 **Katherine Verdery**

This talk tries to move towards a comparative perspective on phenomena of possession in contemporary Japan and Italy. Experiences of possession have been analysed in relation of “internalizing” or “externalizing” medical systems (e.g. Young 1976, Kirmayer 2004), emphasising healers’ roles in shaping patients’ experiences according to existing ontologies, or as results of processes of enskilment through training (Espirito-Santo 2012). Furthermore, recent research on possession has witnessed a trend to lean towards cognitivism, which ends up to ‘psychologize’ spirit-related experiences (e.g. Cohen 2008; Lifshitz, van Elk, and Luhrmann 2019). Yet, experiences with spirits have also been analysed as emerging over time as meshworks of specific feelings and perceptions of the body moving-in-the-world, through “affective correspondences” (De Antoni 2017) with the environment.

This talk will focus on the processes through which spirit realities emerge, contributing to ontogenesis and shaping institutionalized discourses, while relying on ethnographic data about experiences with spirits among people who undergo Roman Catholic exorcism in contemporary (Central) Italy and Shinto exorcism in contemporary Japan (Shikoku). In order to do so, I will analyse possession-related phenomena as “practices of feeling with the world” (De Antoni and Dumouchel 2017), focusing on the bodily feelings, the skills, “embodied memories” (Kidron 2011) and “technologies of imagination” (Sneath, Holbraad, and Pedersen 2009) involved. I will argue that a focus on embodied memories and “affective imagination skills” can contribute to a novel understanding of spirit possession and religious healing, while also providing some tools to move towards a comparative perspective.
