

ANTHROPOLOGICAL

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 UCL



Welcome

Winter is drawing to a close, with spring offering fleeting glimpses of the bright blue skies it holds in store for us. The academic year 2015/16 is at its midpoint, and staff and students are now feeling settled into the year. Our new staff, Dr Emily Woodhouse in Human Ecology and Dr Maria Martinon-Torres in Paleoanthropology, have settled in well. Dr Martinon-Torres immediately set about to create a wonderful opportunity for our students to join a field-camp in Europe's most important fossil excavation site in Atapuerca, Spain, as part of their coursework, and developments are underway to extend a special relation to paleoanthropological departments and associated field-sites in China. To our delight, our Teaching Fellows are staying with us for a further academic year to the end of 2016/17.

We are proud to report the promotion of five staff to Senior Lecturer and Reader and a further two staff to Professor. This success at promotion is a clear indication of the department's thriving research culture. We have also seen the culmination of some of our large ERC grants. Daniel Miller's social networking project *Why We Post* is a project by nine anthropologists who conducted nine simultaneous 15 month ethnographies on the use and consequences of social media at sites including a factory town and a rural town in China, a town on the Syrian-Turkish border, low income settlements in Brazil and Chile, an IT complex set between villages in South India, an English village, and small towns in Italy and Trinidad. We have now seen the publication of the first three of 11 volumes of research as free Open Access volumes by UCL press, the Launch of the *Why We Post* free e-learning course (English version on FutureLearn,

seven other languages on UCL eXtend), and the Launch of the project website with over 100 films also in eight languages.

2nd year undergraduate Jordan Murr has set up the Anthropology Book Club, with Anne Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches you and you Fall Down* providing the material for the launch of the book club. Anthro Society has organised several events for the year, the previous highlight being *Humour: It's no Laughing Matter* with Alex Pillen, Jerome Lewis and Volker Sommer, an excellent debate which has been written up in this issue by 1st year undergraduates Aline Aronsky and Jessica Edney, the latter of who we welcome to the editorial board of *Anthropolitan*. And on Wednesday 9th March Dr Adrian Poole and PhD students Alice Rudge and Camille Oloa-Bilola will take us on a journey *On the Importance of Music in Anthropology*.

During the autumn term the *Anthropology in the Professional World* series, organised by Dr Hannah Knox, was comprised of guest speakers from Intel, Ipsos Mori, DFID and BAMM London (a collective of photojournalists, videographers, strategists and researchers).

The third annual Mary Douglas Memorial Lecture will be held on Wednesday 25th May in UCL's Archaeology Lecture Theatre (which adjoins Anthropology's foyer), with Dr Michael Thompson giving a talk on *How Banks Think*.

We now approach dissertation and exam season, and I wish good luck to all of our hard-working students.

Professor Susanne Kuechler
Head of Department



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The Fourth Wave of Feminism in Iceland: The Beauty Tips Revolution

*Eva Jorgensen
MSc Medical Anthropology 2014-15*

It is a sunny Tuesday on June 16th in Reykjavík, Iceland. Today is a bank holiday for women because the country is celebrating the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote. All women are encouraged to celebrate in front of parliament and take part in the annual tradition of laying flowers at Jón Sigurðsson's statue, the man who fought for the country's independence in the late 1800's. Even though it is a joyous occasion, the majority of women are not in a festive mood and a few, myself

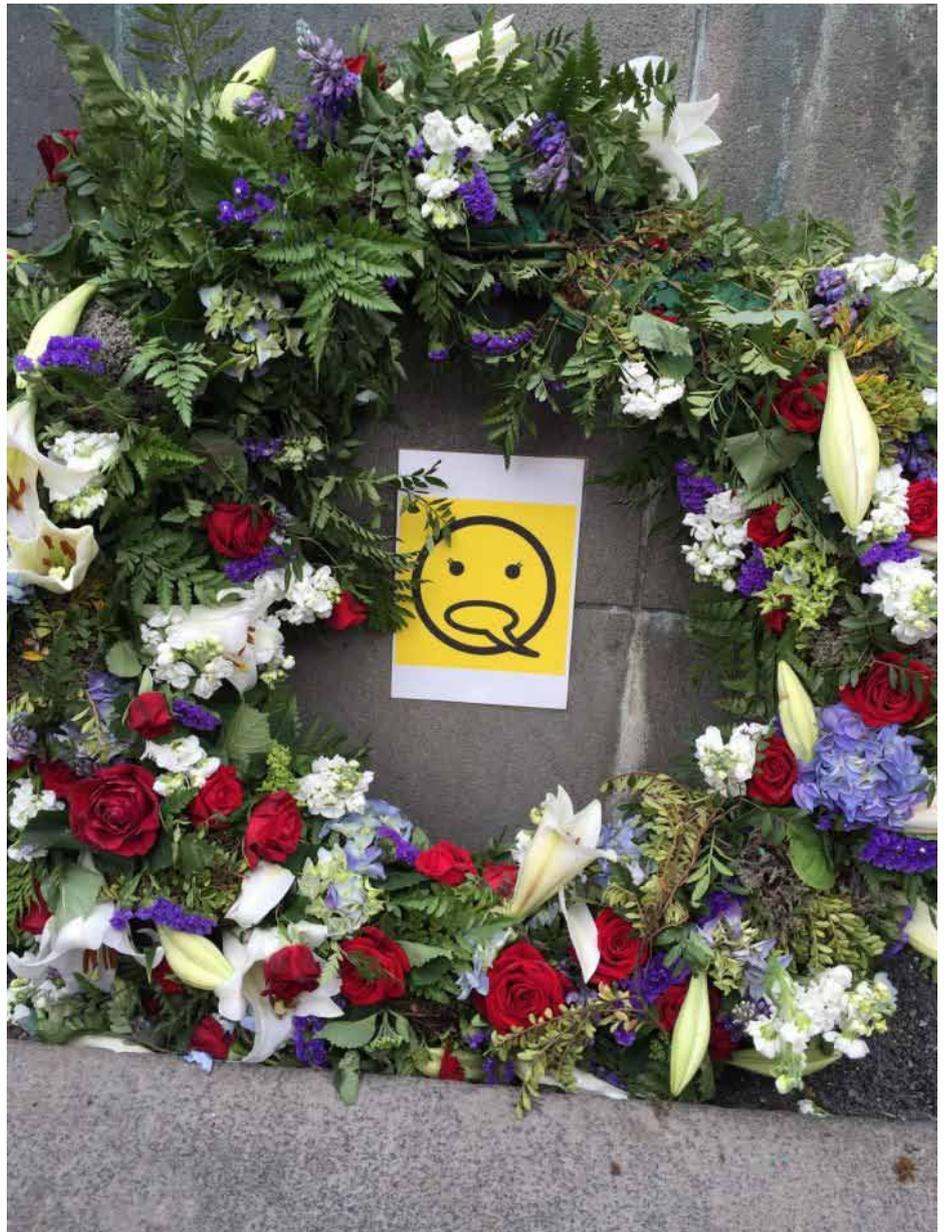
included, are here to protest. Armed with yellow and orange face paint and protest signs we demand gender equality to be not only preached but also practiced. We are not many but we are loud. We don't know each other but we find unity within our cause. "I don't want any bloody flowers" one of my comrades says "I want equality!" Next to the statue a woman is busy chewing gum. "In 2015, we still don't have a statue of a woman, it's unbelievable" she says with her mouth full of Wrigley's Extra. She takes a logo

we have made, smears the gum on the back of it and glues it in the middle of the garland in front of Jón's statue. "There! I bet he knew some victims of sexual abuse" she says, and silently walks away.

This protest of ours originated in an earlier revolution which emerged from a Facebook page called Beauty Tips. The page hosts around 30,000 women and girls of all ages, who can share advice on anything from makeup to personal relationships issues. I had originally joined

out of anthropological interest and I was about to opt out because I could not take any more questions on which *dress to wear to the prom* when one post caught my eye. A young woman introduced her son, who she had when she was sixteen with a celebrity lawyer in his sixties, and advertised for other young women who “this had happened to” as well. One by one they came forward, a total of five girls claiming to have had a child by that man at around sixteen, followed by a discussion on the social silencing of sexual violence. Before I knew, my newsfeed was filled with women stepping forward and telling their stories under the hashtags #WomenSpeak and #Silenced. A couple of us grabbed this opportunity: a logo was made which people could use as profile pictures; yellow if you know someone who has encountered sexual violence, orange if you had encountered this yourself and wished to break the silence. We started gathering the stories that the women shared and even made a flag. We then established the unofficial NGO Konurtala (Women Speak) where we raised awareness of gender inequality still present in the country claiming to be closest to gender equality in the world.

The protest on June 16th was just the beginning. Through Konurtala, we continue to advocate gender equality breaching the walls of silence surrounding sexual violence. We have gained both support and opposition. However, we gained our greatest achievement on July 2nd when a congressman surprisingly stood up and urged the parliament to listen to the revolution. Perhaps there is something to Scheper-Hughes’ “barefoot” anthropologist, attacking the grass root in hope of a better world. Quite rapidly, a small seed has become a large tree. Through aggregation of minor victories, the small Beauty Tips revolution has evolved into a fourth feminist movement in Iceland and it does not seem to be stopping any time soon.





It's a Match! 41 First-dates in London

Freddy MacKee
MSc Digital Anthropology

Tinder has now become a mainstream mobile app most of us relate to the search of casual romantic encounters that usually lead to one-night-stands. But, what if these generalising views of how technology and social media are used have a blind spot? What if people use Tinder in a whole different way?

A parallel narrative about this mobile app in London says that if gay men wanted to meet “nice guys”, then they should log onto Tinder to find them. This sounded like a completely counter-intuitive course of action when almost everyone seems to be hooking up on Tinder.

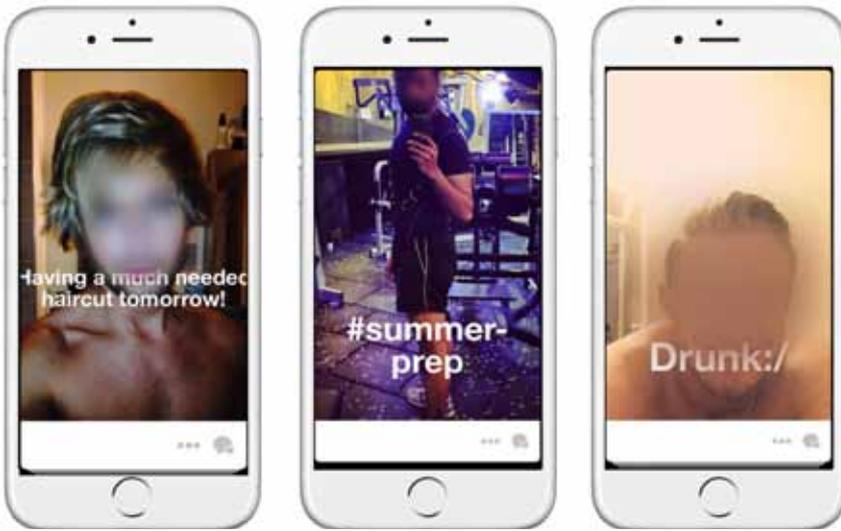
Over the course of 8 months, I interacted online with over 400 gay men and went

on 41 offline first-dates. The purpose: gather enough data to assess the validity of such statements from an anthropological point of view.

