

ANTHROPOLITAN

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 UCL



Welcome

The academic year 2016/17 is coming to an end, with staff and students now looking forward to researching, writing, travelling and relaxing over the summer, whilst our graduates move on to the next stage of their lives.

It's been a busy academic year. We have seen the culmination of some of our large ERC grants. For instance, Daniel Miller's social networking project 'Why We Post' involved a team of nine anthropologists each conducting 15 month ethnographies on the use and consequences of social media in China, the Syrian-Turkish border, Brazil, Chile, Trinidad, South India, Italy and the UK. We have now seen the publication of the first eight of 11 volumes of research as free Open Access volumes by UCL Press (183,000 downloads), the launch of the Why We Post free e-learning course (on FutureLearn in eight languages), and the launch of the project website (www.ucl.ac.uk/why-we-post) with over 100 films in eight languages.

Likewise coming to an end is Lucia Michelutti's ERC project 'Muscular Politics in South Asia', a collaborative study of the criminalisation of politics in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Concentrating on local 'muscular systems of political and economic governance' ('Mafia Raj'), the project provides the first ethnographic account of the relationship between formal politics, violence and extra-legal accumulation of wealth in the region. For full details, please see the project website: www.ucl.ac.uk/democratic-cultures.

Lucia's project has now become the basis for the development of a new MSc in Politics, Violence and Crime to be launched in the department in October 2018 (supporting the training of our Sigrid Rausing PGR Fellows). Also commencing in 2018 will be the MSc in Bio-Social Medical Anthropology (infectious diseases/epidemiology/genetics). More immediately, September 2017 sees the inception of the MA in Creative & Collaborative Enterprise (run in conjunction with UCL Enterprise), and the MA in Ethnographic and Documentary Film will introduce a new strand of VR, immersive and interactive digital media. The existing non-fiction cinema strand of the MA will form a two-year MFA from 2018.

We've had some excellent success in our Research Grant applications this year, with Daniel Miller being awarded his second ERC grant (€2.5 million); Hannah Knox being awarded

the British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship; Timothy Carroll receiving the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, and Miranda Sheild Johansson receiving the Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship.

We said farewell to Chris Russell, our PGR and Exams Officer, who departed after 5 years with us – we wish him well in his coming endeavours. Former PhD student Jill Reese is currently doing an outstanding job covering the role on a temporary basis.

With deep sadness, PhD student Gill Conquest passed away following a courageous battle with cancer at the young age of 33. She was a brilliantly gifted individual, loud, energetic and positive. We miss her deeply. We thank her supervisor Jerome Lewis for writing an obituary to Gill on page 46 of this issue.

In 2016-17 and 2017-18, close to 70 third-year undergraduates are experiencing a year's study abroad. Each year new placement opportunities have opened up, as Dr Ruth Mandel establishes new partnerships. As well as our new Erasmus partners in Amsterdam, Berlin and Vienna, we now have students studying in Asia and Oceania: Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan. In North America, our students study at University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, McGill, UCLA, Berkeley, Harvard, Universities of Santa Barbara and San Diego, University of Chicago, Northwestern, and more. Abroad, students are able to branch out, taking courses beyond anthropology, and many use the period to intern and carry out in-depth research for their final year dissertations.

Our 2nd year student Katja Holtz, who herself shortly heads off to Japan for her year abroad, took over the Anthropology Book Club, with titles such as *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *On the Run* by Alice Goffman, providing memorable discussions in the common room. Meanwhile Anthro Society has organised several events for the year, ending with the glorious annual AnthroSoc Ball.

For 2017-18, I will be taking a one year sabbatical to catch up on my writing. Dr Christophe Soligo will be stepping in as Head of Department. He will do a phenomenal job, but I wish him well all the same!

To all staff and students, have a wonderful summer break.

Professor Susanne Kuechler
Head of Department



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ANTHROPOLITAN ONLINE

The Spring Term of 2017 has seen the inception of a new and exciting initiative to revitalise the UCL Anthropology Department's online and social media presence. The central feature of this initiative is the formation of the Student Editor Committee (SEC), a group of twenty-two student representatives from all corners and levels of the department (undergraduate, masters, doctoral, and postdoctoral). The members are reporting on a range of exciting anthropology-related content from our own department, UCL, London, and the wider world – and will be given official accreditation from the department for their contributions.

The SEC initiative is linked to a revamp of our departmental magazine, Anthropolitan. We have developed a digital blog-based version of the magazine, to accompany the biannual print edition. The Anthropolitan Online blog now has its own dedicated webpage (link below). The SEC members will be publishing short and digestible articles and reports throughout the year, whilst utilising our social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WeChat, YouTube) to publicise their work. We already have nearly 800 followers on our Facebook page, and the number is growing. In the coming weeks, we will begin posting regular podcasts and vodcasts relating to our online content, as part of our multimedia strategy.

Projects currently underway include a report on the recent RAI ethnographic film festival; articles on the cargo shipping industry, sustainability in supermarkets, and K-pop culture; a review of the Anthropologies of Revolution project; interviews with teaching and research staff; and features on various objects in our Ethnographic Collection.

We ask for your support as the initiative continues to take shape over the coming months. If you would like to be interviewed by an SEC reporter about a forthcoming monograph, article, exhibition, or research project, please do get in touch. In many cases, the student contributors' blog-posts will constitute the first step in their publishing careers, whilst serving to promote our vibrant department and discipline to the wider world.

