



The Anthropology of Intentions: Language in a World of Others

Alessandro Duranti

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How and to what extent do people anticipate each other's intended actions? Alessandro Duranti sets out to answer this question, showing that the role of intentions in human interaction is variable across cultures and contexts. Through careful analysis of data collected over three decades in US and Pacific societies, Duranti demonstrates that in some communities social actors avoid any kind of intentional discourse, focusing on the consequences of actions rather than on their alleged original goals. In other cases, he argues, people do speculate about their own intentions or guess the intentions of others, including in some societies where it was previously assumed they avoid doing so. To account for this variation, Duranti proposes an 'intentional continuum', a concept that draws from phenomenology and the detailed analysis of face-to-face interaction.

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