

Colloquium Lecture 6: Finding and Creating Area Studies – Australia and elsewhere

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This paper will reflect on the prospects, limits, and enabling features of interdisciplinarity, with attention to questions about which academic structures might facilitate or inhibit its development. Some of the questions considered will include, how do we acknowledge the power of belief in geographical, historical, or religious determinism or exceptionalism, whilst offering a critique of the 'area' that we might wish to study? How can we preserve and respect local cultural forms, whilst participating in disciplinary conversations about those forms that have participants from across the nation or planet, conversations in which critique is conventional? What role can comparison play in these conversations? This paper will consider these issues in relation to various examples of interdisciplinarity, then briefly introduce two successful examples of Australian works that examine the collision of epistemology in history-making: Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu*, which rereads journals of nineteenth-century British "explorers" for information about Indigenous cultures, and Alexis Wright's *Tracker*, ostensibly a biography of an influential indigenous scholar-activist that models the function of story and story-telling in political culture and everyday life. In these ways the potential contribution of material objects and creative forms to area studies will be considered.

Colloquium Lecture 2: Writing a History of In Vitro Fertilisation and Assisted Reproduction: Questions of Discipline

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The history of IVF and assisted reproduction is a history of the present. As is well known, it was only 1978 when the first two children were born as a result of IVF technology, one in England and one in India, in Kolkata. The contemporary subject matter of this history situates it apart from most traditional ideas of what makes a history. Assisted reproduction as it is now practised stands at the intersection of global biotechnology and the most deeply felt human aspirations. Even basic uses of AR traverse the biotech industry, the diverse cultures of clients and clinical providers, multiple legal and religious regimes, as well as mainstream and online media. With that complex global scenario in mind, this paper will outline the interdisciplinary work of the emerging field of human reproduction studies, to argue that a history of AR can best be apprehended by engagement with scholarship in science, social science and the humanities.

Sarah Ferber's *IVF and Assisted Reproduction: A Global History*, co-authored with Nicola Marks and Vera Mackie, will be released through Palgrave in 2019.