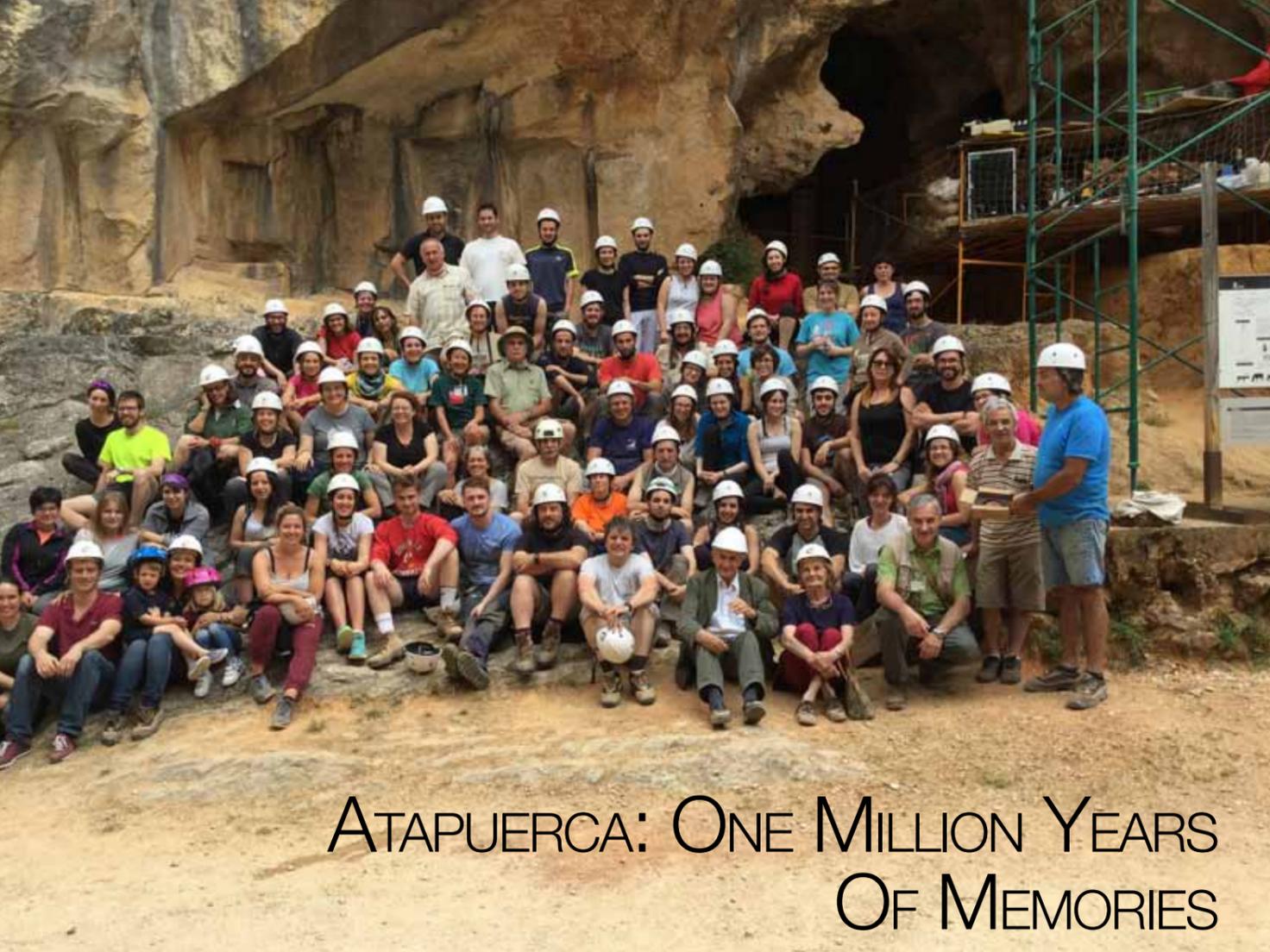
Kind regards,

Lewis Daly and Xinyuan Wang
SEC Staff Representatives

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Blog URL: <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/anthropolitan>





ATAPUERCA: ONE MILLION YEARS OF MEMORIES

*Hester Hanegraef
MSc Human Behaviour and Evolution*

*The Sierra de Atapuerca in northern Spain provides unique testimony to the origin and evolution of humankind and its ancestors from one million years ago to present times. The palaeontological and archaeological sites have been recognised by UNESCO for their outstanding universal value for reconstructing the physical nature of our ancestors and the way of life of the earliest human communities in Europe. From the first ever human in Europe (1.2 million years old), found at the Sima del Elefante site, to the earliest evidence of human cannibalism with the *H. antecessor* species at the Gran Dolina site (860,000 years old), and to the possibly first burial of our history in the Sima de los Huesos site (430,000 years old), Atapuerca has provided a unique trove of treasures to unveil the long path that made us human. Since 2016, and through the agreement between UCL Anthropology and the Fundación Atapuerca, students from UCL have the possibility to participate in the Atapuerca fieldwork,*

joining for two weeks the multi-disciplinary team of anthropologists, archaeologists and geologists that for more than 30 years now have been unearthing our past. Last summer, our first class of enthusiastic students took the new course (“Atapuerca and Human Evolution in Europe” – ANTH3035), and they described it as “[their] most memorable and enjoyable module at UCL so far” and a “unique experience as it offered a different way of learning to any other course at UCL”. As a teacher, this course was absolutely rewarding as it allowed me to teach in the most inspiring scenario and share first-hand the excitement of those haunted by the mysteries of our past: your genuine excitement brought me memories of my first time in the place that has changed my life, and I am grateful to you for that.

María Martín-Torres, Lecturer in Palaeoanthropology

At Atapuerca, the archaeological site best known for its abundant hominin remains and part of the UNESCO world heritage, researchers excavate layers of soil as old as 1.2 million years, and as ‘young’ as 3,000 years. It was also the setting for our two-week field experience in the Trincheras del Ferrocarril, which translates as the Railway Trench. The latter’s name derived from the train track that cut straight through the Atapuerca Mountains and thus exposed three infilled caves: Gran Dolina, Galería, and Sima del Elefante. Once occupied by animals and our human ancestors, the caves are buzzing with eager researchers and eight students from UCL. I got assigned to the TD4 level at Gran Dolina, a plot of approximately 20 squared metres, dated to more than 900,000 years old – at that time, the bear species *Ursus dolinensis* used this cave for hibernation, and a hole in the roof of the cavity acted as a natural trap for ungulates, whose meat also attracted predators and humans to the cave. One silex flake had already been found, and the mandible of a jaguar and a deer antler were also unearthed this year. Knowing that such amazing fossils came out of the ground of TD4, I started on my 1x1 metre section full of excitement, armed with a screw driver, hammer, and brush.

On the second day, I slowly uncovered the rib of an ungulate. It was broken in two pieces, crushed by a rock. Yet, I was overwhelmed with joy. My trip to Atapuerca was a success; I had found something. By the end, I had actually dug up two more ribs, a bear’s third molar, the long bone of a yet unidentified animal, and a large fragment of a pelvis. I also found many tortoiseshells and numerous unidentifiable bone fragments. Others excavated vertebrae the size of my hand, and even a sabre tooth was found. More stone tools also came out of the ground at the TD10 level of Gran Dolina – I do not have to tell you that no one gets disappointed at Atapuerca. I was even able to examine rodent teeth marks on a bone, and inspect crushing fractures caused by the bears. We got the opportunity to practise knapping at the archaeological museum: although our guide made it look so easy to get that perfect flint or hand axe, I just could not get that rock to break. Others got a better hang of it and ended up with something that at least remotely looked like a useable

stone tool. Even more impressive was the human-made cut mark we got to inspect at the lab, where the finds of each day are checked, washed, and labelled: it really made me aware that Atapuerca is a place where our human ancestors roamed and lived, and that we were actually digging in the soil they used to walk on.

However, the big surprise of our field trip came on one of the last days. I will always remember that July 22nd when a new site, Cueva del Fantasma, was being prepared for excavation and a fragment of a skull was found that morning in the rubble. Everyone got really excited. Could it be human? Could it be that Atapuerca had once again amazed us all? The largest collection of fossils in one single place, the oldest hominin in Europe, evidence of prolonged cannibalism, and the remnants of tooth picking marks had already been

found there. By the time of the 11 o’clock break – filled with baguettes, jamón, chorizo, wine, beers, and other local specialties – everyone was talking about it. You could feel and hear the excitement in their voices. Even in my limited Spanish, I could understand the thrill. One look at Jordi, the coordinator of the TD4 excavation, and I knew. I could feel every nerve in my body tense up. It can’t be... A human parietal was found! Cheers could be heard all over the place when the bone was brought back for all of us to see. A smile stuck on my face for the rest of that day. This was fantastic news and we got to be part of that historical moment. There is no place in the world like Atapuerca!





Brexit: A News Story in Reverse

Dave Cook
MSc Digital Anthropology

It's 9am on the 24th June 2016. David Cameron has just resigned and I'm in a viewing facility with a one-way mirror in central London. I'm conducting research for a national broadcaster about media consumption habits surrounding the EU referendum vote. I'm with my first participant when he watches Cameron resign. 'Jesus', he says, and then he asks what Article 50 is. He does a web search and then starts researching all manner of things he hasn't previously thought to look at.

It's a pattern that repeats. I see people conducting research for the first time now the result is in. On the following Monday I head west to get a rural perspective. I interview people with all manner of political views but the research behaviour is the same here. I meet a man whose family are Welsh farmers and heavily reliant on EU subsidies. They voted leave;

the family is now very worried. Now he's researching this issue.

This pattern repeats so often that my co-researcher and I start referring to Brexit as an election in reverse. I've researched several elections over the years and normally interest subsides quite quickly. But with this referendum the result feels like the beginning of the real campaign.

If people were not researching before the result, what were they doing? And standing back and looking at this research from the viewpoint of an anthropologist, rather than as a commercial researcher, what can be learned?

Luckily, we tracked media usage in the week running up to the result. And whilst most people we tracked were consuming more news channels and platforms, they

were almost predominantly focused on headlines and top stories.

