Critique In/Of Anthropology?
Subseries of the Wednesday Seminars

Ghassan Hage
The critique of tone and the tone of critique

Tuesday, 19.03.2019, 5 pm
(HTC C, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 4th Floor)

Intellectual critiques do not only have an intellectual content. They can participate in the setting of moods (see Throop 2014, 2017). They can fill people with hope and they can deflate them. A critic can say: ‘Patriarchy and colonialism are rampant again’ and make everyone feel depressed. They can say the same thing and make people feel invigorated and ready to resist. In this paper, I am interested in the way what I am calling ‘the tone’ of critique contributes to this energizing/deflating process. This is not only true of political critique. It is also true of inter-academic critique. There are situations where, for example, two different readers make the same critical comments about our work but with differing tones which we clearly feel also differentiates between them in terms of whether they wish us well or not. An anthropology of the tone of critique involves an examination of its undertones and overtones. It takes us into an affective dimension which encapsulates what we can call after Levy-Bruhl the participatory quality of critique. In what way it participates in our being: its capacity to enhance it and propel us, and its capacity to diminish it and suck it out of us.

WORKSHOP: Subsequent to his presentation on 19th March the Department will host a workshop with Ghassan Hage on 20th March (Sitzungszimmer, 9 am - 2 pm). Students and Graduates are welcome to participate in the discussion of his article Critical anthropological thought and the radical political imagination today (2012, CoA) with reference to his lecture and the overall topic of the series Anthropology in/of Critique. We invite participants also to relate to the previous lectures of Richard Rottenburg and Jeanette Edwards. Aspects of their own research projects might be brought into the discussion as well.

Please register by 15. March: marlene.persch@univie.ac.at