Fieldwork proved that gay users of Tinder, in fact, behave differently from the heterosexual counterpart. Gay men make conscious efforts to avoid overtly sexualised portrayals of themselves or boarding sexual topics of conversation. Even gay argot that is widely used to describe sexual preferences such as “top”, “bottom” or “versatile” becomes taboo, whereas talking about these matters is almost a de-facto exchange of personal information to merely start an interaction in gay platforms such as Grindr, Scruff or Hornet.

Similarly, progressing onto an offline meet-up with someone you meet on Tinder usually meant going for coffee or drinks in a neutral space, where an immediate sexual encounter would be unlikely. When asking informants directly why they were using Tinder, most of them expressed they were looking for dates or a relationship.

All of these practices and social norms on Tinder stand in stark contrast to how gay men normally behave in gay hook-up apps, which are hyper-sexualised environments where interactions usually lead to casual sex, just as Tinder seems to be working for “straights”. Despite the fact these initial findings seemed aligned with the narrative that Tinder is the place



Users post and share pictures limiting their sexual content.

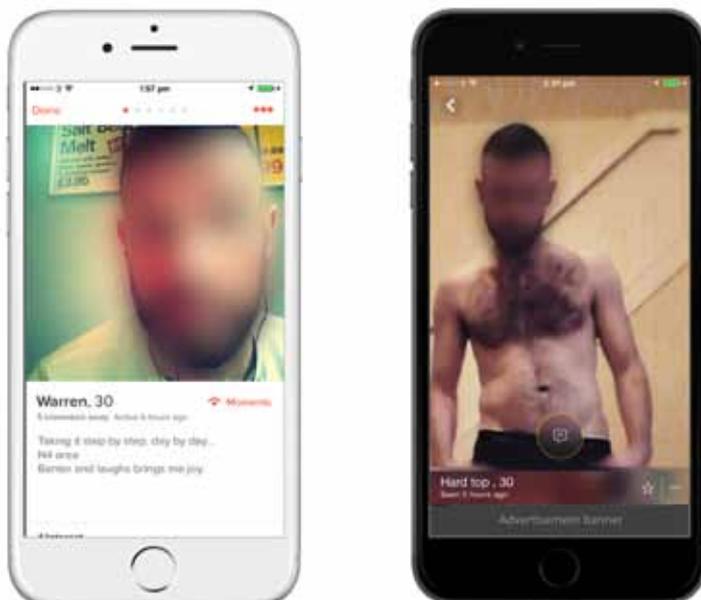
where “gay nice guys” go, a deeper knowledge of the informants and the fieldsite revealed that these same subjects would maintain simultaneously highly sexualised digital identities and behaviours in other gay hook-up apps.

This complex situation showed that rather than attracting a specific type of person, Tinder was bringing out a particular subject position in gay men. The platform had been socially constructed as a “dating app” and not a “hook-up app”. Tinder is, therefore, a constitutive element of a larger technological ecosystem of platforms that gay men use to explore and live their sexual and romantic lives.

Why this is happening is the result of a mixture of how the platform has been designed and the particular context of gay social media. In terms of design, Tinder made it less easy to share private pictures than other platforms. Also, a link that enables users to see common Facebook contacts prompted users to behave “like a decent person”. These differences from other gay hook-up apps inadvertently fostered a different type of self-portrayal on Tinder that would later be appropriated and policed by users themselves. “Gay Tinder” as a platform works in its own particular way in London.

Answering the initial question of

the research, we could say that the conception of Tinder as a place where “nice guys” go is true to an extent. Gay men behave in the way that is expected of them on that platform and they indeed act, open to the possibility of developing a serious relationship with the men they interact with there. This, however, is done through a highly curated portrayal of the self and does not mean that they do not engage in quite different behaviours in other online environments. They are perfectly capable of hooking up and of detaching their romantic feelings and needs in the search of sex in other social media.



An example of a user with different portrayals of his online identity on Tinder and Grindr (left and right).

*Hilary Powell
Artist in Residence, UCL Chemistry*

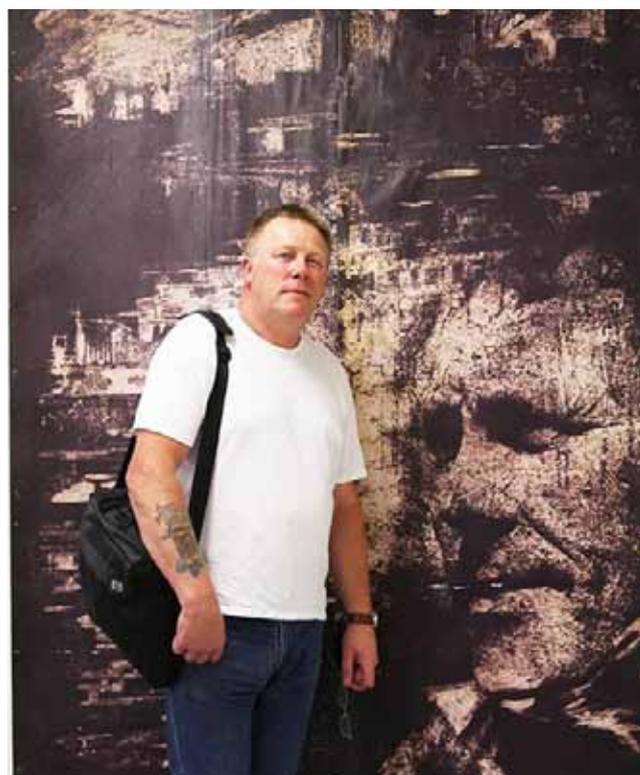
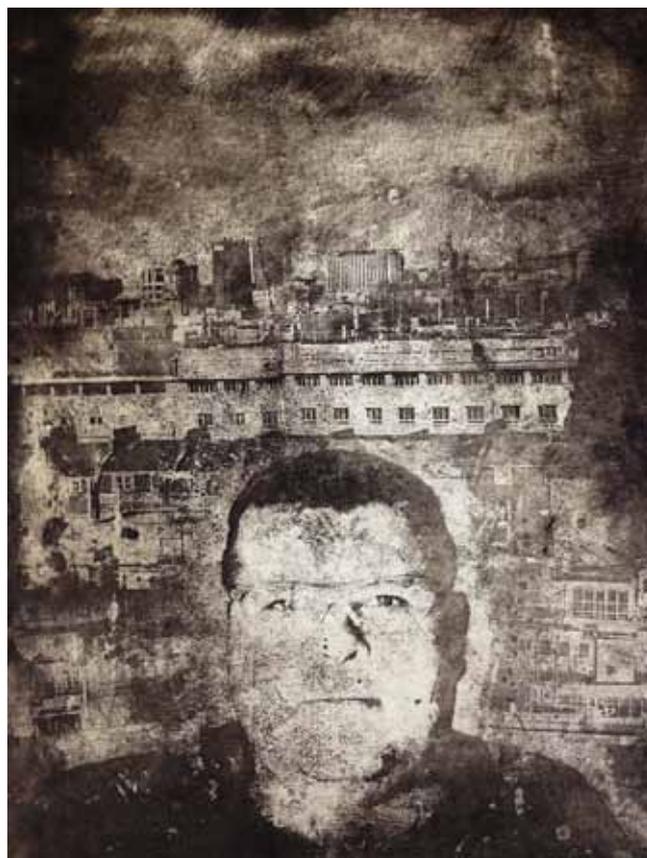
Urban Alchemy

During my time as Leverhulme Artist in Residence with UCL Chemistry (2014/2015), I collaborated with the Anthropology department through a UCL Grand Challenge for Sustainable Cities award. My work examines and collaborates with material components of the demolition site (zinc, copper, steel, concrete, brick, asbestos, cement and slate) exploring their stories and adapting traditional printmaking techniques to create images of these sites and those who work on them. The project focuses on often overlooked and undervalued processes, materials, lives and livelihoods and questions the way we value, consume and waste materials.

I worked with demolition contractors to salvage materials and produce intaglio-etched portraits of demolition workers using reclaimed roofing zinc and inks made from brick. At UCL Institute of Making's "Festival of Stuff", I created alternative stone lithography with concrete slabs and wood cut into reclaimed hoardings printed with a road roller, as part of a public print experiment which surrounded the launch of "Urban Alchemy" – a limited edition book including glimpses of these materials, sites and processes alongside poetic narratives of each material.

<http://hilarypowell.com/urban-alchemy/urban-alchemy-book/>

Below: Hilary Powell salvaging scrap roofing zinc.



Top: Portrait of demolition worker made by etching into reclaimed roofing zinc from UCL's Bartlett School of Architecture/Wates House roof, and Andy McLachlan. Demolition worker next to his portrait.

Asbestos

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in.
Bombs drop. You hold me close. Smell
of rubber and disinfectant. Breathe in.
Breathe out. Respite from the chaos.
Sound of siren and rattle. Breathe out.
Breathe in. I wrap myself around you.

Firefighters enter the inferno. Inhale.
Exhale. Smoke-eaters of inextinguishable
flames. I am untouchable rock of ages
and mortal grief. Ancient texts warned of
my chronic brilliance, weaving a natural
history of fire spirits, shape-shifting
salamander and the disease of slaves.
I am curiosity and wonder. Playing with
fire and magic, purity and danger, I
withstand purgatory. From rock vein to
human tissue I have clothed popes and
emperors. Mineral silk. Risk unravelled.
Now naked torsos are hosed down
in decontamination units. Vacuums of
exposed flesh. Examinations and X-rays.

War and industry courted me. Shipments
of progress. Cargos of resistance
and reinforcement. Consumed and
surrounded. Rooftops, walls, patented

pipes, lagging and cladding, aircraft
hangers and naval vessels, warships and
armaments. I am strength and shelter,
safety and security. A blessing on hearth
and home. Tools for domestic goddess
and practical man. Insoles and underwear,
baking paper, tobacco filters, iron
holders, curtains and covers in a variety
of patterns. On 54th floor or Route 66 I
bring you to a sure safe stop. Cessation
of breath.

I am Marvel comic villain succumbing
to reality. An antihero of unfortunate
surprises. Largely unseen and seldom
recognised, take a punt on where
I turn up next. I am carnival token
and poker chip. Ship-breaking,
demolition, decommissioning, removal
and remediation. A rigged gamble of
disturbance and disaster. The curtain
calls but my glory days are fading.
Fibres fall gently on the poppy fields
of Oz awakening Dorothy from sweet
forgetfulness. Show's over. Fields of
remembrance. To the fallen victims
of industrial negligence, denial and

defamation. Factory-town children
dreaming of a white Christmas as artificial
snow drifts into nightmares.

Mines and mountains take my name.
Dust-covered townships exploiting
Apartheid and child labour. Scars of
whip and lung. Black Lake. White Gold.
Unquenchable desire for profit. Banned
here, I arrive there. An elsewhere beyond
corporate responsibility or care. Toxic
trade in betrayal and hypocrisy. My
lethal infrastructure is insured against.
Compensated for. Lawsuits, litigation and
libel contaminating lives.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Respire.
Expire. I endure as exploited paradox.
Indestructible stone. Imperial export.
Exiled as dangerous goods. Transported
in locked carriages. Committed to the
earth. Secured in rock rooms and mineral
museums. Molten miracle. Bruised lungs.
Blue, brown, black and blue all over until
lying white. I am shroud and sepulchral
lamp. Eternal mourning flame.