In short, they were consuming more news, but in the run up period we tracked, displayed hardly any 'deep dive research' behaviour. This is why we saw such a dramatic behaviour change.

Most were unfamiliar with the term Article 50 at the beginning of the day. As one explained, "I didn't know about Article 50. Questions are being answered now that we didn't know the answers to yesterday. How we voted without that information I don't know. A hell of a lot of people banged a drum and waved a flag. Some of this information would have been useful before..."

This describes a triangle of blame comprising voters, the media, and politicians. And the practices of all these

groups would be interesting to study through the anthropological lenses of media and mediation, politics and power, or digital platforms and media consumption practices.

Going back to the data some months later, one aspect is clearer than it was at the time. Before the vote, many had become bored by the debate and the aftershock of an unexpected result (for both sides) simply made the subject more interesting. Alluding to this antipathy one woman commented, "there was a lot of information available but were people reading it? Perhaps there was too much information put in front of people?"

Many conclusions could be drawn from this reluctance to research, but particularly fascinating is the notion that repetitive news habits are hard to break. The mediating power of online news formats and the powerful agency of top stories is an area ripe for anthropological enquiry. And as an anthropologist, it was valuable interacting with people holding opposing opinions. There has been much talk of echo chambers, and people only knowing people with similar views. So it was equally challenging and insightful to leave my staunch 'remainer' views outside the interview room and get other people's perspectives.

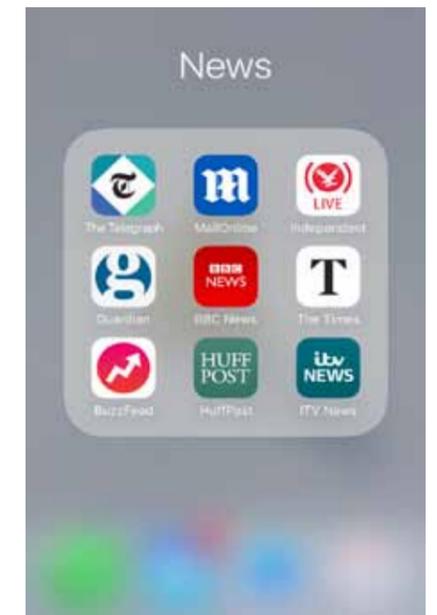
Soon after Brexit, I uncovered another perspective unprompted and unexpectedly. I was conducting my dissertation fieldwork at a co-working

space in south Thailand. My informants were 'digital nomads' living and working beyond the boundaries of their home nations. For most, an antipathy towards news media went hand in hand with their resistance to nationhood. One informant, Lisa from Germany, made a direct critique of the repetitive and recursive agency of online news and headlines. "I've been on a self-imposed news diet since I've been travelling. News websites repeat the same silly issues, going hysterically over the same stuff again and again"

Lisa's comment prompted me to be reflexive about my own news habits. Waiting for a bus, I've refreshed news apps, to serve fresh top stories, more times than I care to admit. It's a practice that Alan de Botton homes in on when he says "we put our lives on hold in the expectation of receiving yet another dose of critical information about all the most significant achievements, catastrophes, ... to have befallen mankind anywhere around the planet since we last had a look" (De Botton 2014).

Perhaps I'm the same as the participants interviewed on results day. We have an incredible research tool at our fingertips, but our limbic brains are still highly susceptible to the gamification of news. Perhaps I will think twice about judging Candy Crush players as I refresh my news app to get the next top story.

Of course there's no need to absolve the politicians or media of any shortcomings



in presenting the arguments and facts, but we as anthropologists should be equally curious about online news consumption and how different platforms and formats influence what is consumed and absorbed.

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Welcome Strangers Finding a Shared Humanity in the Aftermaths of a Refugee-crisis

Kim van Lookeren Campagne
MSc Social and Cultural Anthropology 2015-16

In the summer of 2015, Austria, like other European countries, was faced with substantial migration issues. Accounts of refugees, war, border crossings and terrorism were present every day in the news and other media. Along with most of the world, I saw pictures of refugee camps, Islamic extremists and drowned children, but also pictures of people waiting at train stations or sea-shores to receive incoming asylum seekers. The stories emphasize the extreme sides of the situation and often report in terms of a great "wave" of migrants (Marfleet 2006), flooding the countries of Western Europe. The prevailing imagery is of a dehumanised mass and a looming dark force. However scared or helpful receiving countries want to be, mainstream discourse continues to make the flow of refugees seem intimidating and overwhelming. Combined with recent terrorist attacks and sexual harassment incidents (Cologne, Germany, New Year's Eve 2015-2016) in Europe, this has led to a rise in xenophobia and Islamophobia.

My aunt, who has been living in Vienna, hosted a Syrian family in her flat for several months, and her stories made me curious to find out more about the interactions between local hosts and incoming refugees. I conducted fieldwork for my dissertation in the spring of 2016, which was an interesting time in Austria as people were anxiously awaiting Election Day on May 22nd. It was a stage of polarisation and transition in the country. Mr. Van Der Bellen Wahlen, a non-partisan, mainly backed by the Green Party, and Mr. Norbert Hofer, head of the FPÖ, a far right leader, were in the final struggle for the presidency. Posters were visible everywhere in Vienna and according to multiple informants, Austria

was "polarized," divided between the left and right, being for or against migration. I did my research on the Viennese population that is against Mr Hofer and welcoming towards asylum seekers. A situation that involves a humanitarian crisis, racism and xenophobia is often portrayed as hopeless and conflict-inducing, but it is important to remember that there are other aspects to consider which can help us identify possible solutions.

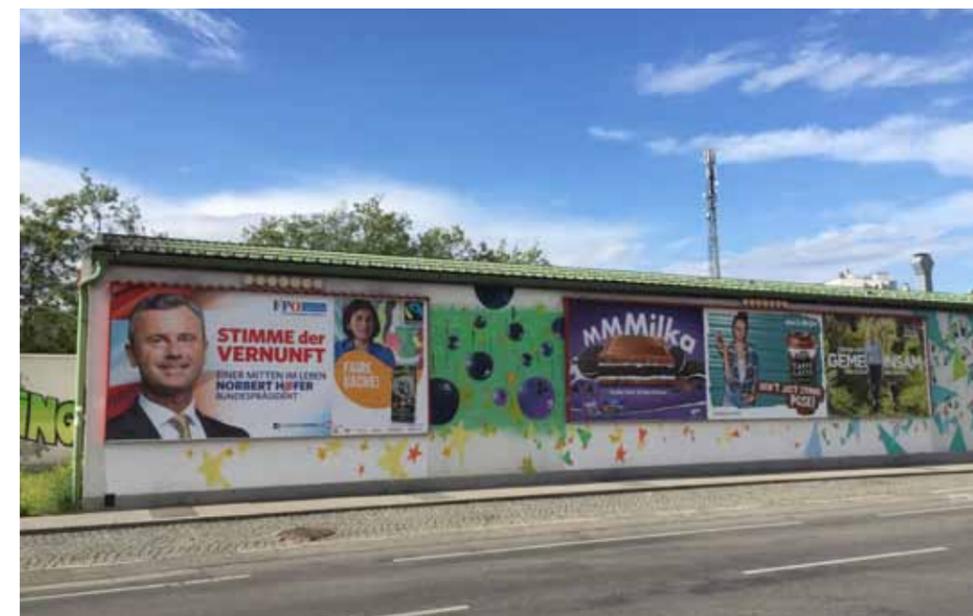
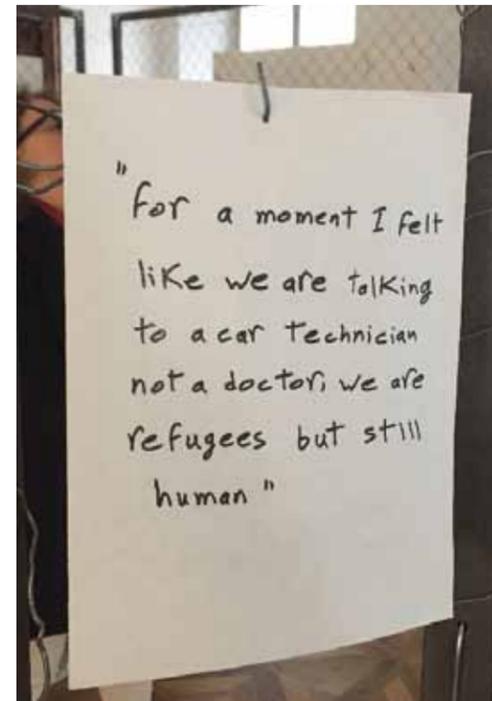
I studied the manner in which locals volunteer and host in order to support an overwhelmed state, blurring the line between the state and private sphere. At the same time, I was surprised to find that many volunteers had an international background and/or experience of living abroad. The integration taking place could not be understood as a shift from outsiders to insiders as my informants often did not consider themselves insiders either. Instead there is a transnational community in Vienna who emphasize practicality and understanding the "Austrian system" (e.g. knowing how to recycle, to speak the language, etc.), instead of necessarily becoming an insider or Austrian citizen – adopting "Austrian culture".

