



Critique In/Of Anthropology?

Subseries of the Wednesday Seminars

Jeanette Edwards

The body, beauty and botox: revisiting the 'awkward relationship' between feminism and anthropology



Jeanette Edwards is Professor of Social Anthropology at Manchester University. She has carried out ethnographic research on kinship and assisted reproductive technologies in the UK, convened and directed

an EU-funded collaborative project on 'public understandings' of genetics, and was recently chair of a Nuffield Council on Bioethics working party focusing on cosmetic procedures. Her publications include: *Born and Bred: Idioms of Kinship and New Reproductive Technologies in England* (Oxford University Press); with C. Salazar, *Kinship Matters: European Cultures of Kinship in the Age of Biotechnology* (Berghahn Books); and with M. Petrović-Šteger, *Recasting Anthropological Knowledge: Inspiration and Social Science* (Cambridge University Press). She will embark soon on a research project that aims to investigate, through participatory research, the meaning of Brexit for residents of so-called 'left behind places' in Britain.

For more information on the series see:

http://ksa.univie.ac.at/wednesday_seminars

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(HS C, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 4th Floor)

In the three decades since Marilyn Strathern identified the relationship between anthropology and feminism as awkward (even if necessary and productive), the practices of social and cultural anthropology have changed a great deal. Not only has the ethnographic and interdisciplinary scope of anthropology widened significantly, but also, and especially with the insights of post-colonial scholars, there have been more vigorous ethical debates about who should be the focus of ethnographic attention, why and how. Is the relationship between feminism and anthropology still awkward? This paper draws on the efforts of a Nuffield Council on Bioethics working party to discern the ethical issues emerging in the increasing use of cosmetic procedures in the UK. Since its inception, social anthropology has been interested in how human beings the world over cut, scarify, pierce and otherwise modify their bodies for various reasons, including aesthetic. What role, if any, for the feminist anthropologist in 'ethical' debate about the current enthusiasm for body modifications that include plastic surgery, botulinum toxin injections to disguise and now 'prevent' wrinkles, and dermal fillers to plump-up cheeks, lips and the mons pubis?

...upcoming next

19.03.2019 Ghassan Hage: *The critique of tone and the tone of critique.*

27.03.2019 Didier Fassin: *Blow Up. Ethnography as Exposure.*