

Viral Worlds Workshop

Date: 16 June 2022

Venue: Institute of Ethnology, 5th Floor, Na Florenci 3, 110 00 Prague 1.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

9.45-10.00 – Coffee

10.00-10.40 – Frédéric Keck ‘**Avian Reservoirs: Virus Hunters and Birdwatchers in Chinese Sentinel Posts**’

10.45-11.25 – Christos Lynteris ‘**Approaching Outbreak Narratives Against the "Virus Hunting" Grain**’

11.30-12.30 – joint discussion of the two papers

Avian Reservoirs: Virus Hunters and Birdwatchers in Chinese Sentinel Posts

Frédéric Keck

Since the SARS crisis, Asian societies have been prepared for a pandemic coming from animal reservoirs. These techniques of preparedness include sentinels or early warning signals, simulations by worst-case scenarios and stockpiling of priority goods. I will show how these techniques of anticipation have transformed relations between humans and animals by following the work of virologists and ornithologists, and ask how they built a form of cynegetic power alternative to the pastoral techniques of culling animals.

Approaching Outbreak Narratives Against the "Virus Hunting" Grain

Christos Lynteris

In the context of the Covid-19 as in the context of earlier epidemics like Ebola or Zika, justified concerns over pressing questions, such as the emergence of zoonotic diseases or the origins of epidemics, risk becoming what Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has called “epistemological tranquillizers” that disallow us to understand our historical or ethnographic informants’ entanglement with the non-human world, their own understanding of disease, or indeed the use of outbreak narratives in order to talk about more-than-disease related realities and bring about more-than-disease related impacts on the world. This talk argues that we need to approach outbreak narratives against this "virus hunting" grain, so as to, on the one hand, maintain the epistemological and ontological autonomy of indigenous and subaltern lifeways and, on the other hand, foster our understanding and deepen our critique of the ways in which outbreak narratives have been used to advance colonial, neoliberal and other hegemonic worldviews, interests and agendas.



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