To provide a safe haven, the Viennese residents I talked to develop a cosmopolitanism that emphasizes acceptance of difference that avoids Othering, exoticizing or passing judgment on experiences that one cannot fully understand. The emergence of cosmopolitanism among my informants brought to light a new side of integration through everyday interactions that encourage human beings to live together regardless of the obstacles. These

volunteers break down their assumptions of asylum seekers, no longer viewing them solely as threats or victims, and, at the same time, dealing with opposing opinions regarding behaviour and/or gender roles. Public opinion often assumes that Arabs and/or Muslims in particular have difficulty integrating into Europe and there is much debate on what steps are needed for people to live together. I argue that coexistence with difference is possible, but in the context of my fieldwork this meant that, during initial interactions, acceptance sometimes had to come before understanding.

One of my informants, Maria, who hosted a Kurdish refugee from Turkey, was confronted with the possibility that her flatmate had been part of what a news article labelled a "terrorist" group. Maria expressed how the media has a huge influence on how we understand the world, and we should not blindly

trust whatever is posted in the news and on the internet. She said, "it was quite confusing for us to deal with this information. ...but... we were like 'ok, we love her, we want to help her. She's here because... she's starting a new life so why shouldn't we help her?' And, I trust her. I mean, she's Kurdish and we know it's a big, big complex thing. Even if she was a terrorist we would need to understand a lot [more] to judge her. So, she's not a terrorist, but even if she was a terrorist I would not just tell her to go because I would prefer to get to know all about the situation."



I expand on Werbner (2008) by building on her idea of cosmopolitanism, which she defines as "reaching out across cultural differences through dialogue, aesthetic enjoyment, and respect; of living together with difference. It is also about the cosmopolitan right to abode and hospitality in strange lands and, alongside that, the urgent need to devise ways of living together in peace in the international community" (2008:2). However, there are Euro-centric aspects of her idea of the cosmopolitan community/society emphasising curiosity, sharing art and intellectual traditions. Although these tools may be useful in certain contexts, they did not seem to be necessary in the context of my field site. Hosts were often surprised and confused at the refugees' lack of interest in museums and Austrian culture, but this did not mean the refugees did not respect their host and their habits.

Rather, a feeling of a shared humanity flourishes through the everyday during which hosts and refugees learn about each other's humanity and agency, similarity and difference. My informants expressed that the differences they noticed did not always need to be overcome. Sometimes it was just a question of accepting a difference knowing that certain life experiences could not be judged or completely understood.

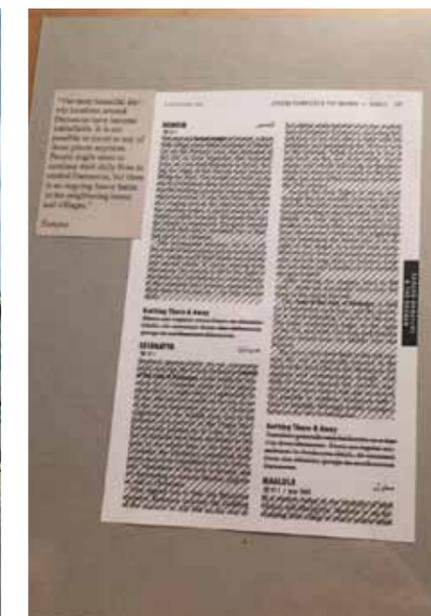
By contrast, at a classical concert, the Syrian family staying with my aunt were introduced to an Austrian woman who

refused to shake hands with the Syrian wife/mother because she was wearing a headscarf. For there to be immediate mutual respect between these two women, it required acceptance of values and habits they did not understand about each other. For the Syrian woman it is something unhygienic to shake hands, but she was willing to do it anyway – accepting the Austrian greeting. The local woman should have responded in kind by accepting the 'difficult' difference, but didn't.

The cosmopolitanism I observed in Vienna is not only relevant in the discussion of migration and transnational identities, but for anthropology in general. We are in a continuous struggle to keep questioning previous conclusions and ideas. I believe that this cosmopolitanism can be a tool to further move away from Eurocentrism and Othering.

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Far left: On the left side is an advertisement for Mr Hofer with a visible Austrian flag in the background, and on the far right is a poster for Mr Van Der Bellen, depicting him walking his dog in a field.

Left: Art piece in exhibit 'When Home Won't Let You Stay,' a page from a travel guide book on which everything destroyed in Syria is crossed out – the reality of today written in the text box beside the page.

“We’ve become ordained for our mothers”: temporary *samaneri* ordination in Thailand

Kakanang Yavaprabhas
PhD Anthropology

In the mind of many people, Buddhism and its ordination may tend to conjure an image of an individual human renouncing the world and meditating in solitude, separating from society and worldly matters. The temporary *samaneri* (novice female monks) ordination I’ve witnessed in Thailand, however, presents a sharp contrast to this image.

It was the King’s Birthday and a national Father’s Day (5th December) in 2013. I was at a monastery, situated in a city not so far away from Bangkok. This monastery is special in a way that its abbess, Bhikkhuni Dhammanandha, is the first Theravada *bhikkhuni* (female monk) in Thailand and is also one of a few monasteries that provides the temporary *samaneri* ordination for women. The ordination took place on that day and its ceremony before the official ordination ritual was highly social. So many

people came to the monastery on that day; they were families, relatives and/or friends of the women who were going to be ordained as *samaneri*.

After the abbess and other *bhikkhuni* cut some of the hair for the candidates, who sat on prepared spaces in their white clothes, the candidates’ families and friends eagerly came to take part in cutting the hair. I was told that it was as meritorious as the ordination ceremony itself.

There was then a procession of the candidates whose heads were already shaved and covered in white cloths to the *vihara* where the ordination ritual would take place. The candidates’ families and friends also joined in the procession with bowls and the yellow robes which they would offer to the candidates, in



and how merit is widely regarded as being able to be transferred to others. Many of the women said that they used to wish to be born as men in their next lives (according to the concept of reincarnation) so that they could become ordained. The temporary ordination as *samaneri* provided by the monastery means they do not have to wait until their next lives anymore.

There is a widespread notion in Thai society that sons and daughters owe ‘debts’ to parents who give them lives and raise them. Traditionally temporary ordination (in the yellow robes) is a way to ‘pay gratitude’ religiously to parents, especially mothers,



and only sons could do it. This temporary *samaneri* ordination has only been available to Thai women since 2009 and only since then that women as daughters can also ‘pay gratitude’ to parents religiously through the ordination. The monastery holds the ordination twice a year and other monasteries with the *bhikkhuni* also hold it from time to time.

