Peter Herbst Seminars 2014

Time: Interdisciplinary Investigations

Wednesday 17 September 2014 12:00-1.30pm, refreshments to follow

Milgate Room, AD Hope Building

Speaker: Matt Tomlinson

Anthropologies of Transmission and Theologies of Creation

Recently Joel Robbins has argued that sociocultural anthropology ought to engage critically with theology in order to recapture the "promise" of understanding otherness. Both anthropology and theology have long focused on questions of transmission, or the circulation and uptake of socially mediated forms through time. Linguistic anthropologists have paid particularly close attention to processes of replication, or creative repetition. This work on replication gives particularly useful insights into new indigenous theologies, including writings on topics such as the "creatio continua" and the "spirit of Christ." In turn, appreciating theologians’ articulations of time, repetition, and transformation can illuminate the anthropological study of religion and social change.

Matt Tomlinson is an ARC Future Fellow in Anthropology in the School of Culture, History and Language at the Australian National University. He is the author of In God’s Image: The Metaculture of Fijian Christianity (2009) and Ritual Textuality: Pattern and Motion in Performance (2014), as well as coeditor of The Limits of Meaning (with Matthew Engelke), Flows of Faith (with Lenore Manderson and Wendy Smith), and Christian Politics in Oceania (with Debra McDougall).