Biography

From a DIY Olympics staged on the sites set to become the London 2012 site to a participatory roller skating animation illuminating Archway Tower my enduring preoccupation is with marginalized histories, places and processes. Recent projects include the public production line of a pop-up book charting a hidden A-Z history of the Lea Valley emerging from investigation of the pop-up book as a tool to examine simultaneous construction/collapse during an AHRC Fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL (the book won Birgit Skiold Award for Excellence at the London Art Book Fair and is in the collections of MoMA NY, V&A and Poetry Library). My work around regeneration sites has taken me onto the demolition site and led to an ongoing fascination with the processes, materials and people at work here and I am now artist in residence with Maylarch demolition.



The Sad Clown! by steenslag on Flickr, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)

Humour: It's No Laughing Matter

Jessica Edney and Aline Aronsky
1st Year BSc Anthropology

Is laughter universal? Does humour have a purpose? Why would anybody in their right mind eat ants? All of these questions and more were raised in the recent AnthroSoc debate, featuring Jerome Lewis, Volker Sommer and Alex Pillen discussing the role of humour in anthropology. Disaster nearly struck when the wine supply vanished, but the debate progressed in a lively manner despite the threat of sobriety.

Reflecting the title, matters turned serious when Alex spoke about her own research on post-war reconstruction. Although usually associated with joviality, she pointed out that laughter aids the healing process when recovering from trauma by creating distance between the individual and their suffering.

While it might seem strange to imagine anyone laughing about trauma, think

about how we often “laugh off” incidents that are (albeit to a much lesser extent) unpleasant. For example, if you trip over in public, you might make a show of laughing about it in order to relieve the embarrassment. It was also noted how we often distinguish between “laughing at” and “laughing with”. As you laugh at your embarrassment, you are attempting to create a sense of solidarity with amused witnesses.

Jerome mentioned this distinction when describing a scenario that he witnessed during his fieldwork in the Congo basin, which would take place when an individual has behaved rudely. Elderly women will mockingly re-enact the event to much hilarity until the individual has been sufficiently shamed. The only way to be forgiven was to join them in laughter, acknowledging the deservedness of such humiliation. With this story Jerome helped us understand that laughter can be both a tool of exclusion and inclusion in social groups.

Of course, humans are not the only animals who live in social groups. Volker introduced us to his research in Nigeria, quipping “Why, in the name of science, I ate ants”. During his fieldwork, Volker had noticed that the chimpanzees had a habit of eating army ants. He wondered whether the ants held nutritional benefit and if not, why the chimpanzees incorporated them into their diet. While Volker could dissect the chimpanzee’s faeces in order to find the number of ant heads which exited a hungry chimps belly, it was still unclear how many went in.

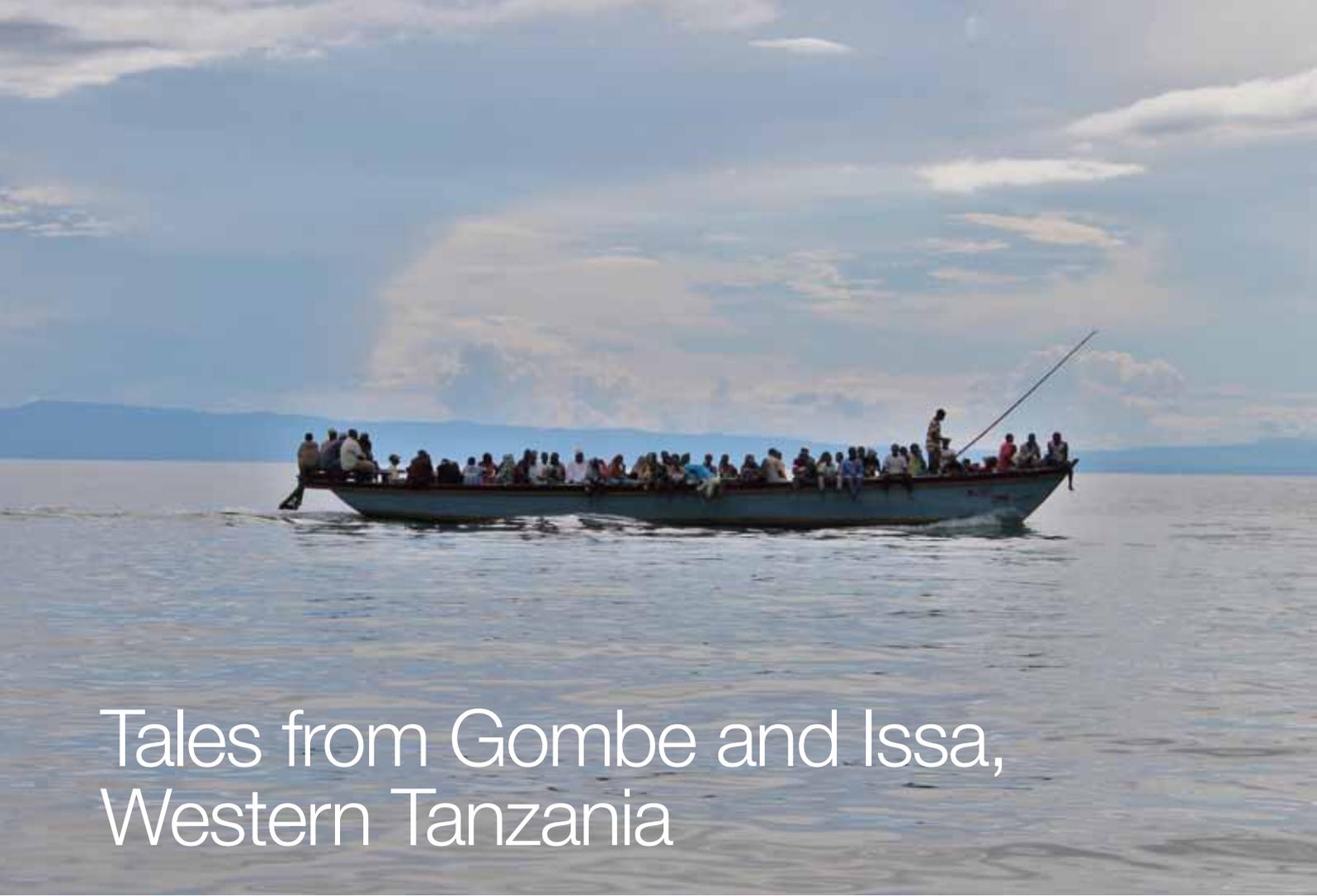
So, like any dedicated researcher, Volker offered himself as a subject for his own experiment. For three days he mixed 100 army ants with whiskey and drank the concoction. He then regulated the number of ants that came out, determining that his excreta featured only 10.1% of the ants he ingested. Thus, he deduced the number of ants the chimps were eating and confirmed his hypothesis; the ants indeed had no nutritional benefit to the chimpanzees. Volker determined that the chimpanzees were instead eating ants to cultivate a group identity or culture, similar to how groups of humans create a feeling of solidarity through laughter.

Comparing ant-eating in chimpanzees to human cultural practices was certainly a novel idea to the audience, as was Volker’s unique cocktail recipe.

Such dedication to science earned the professor a deserved round of applause, before the debate was opened up to questions. It was heartening to see freshers, PhD students and lecturers alike engaging in the discussion and challenging the panel. While we all certainly left the debate with more

questions than answers, it is safe to say that none of us will ever see humour in quite the same light. Or ants for that matter...





Tales from Gombe and Issa, Western Tanzania

Katarina Almeida Warren
MSc Human Evolution and Behaviour 2014-15

It is 11 am. My field supervisor and I are in Kigoma sitting in a boat, waiting. We are the only passengers bar a few mattresses and wooden fish-crates. Slowly more luggage, rolls of fabric, bundles of fish, fruit, and people trickle on board. By 11:30 people start to pile into the hull and onto the beams. By mid-day I commented: "Surely the boat is full now". Alas no. In Africa there is always room for more; and finally 50 people or so later, we are off. Well, not quite – as a little fishing boat catches up with us and piles 3 more people on board.

A day later, we were climbing up through the forest of Gombe, the birthplace of wild chimpanzee research and where Jane Goodall started her career back in 1960. This was just the beginning of the 3 months I would spend in Tanzania

investigating how chimpanzees select raw materials for termite fishing tools. There was jungle pulling at our clothes, tripping up our feet, and getting caught in our hair. Suddenly, we were above the tree-line on a flat grassy ridge looking down on the turquoise expanse of Lake Tanganyika; and, in the distance, the cut-out mountains of the DRC engulfed in a blue haze.

It took another 15 minutes before we arrived at the first termite mound. Out of the termite fishing season it was very still bar the distant noises of the jungle. But despite the mound's inactivity, the chimps were never too far away. We would often find them feeding noisily in the trees around us while we worked, or grooming each other in our back garden when we returned home.

My time at Gombe rapidly came to an end, and soon I arrived at Issa, where I was welcomed with much warmth and celebration. It was not long before I became part of the family. Everyone calls each other *Kaka* (brother) and *Dada* (sister); and we even have a *Mama* – our cook, *Mama Frankie* (lit. Frankie's mother – a naming custom for mum's all over East Africa). I don't know what we would do without her; getting up at 3:30 am every day to start the fire, cook breakfast, and boil hot water for tea and coffee to warm up our shivering, sleepy souls when we crawl out of our tents in the mornings.

