

Jawun Research Centre

SEMINAR SERIES

Communication, Health, and Social and
Cultural Well-Being

Subseries

Cairns Linguistic Anthropology Seminar
Series (CLASS)



Kunaypa historicity: Conceptual specificity of temporal reciprocity in the Sepik, Papua New Guinea

This multidisciplinary seminar series aims to create a forum centered in Jawun. It is for researchers at CQUniversity, across Queensland and all over the world, as a forum to share their research findings and establish potential synergies, leading to joint grant applications, and partnerships that endeavour to advance knowledge in various disciplines.

Location

Room **3.06**, CQUniversity Cairns Campus
Corner Abbott Street and Shields Street
Or via [Zoom](#) Passcode: **217877**

Date and Time

Monday 22 January

3:00pm – 5:00pm **Qld time**

Light refreshments provided

RSVP

JRC Administration via email: jrc@cqu.edu.au

or phone: 0400305315

Further seminars upcoming in 2024 – [watch this space!](#)



Speaker Borut Telban

Research Centre of the
Slovenian Academy of
Sciences and Arts

Abstract

If we accept that anthropology of history transforms history into a subject of investigation rather than just a form of knowledge and social practice, then the ethnography of history must delve into local ways of thinking, living, and acting. The language of the people is key to gaining insight into the relational and temporal modes of existence of society. Among the Karawari people of Papua New Guinea, these modes play an important role in various aspects of cosmological and social life, all of which are intimately connected to land. The Karawari term *kunaypa* (debt, obligation, duty; moral value and law) underscores the view that relationships at all levels – cosmological, social, national, international – should be based on generosity and reciprocity. It is the expected quality of human and non-human agency. *Kunaypa* refers to the specific past (event, being, practice) and at the same time to the specific future. The multiple instances of *kunaypi* (plural of *kunaypa*) lead to multiple intergenerational commitments, as various enmeshed historical experiences lie dormant. When these experiences are recalled and concrete actions are taken, they emphasize the interconnectedness, indeed equation, of past and future.

Professor Borut Telban, Ph.D. (The Australian National University, 1994), is Head of Anthropology Department at the Institute of Anthropological and Spatial Studies, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) and Coordinator of anthropology programme at the Postgraduate School ZRC SAZU. His anthropological and linguistic research in Papua New Guinea has spanned over 35 years.



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