This availability of the temporary *samaneri* ordination to Thai women is a part of what happens after Chatsumarn Kabilsingh received her *samaneri* ordination from Sri Lanka in 2001 and became Bhikkhuni Dhammanandha in 2003. The *bhikkhuni* ordination has been an ongoing controversial issue since her ordination and currently the Thai *bhikkhuni*’s status and identity still have not been recognized by the Thai Sangha, the utmost authoritative Buddhist institution, and the state. Nevertheless, there are around 100 *bhikkhuni* (and novice ones) residing in various monasteries across the country in every region. Many of these monasteries provide the aforementioned temporary *samaneri* ordination.

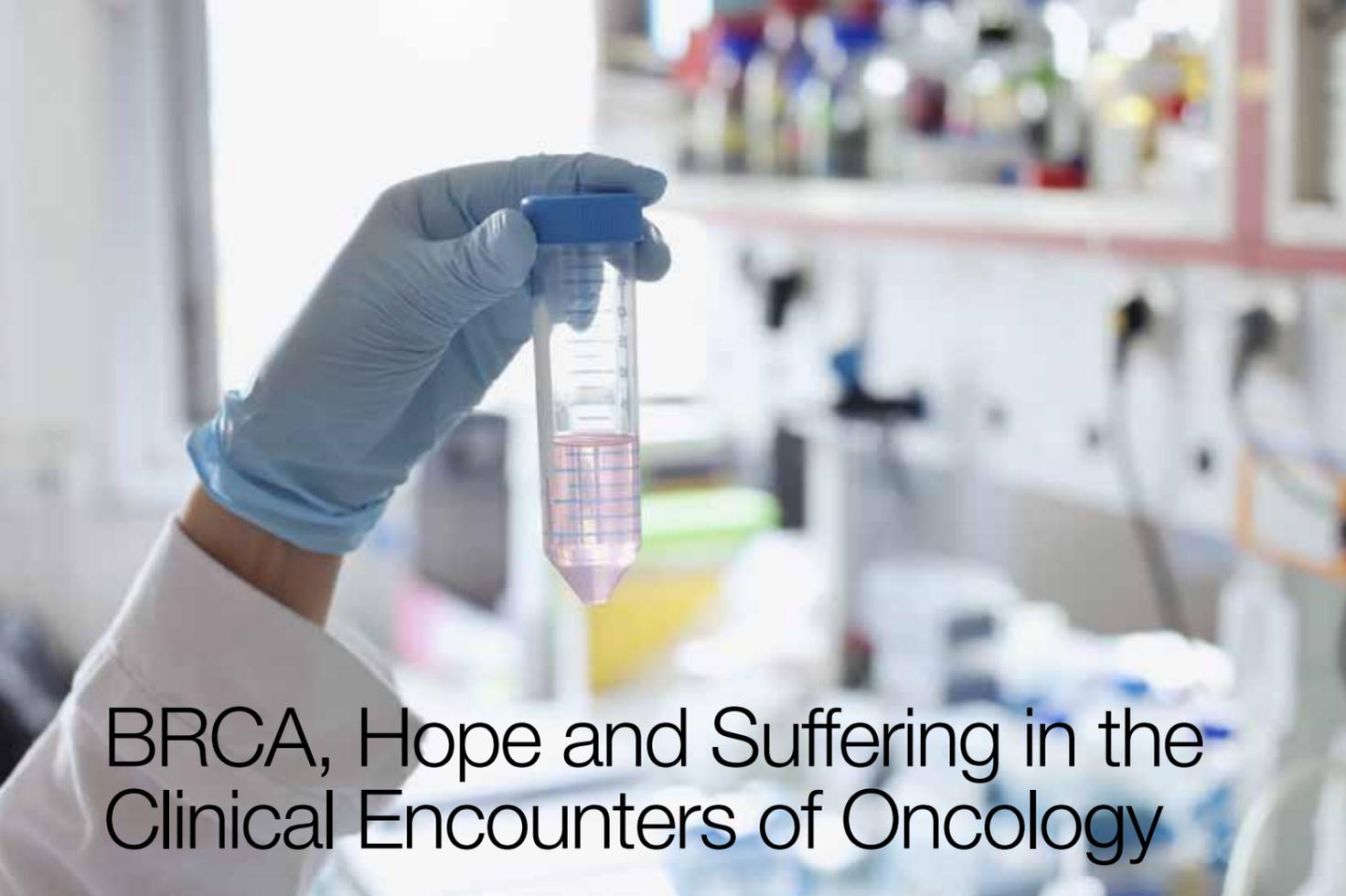
In the ordination ceremony, it was clear how meaningful it is for the women who have become temporarily ordained and their loved ones. Many of them shed tears. Samaneri Dhara, who is in her thirties, told me that “I have succeeded a lot in life. I have a good job. I earn a lot of money. I have been giving my parents a lot of things. Yet I have never seen their tears of joy until that ordination day”.

their hands. They all circled clockwise around the *vihara* three times before the candidates received the robes offered to them mostly by their parents. The candidates then lined up to walk inside the *vihara* and threw some small things which are deemed auspicious to the crowd. It was a happy scene.

After the candidates received the ordination and became *samaneri*, clad in the yellow robes, they received another offering from their families: the bowls. After that they walked in line and received more offerings from their families and friends who put them in their bowls. We can clearly see how the ordination ceremony here is a highly social and celebrated event.

The main motivation for most women who came to be temporarily ordained is also not as much about individual religious self-cultivation as about their families. (They, of course, are also keen to practice themselves religiously and some even said it is their main motivation). Interestingly ordination for parents, especially mothers, is undeniably the most oft-cited reason for these women of why they have decided to become temporarily ordained. This relates closely to a local shared concept of merit





BRCA, Hope and Suffering in the Clinical Encounters of Oncology

Clara Therond
MSc Medical Anthropology 2014-16

Over six weeks during the summer of 2016, I conducted an ethnographic project in the gynae-oncology team of a large London hospital, treating patients with advanced ovarian cancer. My primary research objective was to examine the social and cultural impact of mainstream genetic testing (MGT) of the BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 genes in the clinical encounters of patients diagnosed with epithelial ovarian cancer (EOC). This is the most common type of ovarian cancer and is associated with BRCA mutations.

Since the discovery of the BRCA 1 and BRCA 2 cancer susceptibility genes in the mid 1990s, BRCA genetic testing had only been offered in the traditional genetics clinics to patients who had suffered from ovarian and or breast cancer, and or have a family history of these cancers. However, recent studies demonstrated that over forty per cent of ovarian cancer patients who have been identified as being carriers of a BRCA

1/2 mutation have no significant family history of the disease. The emergence of this new knowledge, coupled with advancements in ovarian cancer research and a reduction in genetic sequencing costs, has led to calls for BRCA MGT to be introduced into routine treatment pathways of patients with advanced ovarian cancer.

Thus, this was an exciting and innovative moment to conduct fieldwork in the practice of oncology, as the BRCA MGT programme signalled a key turning point in NHS clinical cancer care.

The aim and indeed benefits of the BRCA MGT are twofold. First, by identifying patients who carried either of the mutations, affected family members can be identified and preventative measures can be taken to avoid future cancers. Secondly, and most importantly for patients already diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer, oncologists could tailor

treatment decisions according to their patients BRCA 1/2 status.

During my fieldwork I conducted participant observation of the clinical encounters between patient and oncologist and interviewed the oncologists who ran the clinic. My aim was to explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of the oncologists, hoping to capture the multiple dynamics unfolding in the clinical narrative surrounding the BRCA identity and its associated technology.