The menu is beans, every day, three times a day. Mostly with rice, and *ugali* (a thick cornmeal porridge) for dinner, or, very occasionally, a treat of bread or chapatti. With the only fridge serving as storage for

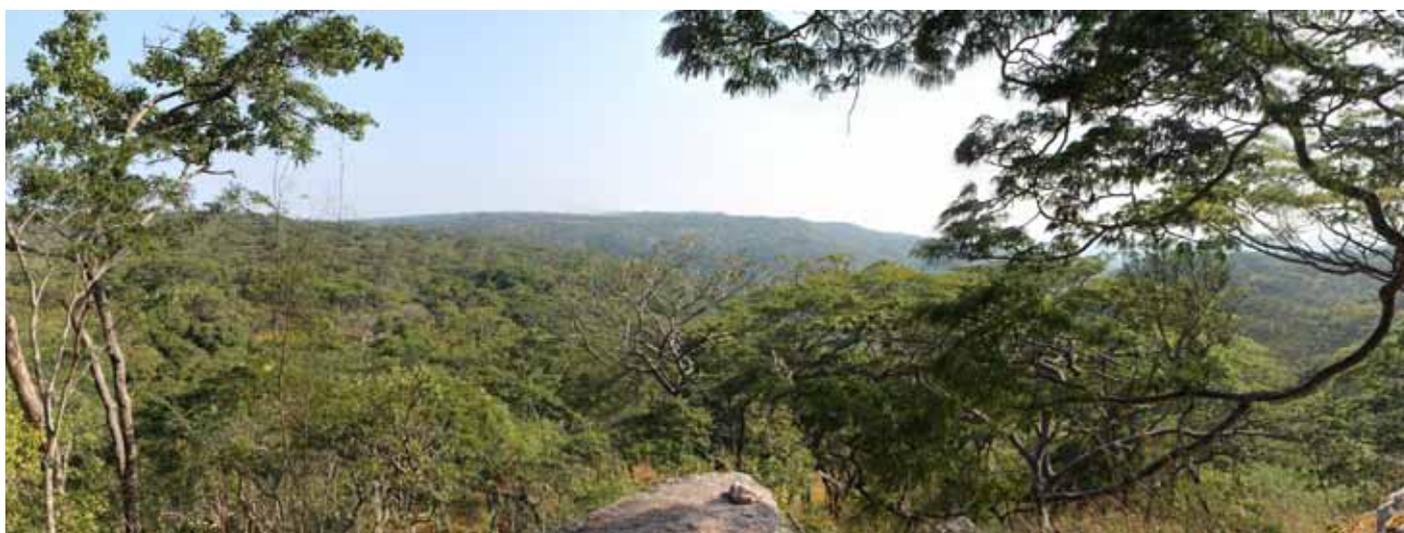
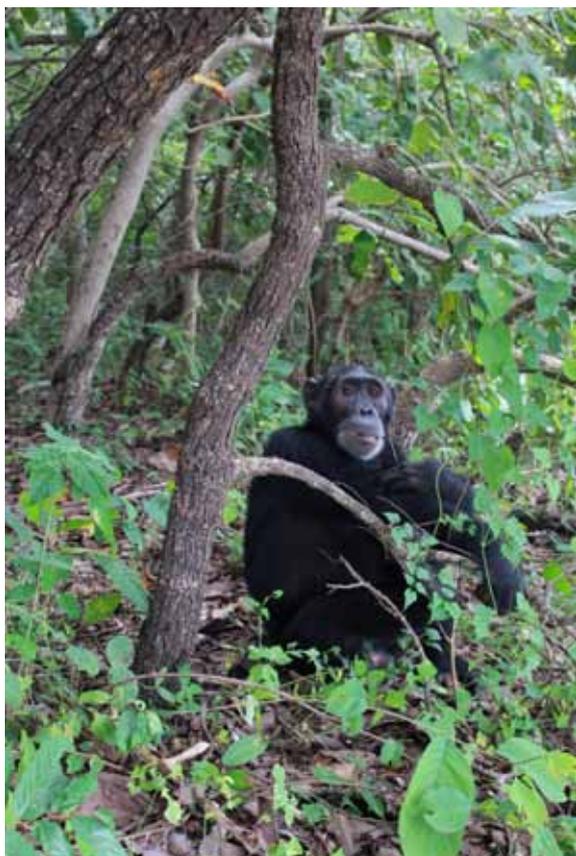
chimp faecal samples, and the market a 4-hours' drive away, fresh fruit and veg only features during the first half of each month.

But nothing ever seemed to dampen the camp spirit. My wake-up call was often a stream of laughter coming from the communal hut at 6:30 as the field staff got ready to head into the forest; and after a hard-days' work all round, I invariably found people engaged in animated

conversation or singing as they bathed in the ice-cold river.

In the evenings, as the temperatures dropped we all huddled by the fire, listening to stories no doubt told several times before. But the enthusiasm never ceased – every story becoming an energetic dance of words and limbs executed by the narrator with beautiful and mesmerizing fluidity.

That was several months ago now, but by a stroke of good fortune in the form of an invitation to return as a research assistant, I find myself again in Kigoma where it all began. Back to the chimps, back to Issa, back to my second family, and a place that feels like home.



Outside Outsider Art

Myriam Perrot
MSc Material Visual Culture 2014-15



Outsider Art generally refers to works created by people outside of conventional art and academic contexts. The notion first appeared in the 1970s and was originally referred to as an equivalent of what was called Art Brut (“raw art”) in a Francophone context. Art Brut is historically the project of one man, the French artist Jean Dubuffet, who started collecting works under this appellation around the mid-1940s. Dubuffet was driven by a similar ambition to that of his modernist counterparts, who were looking for the sources of creativity. The artists held by Dubuffet’s gaze were deemed “virgins of culture” (Maclagan 2009 p29) and were thought to create art bearing the mark of authenticity, not having been dictated by any conventional aesthetic standards. Without artistic training, Art Brut creators are still nowadays thought to have no idea nor

expectation of an art market or an art world; they do not aim to show their works or sell them. On the whole, social, psychological and physical factors of isolation play a role in asserting the originality of these works.

“Maybe fifty years ago we’d all have been outsider artists” (Bethlem Gallery artist)

Since Dubuffet’s investigation, the application of the term Art Brut has broadened slightly, and its counterpart Outsider Art now covers a wider range of productions that would not have usually been comprised under the first notion. A

couple of decades after the creation of both Art Brut and Outsider Art categories, it is now claimed they are part of the art establishment. They have entered art history. Since the first international Outsider Art Fair in 1993, the Outsider Art market has continued to expand, and although prices are not quite competing with those of contemporary art, they are rising steadily.

Despite a current pluralisation of the field of Outsider Art into many sub-genres, the justification for some work to enter the market is often founded on some original mythifying assumptions about the artist producer. Hence today, some art historians argue that in regards to socio-structural changes the category’s social application is too restricted and imperatively needs to be reconsidered in a contemporary light. Indeed, the

conditions permitting the type of creative expressions so praised by the defenders of the categories of Art Brut and Outsider Art are said to be less common.

“There’s nothing else to cover the rest of us” (Bethlem Gallery artist)

Art historians agree on the fact that materials coming from psychiatric institutions constituted the major part of Dubuffet’s early collections. Indeed, in Dubuffet’s time, the conditions of internment in asylums were such as they acted as perfect loci for providing the individual with a certain type of isolation, thus making the patients typical “aliénés” (Peiry 1996 p69). Between Dubuffet’s early endeavours and today, psychiatric institutions have undergone major changes, be it in the treatment they provide patients or their internal structures. From once being the “Gold Standard” of Art Brut, giving the artist ideal conditions of isolation, psychiatric institutions of today encourage art-making as part of healing processes.

To some extent, the Bethlem Gallery, which is part of the Bethlem Royal Hospital, instantiates this shifting context. The gallery aims to exhibit works by current and former patients of the so-named psychiatric institution; and, while inscribing itself in continuity to the therapeutic agenda of the wider medical institution, its activities and ambitions overlap with that of a wider art world. Bethlem Gallery does not advertise itself as an Outsider Art gallery, although some of its artists show and sell their works through Outsider Art platforms.

From an art history perspective, this combined gallery space and studio could work as exemplification of what art historian Maclagan calls the “grey

area” now appearing in the field. Through interviews conducted as part of my masters thesis, it was expressed on several occasions that both the myriad of artists and their many forms of creation represented the gallery. Some of the artists started to create within an art studio, or sometimes in their bedrooms during their hospital stays. Some might have begun the process outside of this context, at different moments in their lives, sometimes having followed an art course in the past, although most of them had not.

For a few of the artists, the Outsider Art label might act as a source of empowerment, giving the opportunity to exhibit their works on multiple occasions, whilst for others it might also do the exact opposite, bearing the threat of an added stigma. Thus from the art “that keeps you sane” (as an artist once mentioned to me) to the art that sells, the path can sometimes be perilous. And it is one of the missions the gallery fulfils, to facilitate such kind of passage in a way that would benefit the individual only.

Conducting research at the Bethlem Gallery proved to be more than looking at an instantiation of Outsider Art today.

Rather it constituted an occasion to throw light on the inherent logic of art history, coming to grips with the limits of its genres containment. Exhibiting a broad range of art productions whilst interacting with the Outsider Art market and the wider art world, Bethlem Gallery can be said to act as a bridge between various fields. And it is in a constant position of negotiation that the gallery strives to propose an alternative to the rules of distinction, so as to preserve the capability for art to be an agent in people’s recovery without committing to the still effective myths channelled through art history.

Maclagan, D. 2009. *Outsider art: from the margins to the market place*. London: Reaktion Books.

Peiry, L. 1996. *De la clandestinité à la consécration: Histoire de la collection de l’art brut 1945-1996*, PhD Thesis, Université de Lausanne.

Bethlem Gallery, Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Greater London BR3
<http://bethlemgallery.com>





Precise Numbers, Messy Worlds

Clara Therond
MSc Medical Anthropology

The Anthropology of Statistics and Indicators Research and Reading Group provides a stimulating inter-disciplinary environment for staff and students to exchange ideas and discuss the impact of statistics and indicators upon people's lives. Offering a space to ask: how do statistics shape the way we live? Who or what may be rendered invisible within data analysis? These were two questions we picked over whilst discussing Vincanne Adams' article "Evidence-Based Global Public Health: Subjects, Profits, Erasures". Adams discusses the increasing migration of Evidence Based Medicine into Evidence Based Public Health, where statistical models are increasingly viewed as the *gold standard* (2013:55). Furthermore, she argues that

health interventions are increasingly being asked to mirror Randomized Control Trial style designs, with "anecdotal" (2013:56) evidence seemingly sidelined.

I carried these deliberations along to the departmental Anthropology in the Professional World seminar series (Autumn 2015) with guest speaker Dr Barbara Hendrie – a former graduate from the Anthropology Department, social anthropologist and currently Deputy Director of DFID Global Partnerships Department. Within her world, rolling out policy initiatives and "scaling up" health interventions undoubtedly encompass an entourage of statistics. However, she addressed the audience on how anthropological thinking informs her

decision making process. Drawing on Foucault's concept of power, "speaking truth to power as a good civil servant" means attending to the micro-dynamics of local worlds, and being able to deconstruct ideas that are often driven by assumption and disposition. One such illustration she gave was a pilot study to expand coffee production in Uganda. Here, policy failure resulted from misguided assumptions and a lack of investigation into "gender sensitive components" within target communities. This brief example illuminates how qualitative data, often rendered invisible or missed, provides crucial evidence that underpins successful policy formulation. Hence, highlighting the need, that Barbara so aptly described, "to ensure

that different (qualitative and quantitative) research strands are pulled together in a substantive and timely way” (Hanmer and Hendrie 2002). Dr Hendrie’s seminar captured the importance of drawing on anthropological tools to help ensure best intervention. These qualities are undoubtedly the key to such a formidable career.

But what indeed, happens when statistical data is missing and public health intervention has to take place on the basis of a qualitative knowledge-base?

Addressing the Social Sciences in Health Symposium 2015 at LHSM, anthropologist and physician Vinh-Kim Nguyen’s case study of anthropology in Guinea’s Ebola epidemic elucidated the complex realities in a crisis setting – when there is no capacity for statistical representations to shape what counts as “real” and no randomized control-style protocol. Nguyen illustrated how “Ebola crystallizes pre-existing political tensions: between urban elites and rural populations, between elders and youth” (Le Marcus and Nguyen 2015). Here, the combination of mistrust of authority, and social relations imbued with the fear of contagion transformed the epidemic into both a political and moral crisis. The Ebola epidemic indicated how – cultural



sensitivity and building trust within communities structures became integral elements in the fight to eradicate Ebola.

