

Interrupting the Anthro-(Ob)Scene: The Depoliticized Politics of the Anthropocene as Immuno-biopolitical Fantasy

The main objectives of the presentation are 1) to excavate the de-politicizing underbelly of much of the Anthropocene-talk, particularly when clouded in presumably radical new post-human ontologies, 2) to demonstrate how these new horizons potentially permit a further deepening, while transforming, of the capitalist forms of socio-natural assembling and thereby securing capital's hold, and 3) to argue how a re-thinking of the relational socio-natural configuration might open up the possibility for emancipatory forms of politicization.

The presentation is organised in three parts. In the first part, we examine how several of the AnthroScenes implicitly or explicitly embrace a new more-than-human ontological perspective, one that revolves around foregrounding the horizontal relational materiality of human/non-human imbroglios. In the second part, we first chart and examine the implications of this new ontologies and question the radical political presumptions that are purportedly associated with such new cosmologies. We then move on to argue how, in fact, a more horizontal and relationally constituted ontology might open precisely the ideological terrain that would permit capitalism to deepen its promethean articulation with nature even further in order to make sure that nothing really changes. We subsequently demonstrate how such new horizontal ontologies resonate with an immunological biopolitical frame, which we contend to be the depoliticized frame that permits both embracing a new ontology while making sure that civilization as we know (capitalism) it can continue. In the third part, we return to examining the particular relational ontology on which more-than-human arguments are based and how the disavowal of exteriority, combined with an impoverished notion of what constitutes 'the political', intensifies already deeply de-politicizing processes. We conclude by re-working the notion of relationality that recognizes excess and subtraction, a procedure that opens up again the potential for a return of the political.