

VORTRAGSREIHE DES INSTITUTS FÜR ETHNOLOGIE

LEITUNG: PROF. DR. MAGNUS TREIBER

Decentering the human to expand the collective

The relational production of subjectivities, the ambivalences and excesses of territorial care

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Abstract

The politics and aesthetics of capitalist reproduction have limited our affective experience of the world in a kind of sorcery through the logics of exploitation and barbarism (Stengers & Pignarre, 2017). The multiple crises have led us to recognize that the very definition of what it means to be human implies a way of living and relating in an interdependent world. The crisis of care is a crisis of the collective, of the production of the common, and to confront it, it is crucial to focus on the processes of subjectivation as a political problem and as an ecological drift.

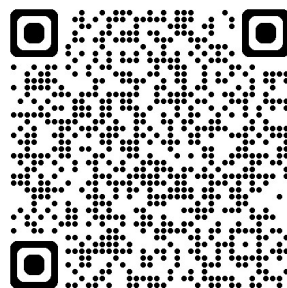
What counts as a political practice of resistance and who participates? Is the ordinary a terrain of production of the common? What are the implications for the meaning and practice of politics? Territorial care informs a kind of collective engagement with the emancipatory production of the common, where the meaning of those who participate in its production is extended into multi-species material and affective entanglements. By decentering the human and advocating a territorial reading of care, I generate insights into the re-production of the commons and processes of subjectivation in experiences of peasant organization in Latin America.

My current research shows how the politics and forms of organizing the common operate out of multiple displacements in peasant worlds, where territorial existence is affirmed in multispecies entanglements. I focus on care as a territorial concept based on an affective and material analysis of peasant organizing strategies. What I understand by peasant organizing strategies brings together a set of practices that includes the body-territory connection expressed in everyday ways of relating to space and beings through forms of healing, feeding and cultivation. From a Latin American perspective at the intersection of affects, territory and materiality, I pay attention to the vital relations that complexify the re-production of the common. I analyze the strategies and forms of organization and political struggle from the ordinary, using Segato's idea of domesticating politics, which makes these world-territory production practices visible as referents of possible futures, as forms of healing the capitalist sorcery that redefine the understanding and practice of the common.

In this talk specifically, I will discuss one of the key arguments of my book project on territorial care, based on ethnographic experiences with peasant communities in the Colombian Massif and the high mountain region of Mexico. I will argue that the production of peasant subjectivities is a relational or territorial process that is mediated by the forms of multispecies care in which it participates and through which forms of displacement of the sensible are generated.

I argue that the notion of body-territory speaks to us of a cosmopolitical dimension of territory as a relational being whose political conception and practice conjures up non-humans as actors in the political arena (de La Cadena 2010). Territory, as an assemblage, as a living materiality (Bennet, 2010) and dynamic process, connect multiple bodies in a continuous becoming, and whose affectations touch a series of connections that resonate in collective life and relations of care. This relational production of body-territory proposes partial connections in constant tension and negotiation with the onslaught of capital and modern/colonial models of spatial and population domination.

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