Both speakers convinced me that alongside the omnipresent hum of number crunching machines driven by Evidence-Based Medicine are the messy local worlds of people, health and disease, which preclude total quantification. Their realities and relationships cannot always be structured and measured into statistical models. The discussions above not only warrant the need to continue to unpack the social worlds of indicators and statistics but to

allow space for recognition that qualitative data provides unquantifiable value and meaning to the facts and figures which have become so persuasive in global health intervention.

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Left: WHO contact tracing, by UNMEER/ Martine Perret on Flickr, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/>)

Culturally Appropriate Solutions to Unwanted Male Attention – a Congolese Example

Daša Bombjaková
PhD Anthropology

For my PhD fieldwork, from which I returned in March 2015, I lived for 18 months in the rainforest of Congo with the Mbendjele Pygmies, a hunter-gatherer group which maintains complex inter-ethnic relationships with its close neighbours, a group of Bantu farmers. Whilst my own interactions with the Bantu were neither unpleasant nor dangerous, there was, on several occasions, potential for difficult situations to escalate, and I was required to defuse such situations in a manner sensitive to local ways. Here I discuss one of the situations I encountered.

Several months into my fieldwork, one young Bantu man decided to start visiting me during the evenings, bringing me

plantains, coconuts, palm wine, and other gifts, asking questions about my life, and describing elements of his. He said he just wanted to chat with me, but my Mbendjele friends advised me to refuse his gifts, as accepting them meant accepting him as my future husband: if I were to marry anyone, it should be an Mbendjele man!

Mbuma, a *kombeti* (elderly and wise) woman of around 70 years old and my adopted Mbendjele grandmother, warned me: “Milo *wants your vagina!*” I tried to explain that there was nothing to be worried about. However, news of the *mundele* (white) girl marrying Bantu was just too attractive to be ignored. Even the boatmen passing by the nearest village



made sure that all the people from the region knew about my apparent betrothal. I became anxious as to how this might impact my research and my reputation in the eyes of the Mbendjele. I couldn't let this play out – decisive action was called for.





It was early in the evening when I approached Mbuma, whispering to her: "Call kombeti women. We meet at maï (water). I will go first and wait for you there." And to make sure that everyone knew about it, I said: "It's a secret! Stay quiet like a fish!" I grabbed my machete and one of the sparklers I had acquired

earlier to play with Mbendjele children, and I rushed to maï. As I began clearing a small piece of ground from leaves and branches, the group of four kombeti women joined me. All of us were silent and synchronised – anything I did, the women carefully observed and imitated. I took the sparkler and plunged it into the earth. I spat three

times, and the women followed suit. I had a hard time overcoming the urge to laugh when I saw the confusion on their faces, and even more when I began speaking in Slovak, my native tongue. I was saying: "I would like to be able to share this moment with people who could understand what I am saying, as I know all of them would find it funny."

Afterwards, I looked at the women and said: "This is the knowledge which kombeti from my village shared with me. From now on, my vagina is closed and Milo cannot enter. I can eat food from Milo and I will not fall for him. I can take food from Milo and share it with Mbendjele."

When I got back to the tent, I heard the women whispering all the details of the ceremony to the rest of the group. My vagina was closing, and that would be the word spread by the passing boatmen from now on.

Western explanations did not work with the people I lived with. By employing the Mbendjele method of communication, I effectively delivered the message and continued enjoying my fieldwork.

Photo by Carlos Fornelino Romero



An Interview with Hannah Knox



Lecturer in Digital Anthropology and Material Culture, Hannah's research looks at the part that technologies and materials play in processes of social change. She has researched the use of information systems in organisational settings, the building of roads in Peru, and most recently the implications of climate change for projects of urban transformation in the UK.

How did you become an anthropologist? Tell us a bit about your career so far?

I probably first heard of anthropology through Nanneke Redclift, who is now an Emeritus Professor in the UCL Anthropology department. Nanneke was a close family friend when I was growing up in Canterbury and gave me my first anthropology book when I went to University in Manchester in 1996 – Clifford Geertz's *Local Knowledge*.

I chose to study anthropology during a year out between school and university, which I spent in Mexico. During the year I worked in a children's home that was run by Catholic nuns. Having come from an atheist family this was my first real exposure to the day-to-day lived experience of religious life. I found the

whole question of how beliefs are formed and lived really fascinating and I think it was this that made me decide that I wanted to study anthropology.

I chose to study as an undergraduate at the University of Manchester and ended up staying at Manchester for my PhD and for two subsequent research positions – one as a postdoc on a research project at Manchester Business School and then as a research fellow at an interdisciplinary social science research centre called CRESC (Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change). I joined UCL anthropology in the summer of 2014.

What have you done, and are you currently doing research-wise?

I have been privileged to work on a number of research projects over the

years – partly due to having had an extended 10-year postdoc at CRESC. My work has mainly been about the way in which technologies play a part in creating the conditions of possibility for the formation of social relations. My doctoral research looked at the transformative promise of new media technologies and tracked how they were framing the formation of economic and labour relations in the context of post-industrial urban regeneration in the UK. I've also done research on large scale IT implementations in global organisations, looking at the way in which contemporary work is structured around epistemological and pragmatic distinctions between different kinds of professional expertise (technical, business, strategic). The main piece of research I did at CRESC was a joint project with Penny Harvey on road construction in Peru. Here we explored

how taking something like a road as a site for anthropological research could provide a way of studying the formation of political relations – between the state and citizens but also the formation of other political subjectivities – including “impossible publics” and what we came to call “engineer-bricoleurs”. Our ethnographic monograph from that project, *Roads: An Anthropology of Infrastructure and Expertise* came out earlier this year.

Most recently, I have turned an interest in material politics that came out of the roads research, to the ends of studying the politics of climate change in the UK. Climate change is a material transformation but it is a form of material transformation that in policy and planning at least, is mediated through a whole panoply of monitoring and measuring devices, information systems and digital representations. This research project has been an attempt to understand the implications of climate change as it is manifested in this distributed set of measurements and representational practices, for methods and modes of political intervention. This research has led me to think about the way in which climate change works to unsettle the relationship between knowledge and

action. It has led me to consider the experiment as an important form of contemporary governance and has also led me to explore practices of working with data and evidence and to consider the importance of affect, imagination and morality in data-led political practice.

What is next?

I have a few ideas for future projects that I am developing at the moment. In the past few years I’ve become very interested in the appearance of big data and in particular what the emergence of big data science does to a distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods. I’m interested in the idea that anthropologists have always worked with “big data” – that is, large amounts of unstructured qualitative material that demands the invention of new analytical tools. Because of this I am interested in the potential for developing conversations between anthropologists and data scientists to see if there is scope for working across these two disciplinary areas as data science develops methods for dealing with this kind of material.

The other area I am keen to work on is what we might call digital

environmentalism. I would like to do more on the role of digital technologies in forming, detecting and structuring human/environmental relations and to think about how the agency of non-humans also disrupts or refigures digital logics. I’m toying with a project that would look at human/bird relations in the Dee Estuary between England and Wales, looking at the way in which digital monitoring and ordering techniques are used in situated negotiations between different actors in the region – farmers, conservationists, and managers of industrial plants like steel works and gas works.

What current projects are your students working on?

Some of the things that my students are working on include: Digital Games and the Reorganisation of Work; Digital Literacy in Panama and Film Piracy in India.

Are you only an anthropologist?

When I am not at work the main thing I do is spend time with my three young children! The hardest thing is trying to limit the amount of time we spend on driving to the obligatory ballet, swimming and gymnastics so that there is still some time for adventure walks, storytelling and kite-making! We joined the RSPB a couple of years ago during a holiday in Wales, so we have been exploring local bird reserves lately. And if I were to have an afternoon to myself, I think I would play the piano, exercise the frustrated artist in me by doing some painting, meditate, swim, cycle – all those things that I imagine I will do but never seem to quite get round to.





Congo Great Lakes Initiative – Congo Heritage on the Move

Emily Garvin
2nd Year BSc Anthropology

Over the past year, UCL Anthropology has worked with the Horniman Museum and the Congo Great Lakes Initiative on a project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, that combines the fieldwork and conservation expertise of the Horniman Museum and UCL Ethnographic Collection curators with the knowledge and heritage of the Congolese community in London, culminating in the Congo Great Lakes – Congo Heritage On The Move exhibition showed recently in the Department (September – December 2015). The exhibition focused on three main themes of life in the Congo – political power, spiritual matters and every day life.

The members of the Initiative came up with the idea for the collaboration while working on a different heritage project, “Keep my land alive!”, with another

institution. That project explored the link between Britain and the Democratic Republic of the Congo via the histories of the British explorers of the 19th and 20th centuries, who brought back many tales and souvenirs to add to the collections we have today. Whilst conducting their research, the members of the project found that some of the objects in the Horniman Museum collection had little to no information available, or, worse still, incorrect information. So they approached the Department with a collaboration in mind.

For the most part, museums and exhibitions in the UK are administered by small teams of curators, with little input from the communities the artefacts are sourced from, often to the detriment of the exhibition. The ultimate goal of the collaboration was to produce a

community-led exhibition of objects that would exemplify Congolese heritage, preserving the memory of objects both ordinary and sacred for future generations. As Dr Haidy Geismar, UCL Anthropology, says, “Work with collections isn’t just about getting people in to populate our collection databases and archives with more information. It’s about opening up these authoritative and highly curated spaces to communities, allowing them to frame and manage the collections of their own cultural heritage, sharing our skills in the process.”

During the project, members of the community came to UCL and the Horniman Museum for workshops in field-work, conservation and object research, with each participant keeping a field diary to record their work, presenting their findings at the following session.



Participants also brought in objects from their own homes to present, with the workshops providing a space for participants both to share their own knowledge and experience, and to learn from others.

While interviewing people involved with the project for this article, one of these objects came up over and over again: the *likembe*, a hand-held musical instrument that is played all over the Congo. *Likembe* are carved out of wood, with wooden or metal tines, and are played by plucking the tines. In skilled hands, such as the *likembe* players in the group, they create beautiful, rhythmic music. They are regarded with great fondness by the community – in fact, they are so highly regarded that of the 27 objects on display in the exhibition, three are *likembe* – one from the UCL Ethnographic Collection and two on loan to the exhibition by members of the project.

The UCL Ethnographic Collection's *likembe* has been on display for many years, but owing to the lack of information available it was originally labelled as a piano, despite a total lack of similarity in appearance or in the sound produced. It is one of the success stories of the project that we can now provide much more accurate information.

According to Didier Ibwilakwingi-Ekom, Executive Director of the Congo Great lakes Initiative, this ability to provide information on objects from people who have used them in daily life is why it is so important to include the indigenous community if we want our museums to provide accurate and useful information.

This project is just the start of the Initiative's plans, and hopefully there will be more collaboration between UCL Anthropology's Material Culture Laboratory and indigenous communities in the future.

An online database was created by Carl Hogsden for the project. Visit <http://cgli.org.uk/collections/> to access the exhibition online, browse the objects that have been researched and to join in the discussion about the items in the collection.





A Journey Through Mind

Kirsten Marys Brown
3rd Year BA Archaeology and Anthropology

Having left sixth-form in the summer of 2013, university has shaped and changed me in many ways except one: I am still as completely and utterly obsessed with human cognition and cultures as I was back then. Okay that's two things, but never mind.

