

CONTESTING AND RELOCATING AUTHORITY

This panel explores the field of vernacular knowledge as 'other than' mainstream/ institutional/ scientific/ political/ social/ secular 'orthodoxy'. Expanding upon the trajectory of regarding Vernacular Religion as religion per se, contesting, expanding, reformulating in pragmatic ways institutional formulations of religion and loci of authority, we are thinking about vernacular religion/vernacular knowledge/ 'alternative' beliefs not only in relation to institutional religion, but also vis-à-vis secularism, state sponsored atheism, scientific rationalism, allopathic medicine, and so on.

Dominant discourses, with claims to hegemonic authority, generate a variety of alternative discourses, and the concept of a homogenous worldview, dominating any social groups and time periods, is misleading. In contrast to institutionally established discourses with notionally monological voicing, the expressive field of the vernacular is always heteroglot, and adapts in relation to the genres and means of transmission available.

We invite fieldwork-based papers dealing with the contestation and relocation of authority through a variety of traditional and emergent genres and media, in a range of contexts.

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