Participation.
Taking Inspiration from Yolngu Practices

Towards a Techno-Ecology of Participation
A New Story of Language as a Technology
Re-Telling Predication and Designation

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Participation

Sociological orthodoxy
The willed involvement of a human individual in a group.

My account of participation
Happening of a collective in a particular present
Participation as happening of a collective in a particular present...

• Each and every happening is particular and unique
• A happened/happening collective generates relations
• A happened/happening collective is ephemeral
• History stays in place and sediments
• Organization is a unit of being (not an assemblage of individuals)
• To participate in this reconceptualised participation, an analyst must commit to a radical form of relationism
• A analytic with particular commitments is entailed
Ecology of Participation

There are significant political and epistemic consequences when the world is a mesh of past and present happenings

• **Politics**: participation construed as happened collectives becomes the generation of on-going dissensus, NOT consensus. Dissensus can be done more and less carefully...

• **Epistemics**: Participation construed as happened collectives, becomes the co-constitution of knowns and knowers, which might be done more and less innovatively
Techno-Ecology of Participation

‘Techno’ is a redundancy

Happening of a collective in a particular present cannot not be technically mediated

Since analysts easily fail to notice the mediation... it is a good idea to include the modifying term

I am interested in a particular ‘techno’ – language

Conceptualisation of language needs to be consistent with the re-imagined participation
Language... meaningful strings of words, are *not* externalisation of the workings of human minds as meaningful vocalisation.

Language is externalisation of the workings of patterned human bodies in place
A language entails a particular expression of (human) being as relation.
Language is externalisation of the workings of patterned human bodies in place

Each language entails a particular expression of ‘being as relation’

• How does this claim matter for understanding collective human life, and of individual lives led within that (and which that is within)?
• The particular expressions of ‘being as relation’ that different languages evoke become as commitments generating particular forms of life
How novel is this ‘story’ of language?

Conventional accounts of language:
  Functionalisms and structuralisms
  Both have language as externalised expression of mindful intention

Common elements in the story:
  • Words are mindful intentions translated into soundwave form
  • Heralding of objects as beginning of language acquisition in babies
Novelty of my story of language comes in its account of differences in languages—a different story of acquisition

• The difference in accounting difference, lies in how language acquisition proceeds after the heralding stage
• What is conventionally noticed is that young children adopt a particular form of designation
• It is seen as refining of the process of heralding of objects
• This growth in capacity imagines children as expressing mindful naming
Novelty of my story of language comes in its account of *differences* in languages—different story of acquisition

• Heralding is gradually expanded: baby announces objects... and baby announces change (eg. in position)
• Following pattern of adult sounds connects sound of a heralded object to the sound of a heralded change
• The baby begins to predicate and in time designate
• Each language is particular in it means of coding change
Difference between languages begins in predication form in how change is coded in sound

• Coding for change: effects what it is that is named as changed.

• The form of the designant precipitates from the form of predication – There are ontic effects

• Any particular telling of forms effects ontological effects

• An English telling of form attributes designants as ontological entities...

  English: spatiotemporal particulars

  Yoruba: sortal particulars

  Yolngu Matha: vector particulars
Participating in a re-conceptualised participation

• Propose a ‘techno-ecology of participation’
• Recognise language as first techno...
• Recognise language as different ‘mind-free’ effected forms with particularities of forms having ontic and ontological consequences
Participating in a re-conceptualised participation

Why does this new story of language matter?

• Reconceptualised participation renders relations as form of being... And relations as forms of being only arrive as particulars – no universals

• Allows differentiation of ontic and ontological

• Allows recognition of radically alternative forms of knowers
Thank you to all