Accordingly, my chief questions were: How do oncologists conceptualize, incorporate and adopt this novel technology into their clinical interactions? How does BRCA technology and identity intersect with the themes of suffering and hope? Furthermore, and drawing from the extensive research in the field of BRCA breast cancer genetics and activism, I was keen to explore if, or

indeed understand how, the “iconic figure of the female BRCA carrier” translates into the clinical setting of patients battling against advanced ovarian cancer (Gibbon 2008:21)?

Listening to the narratives and impact of coping with both the disease and chemotherapeutic treatments was moving. As one oncologist explained to me, most patients in the clinic would die within the next five years. Indeed, many patients I observed had suffered multiple relapses, had undergone rigorous courses of chemotherapy and had often developed some drug resistant disease.

This is the unpredictable and gritty reality of living with such an insidious disease. The trauma and uncertainty which engulfed most BRCA positive patients’ lives appears to render the “iconic figure of the female BRCA carrier” silent or rather squeezed out by the deep social suffering and bodily immediacy of living with this deadly disease (Gibbon 2008:21).

The narrative of Lucy, a BRCA 2 positive woman in her early fifties, captured the suffering endured as she described her struggle to return to a sense of normality

whilst fearing her cancer may return at any moment:

“Initially I was fine... I was all bubbly and I wanted to get back to work and find myself. But I haven’t. I just take one day at a time. I am concerned... ‘any’ small thing, I am worried.”

“That’s the thing you’re thinking, is it back? What’s going on? Do I have to go through all that again?”

But yet, amidst this suffering emerged a striking and somewhat paradoxical narrative of hope for ovarian cancer patients who carried a BRCA 1/2 mutation.

Following the recent successes of BRCA translational research, and the subsequent licensing, in 2015, of Olaparib, the first personalised anti-cancer drug for BRCA positive advanced ovarian cancer patients, the clinical narrative was filled with a novel discourse of hope. This re-ignited the “medical imaginary” – a term coined by DelVecchio Good to describe the affective and imaginative dimensions of new medical technologies upon patients and clinicians – in an otherwise treacherous and uncertain



journey of advanced ovarian cancer (DelVecchio-Good 2001).

As one oncologist enthusiastically explained to me, some BRCA positive patients taking Olaparib are now living in remission for as long as seven years, which is unprecedented. At other times, anticipation and hope, for those patients who carried a “mutational load”, was kindled in and hinged upon the first long awaited and highly anticipated immunotherapy trial. Hence, amid much suffering and despair, hope is becoming concretized in a more intimate and choreographed way around a patient’s molecular make-up.

Moreover, I suggest that as the BRCA identity and technology embeds within this landscape, the socio-cultural and indeed clinical meaning of the BRCA genes facilitates a novel kind of BRCA biological citizen to emerge within an increasingly stratified field of biomedicine, to the extent that BRCA positive patients, and their genomic material, are playing an increasingly pivotal role in the “political economy of hope” that drives the culture of oncology.

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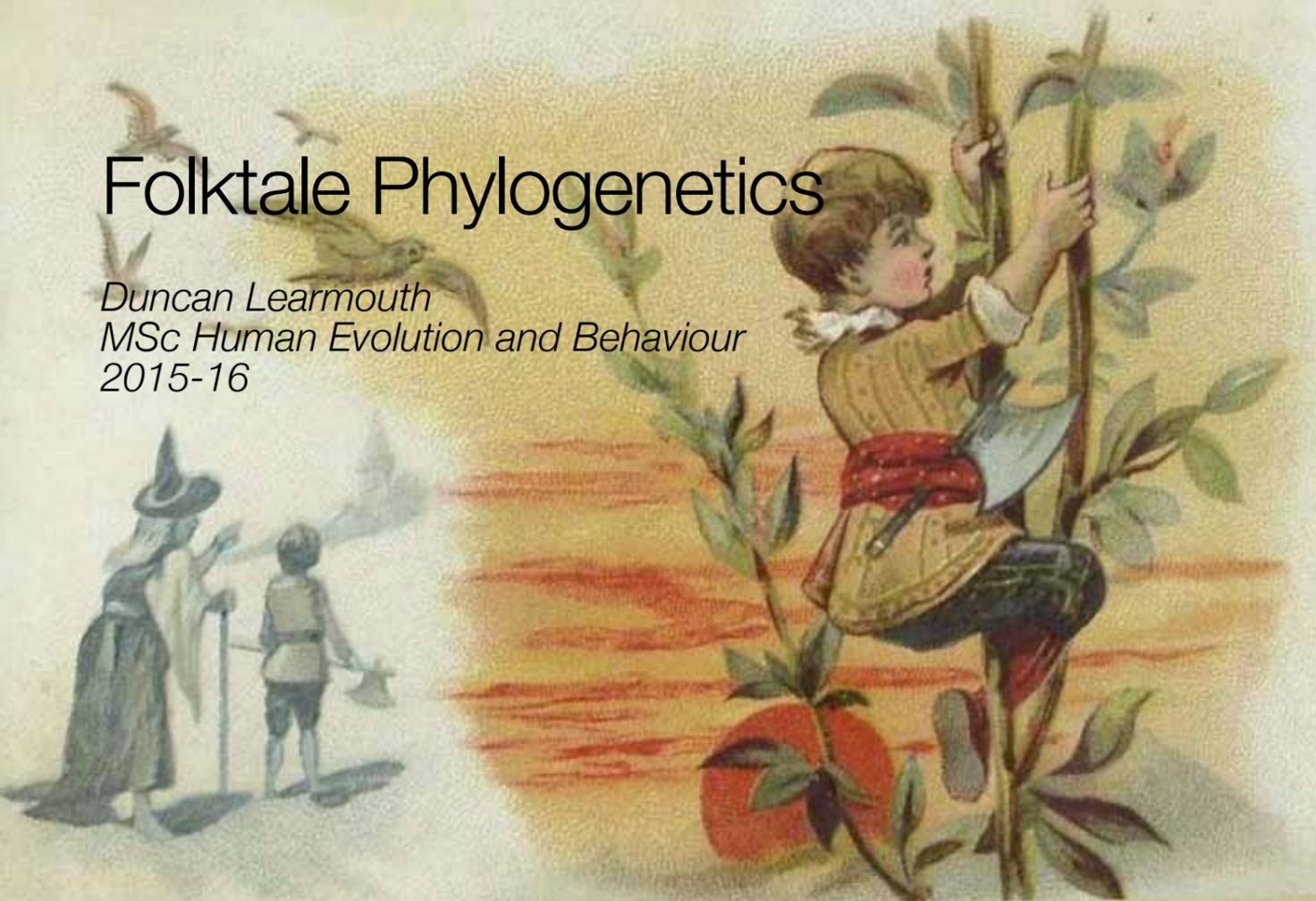
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Folktale Phylogenetics

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2015-16



How can analysis of folk tales like The Little Mermaid and Jack and the Beanstalk help us understand the evolution of human culture? Folktales tell us about the way people think, what is important to them and how they relate to the wider world. By studying their variation over time we can infer changes in beliefs, values and social structure that, when combined with other evidence, help us reconstruct our evolutionary past.

Storytelling is present in all human societies. Representing events verbally allows 'safe' rehearsal of actions in problem-solving, dealing with cheaters and understanding the behaviour of others. The folktale is a particular type of story that simulates unnatural events giving it scope to deal with a wider range of topics such as supernatural beings, magic, cruelty and death all of which are particularly stimulating to the human imagination. Folktales are rooted in 'action' with protagonists often transforming the world in a way that seems to appeal to human disposition. This can make them a powerful tool of shamans, chiefs and kings who

have sought to manipulate and control behaviour.