In September 2014, I finally got the chance to travel to KwaZulu Natal (South Africa) and study San rock art, as part of my fieldwork. The cognitive explanations for the depictions led me to research methods which would allow me to understand the social, environmental and cognitive conditions necessary for different types of knowledge to become

culturally transmitted, not only for the San but for behavioural studies in general. I was particularly interested in how we can explain the cognitive processes which underlie the behaviour we study.

In trying to understand what anthropology can bring to the discussion table concerning the nature and the categorisation of knowledge, it has become increasingly clearer that integration with cognitive sciences would be incredibly insightful, because participant observation alone cannot establish causality – it cannot explain cognitive processing. Equally important, however, is the role anthropologists

play in reinforcing the fact that human behaviour (specifically cultural knowledge) goes far beyond the processes of the mind. The environment, material culture and society all play a significant role in shaping and changing us – what is important is that each element is complementary.

Maybe this seems ambitious, irrelevant or even disconnected from the purposes of anthropology, so I'd like to briefly discuss my undergraduate fieldwork project to demonstrate why I find this fascinating.

Since June (2015) I have been working alongside experimental psychologists

in the UCL Language and Cognition Laboratory, investigating the role emotion plays in children learning abstract concepts. Previous experimental research in adults has shown that the processing of known concrete concepts is grounded in our sensory-motor interactions with the external world, in contrast to the processing of known abstract concepts, which have an emotional (affective) association. Following on from this, we conducted an experiment testing the effect emotionally evocative (valenced) language vs. neutral language had on children learning new abstract concepts (the results of which are still being analysed).



I was initially drawn to the project because the acquisition and transmission of abstract concepts forms some of the most impenetrable parts of cultural knowledge, and I wondered if perhaps this project could provide another perspective on the matter.

A crucial element of the “affective association theory” is that, contrary to what was previously argued, abstract concepts are not only learnt linguistically. This could be incredibly relevant for anthropology – several anthropologists, including Maurice Bloch and Michael Carrithers, have provided ethnographic

evidence for non-linguistic learning of types of cultural knowledge (e.g. basket weaving; the concept of a “good Swidden”). To what extent could the evidence from experimental psychology and cognitive neuroscience develop our understanding of this type of cultural knowledge?

These questions have helped develop the basic theme of my dissertation, which seeks to understand how psychologists, anthropologists and philosophers define knowledge and belief, whether there is a difference and how an integrated

approach may support our understanding of cultural knowledge. The most challenging question I’ve had to ask myself since working in the lab is whether there is a difference between generating a concept through experimentation and observing a deep-rooted cultural conviction.

For more information on the UCL Language and Cognition Laboratory please visit the website at: www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/research/research-facilities/language_lab/

For those interested in Cognitive Science: www.cognitionandculture.net



Top right: San rock art depicting a malevolent shaman in the form of lion, which bleeds from the nose. Rock shelter, Clarens, KwaZulu Natal. Taken by the author, September 2014.

Left: San rock art, depicting a shaman's experience in trance. Archaeological interpretations of the image suggest the shaman was depicting himself under water. How can we understand such abstract representations in terms of cognition? Rock shelter, Clarens, KwaZulu Natal. Taken by the author, September 2014.

How to Fengshui your Fish Tank in Three Easy Steps

William Matthews
PhD Anthropology



If you're anything like me, then you've probably devoted considerable thought to the question of how to combine those twin pleasures of life, fish-keeping and Chinese cosmology. Well, you're in luck, as based on my fieldwork with fortune-tellers in Hangzhou, I will tell you how to do just that by creating a *fengshui* fish tank.

Fengshui is a practice of configuring space and manipulating objects to maximise the flow of auspicious *qi* (cosmic energy). Every aspect of these spaces and objects has cosmological consequences, based on how it correlates with the Five Phase cycle of Chinese cosmology (involving Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth and their constructive and destructive relationships). Fish tanks play an important role, especially in offices,

helping to attract wealth, associated with water and fish, the Chinese word for which is a homophone for "abundance."

Is a *Fengshui* Fish Tank Right for Me?

This is, no doubt, your immediate question, and I would hate to put you to the trouble of reading through the entire article only to find that a fish tank will have appalling cosmological consequences for you. Whether or not this is the case will be based on your fate (*ming*), taking into account the year, month, day, and hour of your birth and their correspondences with the Five Phases. This is complicated, and beyond the scope of a handy guide to aquaculture, so if you are unsure of the specifics, consult your local fortune-teller. Basically, a *fengshui* fish tank is only really suitable for you if your fate is governed by the Phases of Water or Wood. If your fate

is governed by Fire, in particular, a fish tank would be an awful idea (water, like that found in a fish tank, destroys fire, i.e. you) – flower-arranging would be a better choice, as the beauty of flowers is derived from Fire.

Shopping for your Tank

If you do decide to set up a *fengshui* fish tank, you will need some equipment. In addition to the tank itself, which should be as large as possible to comfortably accommodate the most auspicious fish, the Dragonfish, you will require adequate lighting, heating, and filtration. Any decor you decide to add ought to be in harmony with the *fengshui* of the site of the tank, so consider the shape and colour of any wood or rocks.

All of this equipment may be found at your nearest Flower-and-Bird Market, alongside other pets, flowers, Chinese medicines, and possibly antiques. Shop around – there are typically several types of fish tank stall. Ignore the generalist shops and those selling smaller tropical fish – you want to head for the dedicated *fengshui* fish shops. These tend to look a lot more professional than everything else in the market, and will have large display tanks with healthy fish. Inside, there will typically be a tea table, where customers can sit and discuss their ichthyological schemes with the proprietor.

A good *fengshui* fish shop will offer installation services and custom-built



tanks, along with advice on particular species suitable for *fengshui*. A *fengshui* fish tank is considered a major investment (the tank and equipment costing at least £1000); as one proprietor told me, the *fengshui* fish are expensive, so unlike the cheaper tropical fish, one ought not to skimp on the quality of their home.

Siting the Tank and Choosing your Fish

This is best done in consultation with an expert, such as the proprietor of a *fengshui* fish shop, or a *fengshui* master. At home, avoid placing the tank in the bedroom or kitchen. At the office, it is best placed so that it is the first thing seen on entry, encouraging wealth to flow in. You can use a *fengshui* compass, like the one pictured below, to find the best spot:



As for fish, you can't go wrong with a Dragonfish (*longyu*). This is the ultimate prestige fish, displayed proudly in the lobby of many a Chinese company, and is the reason why you need such a big tank. For an office tank, a gold Dragonfish is best, emphasising wealth, whereas for

the home, a red one is preferred. These fish are treated with great respect and are priced individually according to colour, ranging from hundreds to thousands of pounds.

Many people, understandably, leave it at that, but why not take it one step further? For the most auspicious outcome, set up your tank according to the ancient cosmological text the *I Ching*. Choose fish to correspond with cosmogonic stages, in the form of one for the Supreme Ultimate (unitary principle), two for *yin* and *yang*, four for young and old *yin* and *yang*, and eight for the Eight Trigram symbols of the *I Ching*, or the Eight Characters of your birth time. The fish should be chosen as follows: one gold Dragonfish, two red Dragonfish, and four suckermouth catfish (which eat the leftovers and supposedly clean the tank, creating a fully-functioning microcosm). The final eight fish depend on you and your time of birth – different fish have different benefits based on

their shape and colour, ranging from encouraging stability to warding off evil. Your proprietor should be able to tell you which are best for you. Take them home and release them slowly into the tank, and sit back and let the good *qi* flow.

The Budget Option

If several thousand pounds seems a little on the steep side, you can still achieve some *fengshui* benefits with a smaller tank and cheaper fish. A very popular choice for businesses is the Wealth Fish (*facai yu*), a rotund, red creature with a smooth snout – all highly auspicious features. A group of these, available for about £3-4 each, in a smaller tank will bring many of the same benefits (especially wealth) in a lesser form – you just won't be the talk of the fish market.



Top Left: Admiring a tank at the flower-and-bird market

Top Right: Inside a Hangzhou flower-and-bird market

Left: A retailer's tank full of Wealth Fish. Don't be too greedy.



Choosing Different Methods of Contraception in Peru

Rebecca Irons
MRes Anthropology

With the increasing availability of technological methods to control fertility and plan family size, we can begin to ask why women prefer to use certain methods of medical contraception over others. For example, research in West Africa shows that women prefer methods that they see as less “damaging” to the body and that is why less “chemically” invasive methods (such as behavioural or traditional) are more popular there. When it comes to hormonal methods, choice between methods on offer may differ according to cultural values also. For example, Mexican women opt for the pill over the injection as it is seen as the less aggressive option. This is because once administered the injection must be left to run its course, unlike the pill, which a woman can simply

stop taking if she notices undesirable side effects. In Peru, where I undertook fieldwork for my Master’s thesis, women also favoured contraception that they did not perceive as disrupting to their “balanced menstrual flow”, with the injection seen as the most obstructive as it takes from one to three months to clear from the body once administered, and the women have no way of speeding up this process. You might then expect certain contraceptive preferences in communities where such beliefs about the body are found, as in the Andes.

During my research in Huancayo, a different story emerged. In the small family planning clinic where I worked, women were consistently requesting

the three-month injection, even when another method was recommended for their particular health-cases. Preference for the injection is not uncommon across the country. The Demographic Health Survey tells us that 64% of women in a relationship have only ever used the injection, compared to only 48% ever-use for the combined pill, but these results do not tell us why that may be (DHS, 2014). There could be a number of practical reasons why women may have been using one method over another, but these cannot be removed from the social and political landscape from which they arise.

In my fieldwork I observed that women who visited the clinic would usually do so alone or with their children. Husbands

and partners were never present at clinic consultations, even though they were allowed to enter should they have wanted to do so. Through participant observation and conversations with female patients about their contraception preferences, it became increasingly clear that the blister packets that carried the pill were undesirable “evidence” to have of one’s contraception use, and the women did not want to have to take them home. *But why should it matter if their families and spouses knew that they were using contraception?* Jelke Boesten argues that Peruvian women who are seen to be seeking contraception are viewed as promiscuous by society and as unfaithful by their husbands (2010). She suggests that the lack of knowledge and spousal involvement in the process leads to suspicion about the potential

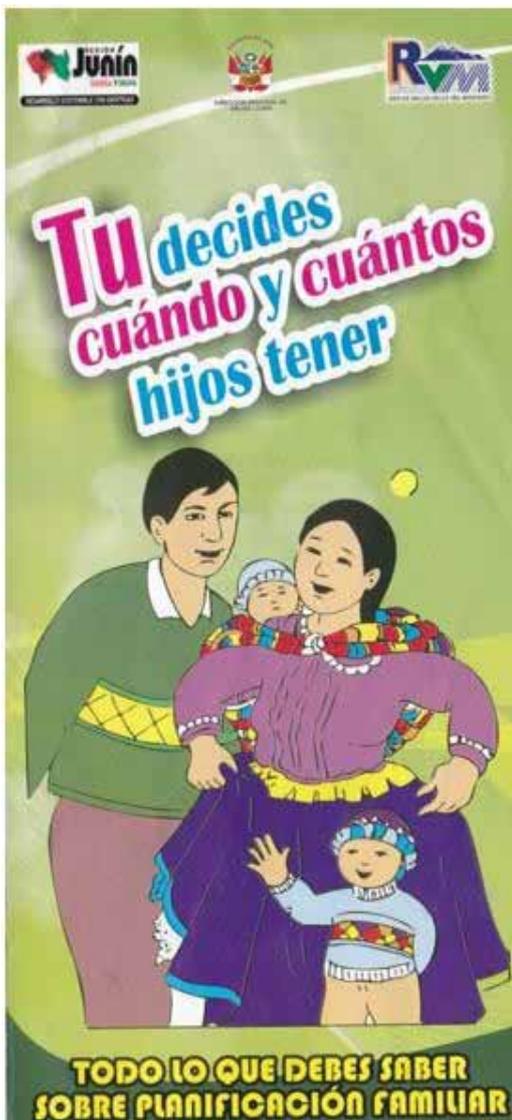
sexual behaviours promoted by modern contraception. Cristina Alcalde also points out the risk of domestic violence that women are exposed to if they are discovered in their deception, due to the patriarchal belief that a wife should give a man as many children as he wants (2010). That said women have a desire and a right to control their fertility and choose how to plan their families, without fear of repercussions. The patients who visited the clinic in Huancayo were somewhat cornered into choosing a method that left no tangible evidence for discovery, which suggests little agency over their reproductive bodies if choice is limited by fear. However, choice and empowerment can only be practiced within the existing power relations. In that case, the hormonal injection arguably acts as a way for women to gain some control over their fertility, even

if they must do so secretly. Even though a range of contraception is offered through health clinics in Peru, the gender inequality and female subordination creates barriers to access and determines what methods women see as suitable within their social context.

