

Call for Papers – *Shortcuts*

About *Shortcuts*

Shortcuts are relatively short interventions (1400-1600 words) that contribute to controversial contemporary problems and/or theoretical debates in anthropology and may well be provocative in nature. The aim here is therefore not to present a subject comprehensively, but to develop a concise argument that will ideally lead to further discussions in the specialist community or even beyond.

Rethinking ‘Rethinking’

If there is something like a baseline assumption in the social sciences, anthropology included, then it is the premise that research ought to make a difference to the ecology of knowledge. It ought to present previously unknown empirical insights and/or put forward perspectives, interpretations and conceptualizations that differ from those in already existing studies. However, what is rarely debated is the question of how in particular this process of ‘making a difference’ is enacted in terms of the anthropologists’ epistemic practices. While this practice is sometimes taken to mean ‘making a radical break with the past’, as the various anthropological ‘turns’ of the recent past seem to suggest, what is much more common is an approach that is not wholly dismissive of established perspectives, interpretations and conceptualizations, but instead seeks to reach a balance between reiterating some of them and overcoming a select few of the others. One of the strategies employed to do so is to ‘rethink’ what is then often claimed as representing anthropological common sense on a given issue. In fact, the history of anthropology is awash with attempts to ‘rethink’ its conceptual premises, methodologies and research ethics, objects of study, disciplinary subfields, or even the discipline as a whole.

But what is involved in the practice of ‘thinking anew’ (*rethink*)? On the face of it, this notion denotes ruminating on thoughts previously thought in order to reconfigure them. More particularly, and with a view to the temporality of this epistemic process in the field of anthropology, it can be argued that it is the practice of actively engaging with ideas from the past to make a transformed version of them ready for present-day

anthropologies and their envisaged futures. In this way, anthropological pasts, present times and possible futures become folded into each other.

We invite short contributions (1400-1600 words) in English that reflect on the epistemic practice of 'rethinking' in anthropology. We welcome articles by anthropologists that critically engage with their own or other anthropologists' efforts in 'rethinking' long-standing concepts in anthropology and/or with the question of what this practice indicates about (potentially problematic) epistemological premises and 'progress'-driven orientations in our academic field.