Whilst folktale research has a long literary tradition, analysis using scientific methods is a relatively new development. The catalyst has been availability of phylogenetic methods, language family trees and 'digitised' folklore datasets. Phylogenetics was first developed to analyse biological evolutionary trees and subsequently applied to other areas that show patterns of inheritance such as language. Mapping cultural traits, such as folktales, onto language trees informs us about their descent pattern. It also enables advanced Bayesian methods to be used, for example, to estimate ancestral state probabilities. These involve sampling a very large range of scenarios in order to choose the most likely possibility. Google's AlphaGo employed Bayesian algorithms to beat Go master Lee Se-dol last year.

Anthropologist Jamshid Tehrani, a UCL alumnus (Human Evolution and Behaviour MSc and PhD), and literary historian Sara Graca da Silva used

Bayesian phylogenetics to analyse the presence or absence of 275 'tales of magic' in 50 Indo-European speaking populations. Four tales are reconstructed as having a deep ancestry with their wide representation (from India to Ireland), leading to a high statistical likelihood that they were present at the Proto-Indo-European root of the language tree. They include 'The Animal Bride' in which an animal takes the form of a woman whom a man marries. He later disappoints her and she departs back to the animal realm with their children. The Little Mermaid is a variant of this tale. Animal fables have a deep cultural history and are mentioned in some of the earliest written records, including Aesop's fables around 600 BC. The presence of this tale at the root of the language tree about 5,000 BC suggests a deep oral ancestry predating the earliest discovery of writing some 2,000 years later. The anthropomorphism in the tale creates an imaginative and therefore memorable narrative to illustrate the difficulties and risks of marriage. There is a strong animist connection to traditional religions. Lévi-Strauss argued that the role of myth is to make human

meaning possible by applying illusion to resolve 'irreconcilable opposites', such as that between man and animal. Quoting a Carrier Indian in *The Savage Mind*: 'we know what the animals do because long ago men married them and acquired this knowledge from their animal wives'.

Another tale with deep ancestry, 'The Boy Steals Ogre's Treasure', features an

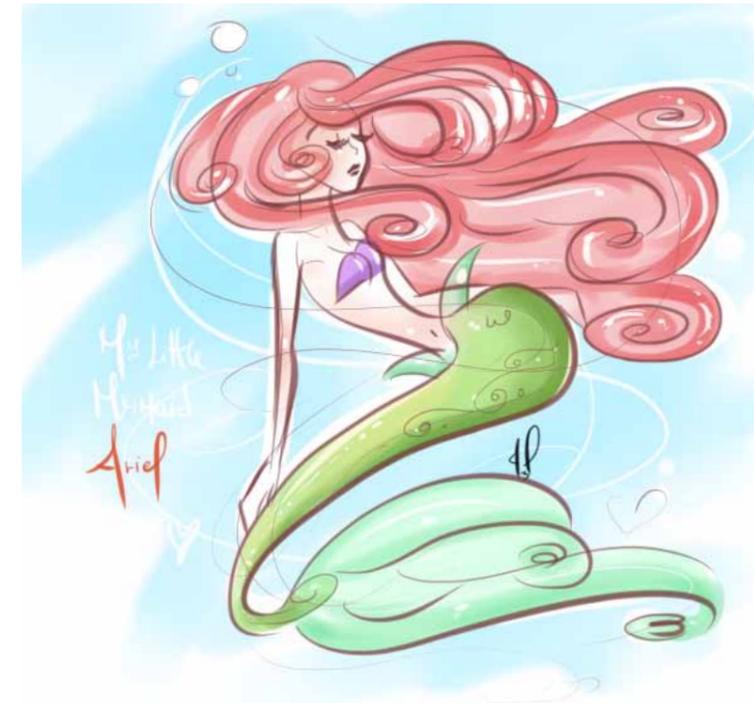
ogre who can 'smell' humans – a signal to the listener of its bestial nature and possibly alluding to fears of cannibalism. A later variant of the tale is 'Jack and the Beanstalk', in which an 'upper world' is introduced – probably borrowed from another tale 'The Beanstalk to Heaven' – providing us with an intriguing signal of religious change during European history.

'The Smith and the Devil' had a high likelihood of being present at the root of the language tree. A blacksmith exchanges his soul in return for supernatural powers, which he then uses to weld the devil to a tree, thus reneging on the bargain. The earliest archaeological evidence for metal smithing is commonly referenced to cultures such as the Vinča (Serbia) from about 5,500 BC. The presence of 'Smith' at the Indo-European root implies that the language origin must have been after this date. The finding conflicts with the theory relating it to the spread of agriculture from Anatolia 8,000-9,000 years ago and suggests other ideas, such as the link to later expansion of pastoralists from north of the Caspian Sea, may merit consideration.

Working in conjunction with literary scholars, anthropologists are applying the latest phylogenetic methods to unlock secrets of the ancient folktale and uncover new insights into human cultural evolution.

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“WHEN THE COFFEE BEANS STOPPED”: THE MATERIAL BASIS OF DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION

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When I introduced myself to the dozen and, at the time, enthusiastic members of *Fountainhead* – a newly opened startup incubator in central London – I did so with confidence in my own intent. Admittedly, I assumed this would simply unfold together with that of *Fountainhead*'s managers: they would assist the collective growth of new-born startups; I would assist in a research project on the development of entrepreneurs' social networks.

The incubator (from Lat. *in-cubare*, or “brood”) had been designed specifically for the creative industries. A spacious and open-planned space with concrete floors and cubic-shaped plugs hanging from the ceiling accommodated manufacturing activities while sparing the ground a sea of cables. Clustered desktops with colourful chairs flowed into a kitchen area next to a series of seminar rooms for more private interactions.

On my first visit to the place, Ben – one of the assistant managers – enthusiastically spelled *Fountainhead*'s potential. A personal tutoring programme and a series of workshops were apparently being devised to assist entrepreneurs in the intricacies of their trade. Moreover, unlike shared office spaces, where strangers simply come and go, *Fountainhead* promised longitudinally to foster the communal exchange of ideas and skills among a selected cohort. If the built

environment conducts particular social relations, it does not determine their taking place. Similarly, the objectification of thought is not simply an intentional act.

That *Fountainhead* incubated to “fountainheaders” became increasingly clearer and less surprising as I carried on with my interviews and observations. There never was an ice-breaking event. No introduction of rookies to veteran members either, and no organised communal meals. No formative workshop of any kind. All the while, management experienced unstated budget issues, untimely changes in top-level positions and a dearth of staff. Plans for an incubator silently faded in the background with little or no official communication between manager and entrepreneurs. A few months into my research, John confided to me: “No one is sure of what's happening anymore.” The criteria for entry into *Fountainhead* themselves had never been made clear: out of the dozen companies there, some had ten members, others but a single one; some had long-established networks built through years of experience, others were on their first project. Almost no-one I met worked on delivering the “creative,” “physical products,” for which space had initially been conceived.

So how did people at *Fountainhead* cope with, and make sense of, a situation misaligned with their expectations?

In short, they did so in no single, coordinated, negotiated way. For one, accounts of *Fountainhead*'s history varied widely between and even within companies. The lack of a shared narrative sided that of a collective identity – what Mary Douglas would have taken as an unmistakable sign of institutional failure. Dealings with the management approximated the likes of commercial transactions: entrepreneurs reported feeling like members of their own companies. Nothing more.

One way of studying institutional processes or, as the case may be, processes of “de-institutionalisation,” involves observing the relationships people develop with and through the objects populating their everyday work lives. This would give anthropological interpretations an edge in understanding social organisation. Nowhere was de-institutionalisation more evident than in the contingent management and use of the communal kitchen – a revealing example of an unavoidable “common”, or shared resource. For instance, I would get people to casually identify which food item belonged to whom in the communal fridge and kitchen shelves, but the reports were so assertively distinct as to be systematically confused. I once recorded the same cereal box as having been at once “provided by *Fountainhead*”, “left by someone who left”, “bought by someone...for sharing”, “not mine, not



mine to take”, and “mine, actually, and no one else's.” The contended cereal box – contentions nevertheless silently coexisting and, so far as I am aware, never clashing confrontationally – serves as an apt material metaphor for what was *Fountainhead*'s organisational strategy (or lack thereof).