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Dissecting the Human Behavioural Phenotype

Dana Bentzen-Bilkvist

MSc Human Evolution and Behaviour 2014-15

I recently completed the MSc Human Evolution and Behaviour course and had a wonderful experience with the dissertation. The project aimed to look at human behaviours, which are complex and involve many layers of cognition, culture, psychological mechanisms and individual differences. Although those layers are manifested in the same individual, it remains unclear whether behaviour-generating processes are integrated or modular. The goal of my dissertation was to dissect a potential “behavioural phenotype” that influenced behaviours. Or were behaviours disparate groups not affected by each other?

The three domains: introspection, imitation and cooperation were chosen due to their important in human evolution. Firstly, introspection, or self-reflection into the present, past and future, is considered a “unique” human capability. However, introspection is a solitary act, which seems at contrast with the hyper-sociality of human society. Secondly, imitation is thought to have been integral to the evolution of cultural. Imitation allows children to learn both gesture and language. Thirdly, cooperation has allowed humans to build up nation-states by having complex levels of relationships based on reciprocity. The combination of these three behaviours has proven to be incredible successful with human biomass being larger than the combined biomass of all terrestrial vertebrates (Boyd & Richerson 2009). However, to what extent, if any, are these behaviours

influenced by each other in the same individual?

To establish if these behaviours were linked we conducted experiments that could be used as proxies to determine if one was a high to low introspector, imitator or cooperator. We hypothesized that there were going to be strong correlations between the three behaviours. We made predictions that if the behaviours were linked that there would be a correlation between low introspection, high cooperation behaviours, and high imitation. We tested over 100 individuals ranging in age from 18 to 64, and with diverse backgrounds.

Results revealed two categories of findings; firstly, substantial levels of

individual variability within all measures. In the cooperative games individuals ranged from giving the smallest amount possible to the whole stake. While flexibility was expected, the large variation displayed how different individuals act in the same situation. Secondly, the behaviours had no associations with each other. A high cooperator was no more likely to be a high imitator or a low introspector. This finding was not expected! This finding remained even when the data was analysed in quartiles, isolating for the highest scoring 25% and lowest scoring 25% (ie, 25% of the cohort scoring highly imitative, and 25% of the cohort scoring the lowest imitation). Non-parametric means tests were run and of 72 possible associations, only two were significant.



Together, results rejected the concept of an underlying “behavioural phenotype” dictating and explaining behavioural patterns. Behavioural domains seem to operate in isolation with no effect on each other. This finding can be interpreted through both a human behavioural ecology and evolutionary psychology paradigm. Human behavioural ecology champions both adaptability and flexibility. Throughout evolutionary history humans have been in competitive and cooperative social environments, and in this context it would have been advantageous to realise different context-dependent combinations: innovative and selfish, imitative and cooperative, introspective and innovative. With a history of evolution in highly dynamic environments, these combinations of behaviours would be constrained by overall associations.

Evolutionary psychology predicts that a “general intelligence” that would encompass the broad spectra of behaviours of introspection, imitation and cooperation would be maladaptive, as it would cause an individual to react too slowly to the demands of daily life. Instead modularisation of these three domains would allow for a fast and effective adaptive response. The demands of hyper-sociality would be met by the module for introspection; the need to socialise would be addressed by the module for imitation of language, learning new physical tasks would be applied by the module for imitation of gesture; and dealing with complex give-or-take scenarios would be dealt with by the module for cooperation.

Works Cited

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There are two players in the Ultimatum Game. **Player A**, and **Player B**.

You are **Player A**.

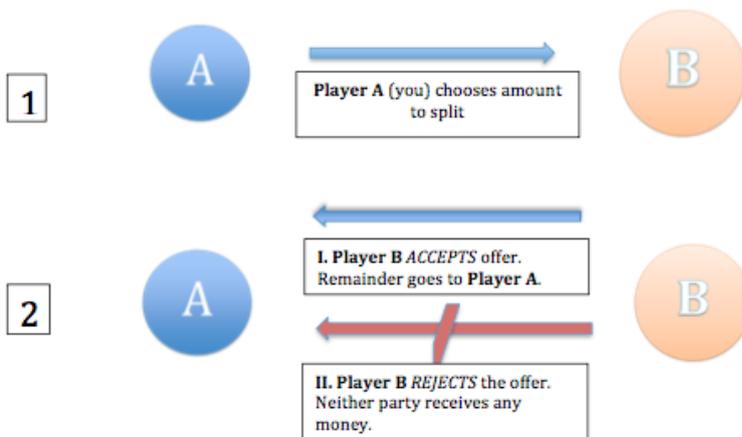
Player A is offered a gift of £5 and must offer any share of this money (between 1p and £5) to **Player B**.

Player B has two options:

- I. to **ACCEPT** the offer in which case **Player A** keeps the remainder of the £
- OR
- II. to **REJECT** the offer, in which case neither **Player A** or **Player B** receives any money.

Please write below how much money you want to allocate to **Player B**.

Allocate to **Player B**:



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Jargon and Convention: Anthropology's Real Dirty Words

David Whyte
PhD Anthropology

Anthropology has often had to deal with “dirty words” – words that become so over-used, or their meanings so contested that as anthropologists we may feel a slight cringe when putting one on paper. “Culture” itself is perhaps an extreme example from the past few decades of anthropological debate. The real dirty words, however, are the words that slip under the radar. Those that never become so sensational that they spark wide debate, but rather creep into disciplinary use through quietly developing conventions. I’m talking about jargon.

Anthropologists, like most academics, enjoy impressing their colleagues. In fact, in a scholarly atmosphere where funding is everything and competition is fierce, careers depend on making the right impression. What has developed is a style of writing – a type of in-group slang – that we use to talk to one another on paper to show that we are part of

the crew and that we mean business. Who amongst us has not returned from the field of late without finding a “multiplicity” of x, or that cultural oddity y is “shifting and complex”? The result of all this code, coupled with the related normative structure of theses and articles (Introduction, detached theoretical development, ethnography, conclusion) is that anthropological writing has largely become a very dull read for everyone except other anthropologists.

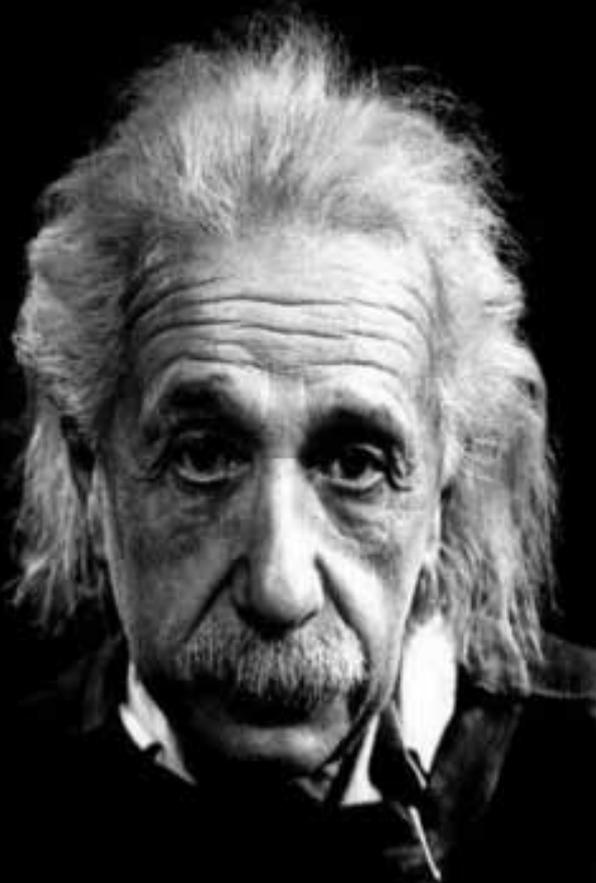
Anthropology is about making a difference through understanding; it is about communicating our common humanity. This is a valuable enterprise and should be shared with everybody, not just amongst specialists. In his book *Engaging Anthropology*, Thomas Hylland Erikson (2006) blames writing style as the reason that anthropology has “almost gone underground in the English-speaking world.” Convention has created unofficial rules relating

to language and structure that often render excellent anthropological work incomprehensible, or at least insufferable to the more general reader. How often do anthropologists win prizes for non-fiction? Can your brothers, sisters or friends name a great anthropologist-writer (yourself not included)? There are of course very well written, colourful ethnographies aimed at non-specialist audiences that still manage impressive theoretical analysis. Piers Vitebsky's *Reindeer People* stands out for me. The problem is that they are most often written by late-career academics as a form of insightful memoir (Geertz' *Available Light* and Stoller's *Power of the Between* are good examples). While these indeed deliver anthropology to a wider audience, we should not have to resort to writing about ourselves before we can make the lives of others seem interesting to non-anthropologists. Neither should graduate students or early career academics face fears over potential embarrassment or even career sabotage



"If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough."

Albert Einstein



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for not writing “academically.”

For me this means that the jargon has to go. Instead of “multiplicity,” there is “many-sided” or “numerous.” Is “heterogeneity” all that different from “difference” or “variation”? I am currently at the beginning of fieldwork for my PhD. Will I be penalised for ditching the jargon and writing in a less “scientific” style? Will my ethnography lose something like depth, or perhaps seriousness if I do this? Will it amount to dumbing down? Absolutely not. Experimenting with ethnographic presentation is in vogue right now, and writing style also needs to be part of this experimentation. For now at least, producing texts is a major part of what we do. Thought has to go in to whether conventional writing styles suit our own personalities, or the characters of our ethnographies. As

young anthropologists we can explicitly state these goals in defence of our experimentation and there is a growing number of would-be examiners out there who will nod appreciatively. In designing a Twenty-First Century anthropology, we should be aware that perhaps above any other discipline we are capable of poisoning ourselves between the academy and the “real” world. Providing deep analysis while never failing to write evocatively develops a voice capable of engaging specialist and non-specialist alike. This should be a key aim for us all going forward. Cleaning up our language would be a start!

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The War of Worlds: Self and Society in Social Movements

Vita Peacock
Postdoctoral Fellow

On Thursday, 4th June 2015 at the beginning of a mini-heatwave, anthropologists from institutions across Europe, America and The Middle East, descended upon the UCL Anthropology Department for a two-day conference entitled *The War of Worlds: Self and Society in Social Movements*.

With funding from the ESRC, this was a golden chance to bring a small number of the community of social movement scholars together, to layer our ethnographic discoveries over each other and see what shapes grew. However it was of course about more than this. The original CFP invited participants to “think globally about the way perceived threats to architectures of domination once personified by the “Other”, have turned to new threats posed by what Povinelli terms the “Otherwise”: alternative ways of being alive in the same territories which propose that another world is possible”. The emphasis was thus not on social movements as bounded zones of collective practice, but on the porousness between actors seeking political change and the normative/dominant forms of the societies they inhabit. As activists themselves increasingly repudiate utopian ideologies and identity politics, the CFP beckoned anthropologists to move with them, into the broader zone of culture itself.

This theme was taken up with alacrity. Bob Kurik opened the conference with a rich description of Germany’s “post-autonomen”: Black Bloc who switch



tactically between different social selves in order to productively disrupt a social system while simultaneously inhabiting it. This criss-crossing between the normative and the alternative was similarly apparent in Fiona Wright’s paper. Her work with Israeli anti-Zionists showed how they

sought to pierce the cosmopolitan “bubble” of Tel Aviv cafe culture, which blocked empathetic sentiments towards Palestinians. What was also noticeable were the cognitive dissonances inherent in these efforts. As one activist lamented to her, “I enjoy my cup of coffee and my

non-vegan cheese toast”. Wherever we went then, the theme took on a different hue; and as we travelled imaginatively between Brazil, Hong Kong, Russia, Taiwan, Slovenia, Germany, Israel, the US and the UK, the imbrications became more complex, but certain questions began to clarify themselves.

One heated discussion which emerged centred around the question of the self.

activist selfhood, we were already making a valuable and necessary contribution to the field. Yet some in the room felt caution was needed: reifying a notion of self can all too easily slip into a metaphysical individualism which forecloses a genuinely relational analysis. For Jarrett Zigon it then becomes “the politics of the a priori”, and we are back within a narrow set of Western concepts. Broadly speaking, we generated two different ways of

that are born in the drama of direct action. An alternative approach was to follow the ways activists themselves reject essentialised identities as a political choice. What Kurik called “versatile selves” were also manifest in the papers of Kroijer, Matthews, Potts and my own. For Alex Flynn, such choices were “deeply revolutionary” and worthy of further thought.

As the heatwave reached its zenith, and we collected downstairs to cool off at the end of the final day, talk naturally turned to reflexivity. For Rasza the fact that reflexivity had gone unfigured in the conference was “quite striking”. Yet for others like myself it had been there all along – our own political transformations, frustrations, and investments stalking those of our research participants like shadows. Just as among activists politics is becoming an increasingly cultural field, so too for us as anthropologists culture is becoming an increasingly political field, with all of us playing the game of representation. Like any game, it will have winners and losers in the years to come. Rasza summed the discussion up beautifully before we parted ways, “Our lives are just as much at stake in this”.



As Angelique Haugerud pointed out in her commentary, curiously absent from the latest Wiley-Blackwell “*Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*” are the words “selfhood”, “personhood” and “subject”. Indeed many participants felt that in even addressing the question of

stepping around this hermeneutic trap. The first was to consider the selves that are socially produced. For Maple Rasza this was the “collective subject” that arose from the collaborative management of resources. Meanwhile Stine Kroijer explored the idea of “collective bodies”



PhotoKathmandu 2015

Chris Pinney
Professor of Anthropology and Visual Culture

Kathmandu's first photography festival ran for one week in early November. The organisers, chief among whom is NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati, had started thinking about holding the event while attending the long-running Chobi Mela in Dhaka, Bangladesh in January of last year. Then came April's earthquake which destroyed significant buildings in the historical centres of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, and killed over 8,000 people largely in remote rural areas.

The organisers became involved in relief work in the aftermath of the catastrophe but did not revive the idea of the festival until June when serious preparations started. Then in October Nepalis elected the veteran Communist K.P. Sharma Oli as their new Prime-Minister, and a new Constitution, which the Madhesis in the Terai thought disadvantaged them, provoked protests on the Nepal-India border. India tacitly supported what most Nepalis see as a blockade whose most

visible result has been the severance of petrol and gas supplies and Nepal's reliance on China for (scarce) alternative supplies. Buses, trucks and taxis have to wait four days in line at petrol stations for strictly rationed fuel (15 litres in the case of taxis). LPG for domestic and commercial cooking is almost unobtainable.

I had been invited to run a four day (20 hours) intensive workshop on

“Writing Photography” as part of the festival and the organisers wrote in late October advising that things were “not easy” in Nepal and recommending that participants arrive with “a sense of adventure”. The poor, as Walter Benjamin noted, live in a continual state of emergency. As a comparatively wealthy traveller things were relatively straightforward: there were taxis, albeit charging five times the usual rates, upscale restaurants were sourcing LPG on the black market, but there was a huge bonus: the dearth of vehicles meant that the valley’s famous smog diminished, revealing rarely seen blue skies and glimpses of the Himalayas.

There were other pleasant surprises: although specific regions have been extremely badly hit by the earthquake, Nepal’s infrastructure is essentially intact, key temples and public structures have collapsed, but most remain intact. In Patan, the old ritual centre to the south of Kathmandu, and in Bhaktapur at the other end of the valley perhaps 20 per cent of

historically important buildings have been lost. In Kathmandu’s Durbar Square there is more damage.

The festival reflects a new presence in Nepal: significant numbers of Nepali intellectuals, often US trained, who want to live in Nepal and construct a new narrative. Given its accomplishment it seemed incredible that that this was the first festival of its kind in Nepal. The day before arriving in Kathmandu I had hung out at the opening of the Delhi Photo festival, and in 2013 I attended Dhaka’s Chobi Mela. Chobi Mela has been the pioneer, fusing a roster of renowned international practitioners with Bangladesh’s exceptional activist photographers (I got to meet Graciela Iturbide – who had worked with the legendary Mexican Surrealist Manuel Alvarez Bravo –and spend time with Taslima Akhter, who won a World Press Photo award for her Rana Plaza disaster work). Delhi Photo Festival was in its third iteration and is expanding and improving. But neither could match the

triumphal aspect of Photo Kathmandu: its engagement with a broader public. Almost all of the several dozen exhibitions and installations were in public spaces – usually open 24 hours, or otherwise completely accessible during daylight hours. Here the organisers were helped immeasurably by the sublime architecture and townscape of Patan with its dramatic Durbar Square with its walls, courtyards, alleyways, alcoves and step-wells. Here numerous installations displayed archival images, recent documentary work, art photography, and at night, slide shows and other events. Each installation or event had highly visible numbered marker and locations were easily established through the numerous large festival maps which littered the city. Artists’ talks and panel discussions were held in interior spaces but were free, openly accessible, and packed.

Among the photographic highlights of the Festival were Nepal Picture Library’s History of Nepali Studio Photography, Kishor Sharma’s documentation of the

Below: Photo by Trudi Binns





Rautes, the so-called “last nomads of Nepal”, a matrix of Instagram feeds from the day of the earthquake, Tuomo Manninen’s remarkable group portraits, a collective project by Class 8 students from Patan, and Kevin Bubriski’s haunting images made over several decades of a Nepal that seems in many ways to have been utterly transformed. How much has changed, at least in the valley, was brought home when we drove to Bhaktapur about 10 km away. When I

was last here in 1992, I cycled through rice fields and villages. Now Kathmandu is joined to Bhaktapur by a four lane highway completely surrounded on all sides by impenetrable thickets of hastily erected shops and houses. The valley is now one large urban sprawl.

My workshop, of course, allowed me to learn far more than my dozen students. Mainly Nepali, they included several journalists, NGO workers,

three PhD students (from Hyderabad, Heidelberg, and Cornell), and a CNRS researcher working on photography in Tamil Nadu. During the final day’s presentations by students of their own projects I heard a moving semi-fictional, semi-autobiographical narrative of a Newar girl’s lhi initiation, learned about photography and art practice in Bangladesh, got a good sense of how a Kathmandu journalist uses her camera to document her remote natal village (in what she termed the “Land of the World Food Programme), and heard a chilling, illustrated, account of narrowly escaping death in the Lantang disaster (where most of a village disappeared under a landslide) and the role of photography in its proposed new Memory Centre.

The best thing, from my perspective, is that following my panel discussion on Histories of Photography in South Asia, and discussion with NayanTara and Nepal’s leading photo-historian, Pratyoush Onta, it seems likely that I will be returning to work with them again. I can’t wait.

Below: Photo by Trudi Binns



New Appointments

Dr Antonia Walford *Teaching Fellow in Digital Anthropology*

Antonia's research examines the relationship between digital practices and emergent forms of engagement with nature and the environment. She also works on questions around anthropological practices of comparison. Her doctoral fieldwork was with climate scientists and technicians in the Brazilian Amazon, and traced out the complex relationship between practices of digitisation that transform the Amazon forest into scientific data, and the social, political and material effects of the circulation of this data within both the local and the wider scientific knowledge economies. More recently, she has been engaged in trans-disciplinary collaborative work with a colleague from

UCL Physics, looking at new relations between the natural and social sciences, and examining the role of Citizen Science in shifting norms of knowledge-production and political efficacy. She has also recently conducted a short period of fieldwork in the North of the Brazilian Amazon with indigenous groups involved in cultural revitalisation projects as part of her post-doctoral research, which is a comparative analysis of how nature and culture are re-figured in different contexts of environmental crisis and technological innovation.

Antonia was awarded her MA from the Museu Nacional, UFRJ, in Rio de Janeiro, and her PhD from the IT University of Copenhagen. After completing her PhD in

2013, she went on to take up a position as Research Associate at the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC), at the Open University. She has been affiliated to the Centre for Digital Anthropology at UCL since April 2015.



Dr Edward G J Stevenson *Teaching Fellow in Medical Anthropology*

Edward (a.k.a. Jed) studied Archaeology, Classics, and Classical Art at University College London as an undergraduate. After working on archaeological sites in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, he turned his attention to issues of health and disease in Africa, gaining a Master's in Global Health and PhD in Anthropology from Emory University in Atlanta. He held postdoctoral research positions in Public Health at Emory and Evolutionary Anthropology at UCL, and began his teaching career in Medical Anthropology at Durham

Jed's research centres on health and human development in sub-Saharan Africa. He is particularly interested in the health implications of mass schooling, forced migration, and food and water insecurity. Since 2007 he has conducted a longitudinal study of child development in Ethiopia, and in 2013 he carried out research in Congo Brazzaville as part of the UCL Hunter Gatherer Resilience Project. He is currently researching the impacts of hydroelectric dam and plantation development on the people of the Omo-Turkana basin in Ethiopia and Kenya.





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