The sense people made of their experience at *Fountainhead* was just as varied and irreducible. Yet, there was something linking them all. Between my first and last series of interviews,

everyone seemed to have undergone a cognitive reassessment of what *Fountainhead* was supposed to be, and offer. Most individuals independently reached similar conclusions: the place was not an incubator – and it never had been one. It was not a co-working space either, but rather, a shared office space (that is precisely what John had told me *Fountainhead* set out not to become). What was the material basis for this general perception? What individual behaviors now sustained this emotional distance?

One answer can be gleaned at what several people referred to me was the time of transition, that is “when the coffee beans stopped.” For a few months after *Fountainhead*'s inauguration, someone – supposedly one of the evanescent managers – had indeed been dispensing and replacing large bags of ground coffee, as well as milk and teabags, for the taking. The organisational “uncertainty” that John voiced in our conversation eventually came to recede this final link.

Responses to the discontinued provision of coffee beans were predictably similar: small bags of coffee began to appear on individual desks. The lack of contingent organisational forms between entrepreneurs further revealed the asocial sociality instantiated – institutionalised – in and through the provision of coffee. A change in leadership in the University's

Business Branch is what grinded *Fountainhead* management to a halt – including the public provision of coffee beans. Interestingly, all of *Fountainhead*'s disorganised diversity and the underlying institutional uncertainty came to sustain a certain individual stability.

“When the coffee beans stopped”, entrepreneurs at *Fountainhead* responded in passively active, or actively passive ways. This may reveal an ambiguity common to de-institutionalism and individualism. Each supports the other, but each is also an expression of contextual constraints and possibilities of living and working together. “Keep those coffee beans coming” would be, in brief, my best advice for building a successful incubator. Openness to unexpected change in one's research plans would instead be my iteration of a well-known suggestion – one at the core of what makes ethnographers empathetic opportunists on our quest to anthropological inquiry.

The Heteroglossia of Time on the Isle of Wight

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In the summer of 2016, I spent two months in Brighstone, a village on the southwest coast of the Isle of Wight, colloquially known as 'the back of the Wight'. I wanted to explore political anthropology in this largely rural and conservative place, on the eve of the EU referendum. But after a succession of chance encounters my attention was focused elsewhere: in the direction of temporality.

Stopping for conversations with people all around Brighstone it became apparent that they were occupied by a plurality of pasts. People shared thoughts on their personal and family pasts, the historical and geological pasts of the village and the island, and that of the nation and the world. It was as if people were witnesses to an enthralling pageant dancing by populated with animated figures of embodied pastness, which possessed the affective power to make them laugh or cry, be grateful or rueful, tranquil or disturbed. The strange thing was that

those panoramas which so engaged my interlocutors were initially invisible to me, beyond my capacity to perceive or imagine.

To solve this empirical puzzle required a shuffle at the theoretical base. Scholars have long argued that the past, present and future infuse one another without rendering explicit the philosophical kernel latent at the root of this idea: that time might be a field of relationality. The way social actors relate to the past cannot be extrapolated from their unique and transitory positions in social nexuses in the present. Our relationship to the past is thus inherently unstable, it is in a state of perpetual dynamism, a warped kind of image cast through the mutable and distorted prism of the present. The past and the present preserve the capacity to mutually transform and enable one another, and thus perceptions and experiences of time are codependent upon other domains of social life, such as notions of political belonging,

religious affiliation, or modes of economic subsistence.

If the field of time is like a disaggregated chorus of voices, themselves emerging and depleted in time, orientated around the subject in specific configurations based on the minute conditions of the present moment, how does our relationship to time come to take the form it does at any given point? I delineate two distinct practices by which a relationality to the past could be actualised in this local context. I call them memory and historical imagining and argue that they are alternative modes of relationality which place the subject differently in relation to the past. Thus whereas memory places the individual at the center of the conjured past in the role of protagonist, historical imagining posits the human on the margins, gazing in at a past that happened to others. Conceived of cosmologically, memory would look like the Aristotelian universe with the social actor embedded at the heart of the world,

whilst historical imagining would resemble the Copernican model, with our agent displaced to a peripheral position. These alternative modes of relating to the past produce different phenomenologies of historicity.

Many of my interlocutors related to the past primarily through memory. In his front room, surrounded by old diaries, school reports, photographs and family relics, Samuel recalled being a child and his years as a teacher. Standing on the shore at Compton Beach, Mary remembered bygone days spent at this site with her family. Despite their apparent variety, these instances are unified by their structure. Regardless of the chronological order or mood of events, the subject always played a leading role in the unfolding drama of the imagined past.

The structure of the relationship to the past opened up by historical imagining is fundamentally different. Harold navigated the landscapes of Brighstone scouring for sites draped in the mysteriousness of historical ambiguity. He owned a field on the outskirts of the village where a settlement had stood until the early 1940s, the remains of which have vanished. Harold owned maps showing the hamlet in the nineteenth century, and he found plants in the field he knew the Romans had imported. At the Norman church and the graveyard, Harold had less opaque insights into cameos of life lived in the annals of lost time, and used prompts of local architecture and geography to catch glimpses of remote pasts, populated by barely differentiated characters cut of generic historical matter and moved by abstract forces. He spoke of 'the peasants', 'the clergy', 'the knights'. The clarity of these visions were strung along a spectrum, but what was fixed was the irrevocable externality of the self from these hallucinatory vistas.

In practice, the coexistence of memory and historical imagining means a puritanical straight-jacket model will not suffice. The way humans actually interact with the past is an interstitial experience: we relate to the past in the spaces of overlap and intersection between these disparate practices. At the site of the fallen hamlet alongside glimpses of Roman settlers and Victorian dwellers, Harold recalled a time when

he camped there with his grandchildren. Times distinct from one another in the linear chronology of 'Newtonian time' were rendered coeval as the paddock became a palimpsest in which diachronic moments were configured in a pattern unique to Harold's reckoning. Standing in the grassy field that afternoon was like the moment the house of time was declared complete: a moment of inhabiting a grand architectural curiosity, in the liminality between its construction and its ongoing renovation.

In fact, my interlocutors' religiosities pose a challenge to my argument. Besides the debate around the secularity of the enterprise of history, religious experience challenged a foundational premise of my argument: that time can and should be understood as a relational field. Mary, the oldest of my interlocutors, spoke of heaven as a place of placid inertia, the terminal of human teleology. Samuel's faith was 'a rhythm of piety' whose culmination of convergence with God was fleeting coevalness, as if his body were a pendulum oscillating between immersion in time and extraction from it. How could

we understand and represent such experiences of eternity and timelessness?

But why should the past matter at all? For the people of Brighstone, the past is not cleansed of its impurities. It remained a profoundly ambivalent relationship: subjects sought to differentiate themselves from it as often as they embraced it. Social agents are equally reconciled and estranged, comforted and disturbed, by the pasts they relate to, yet the spectre of the past remains ubiquitous. I argue that conceptualisations and experiences of time must be understood as embedded in the wider nexuses of subjects' life-worlds, for there exist exquisite interconnections between temporalities and forms of knowledge, power and morality. Temporalities are one tessellation entwined in the grand nexus of our cosmological becoming, through which we experience and understand the world. And as anthropologists, understanding how humans inhabit time can deepen our understanding of the interactional nature of social life.



An Interview with Joanna Cook



Joanna Cook is a lecturer in Medical Anthropology. She has published books on monastic meditation practice in Thailand, democratic failure in cross-cultural comparison, detachment in the social sciences, and power in Southeast Asia. Her current research focuses on mindfulness and civil society in the UK.

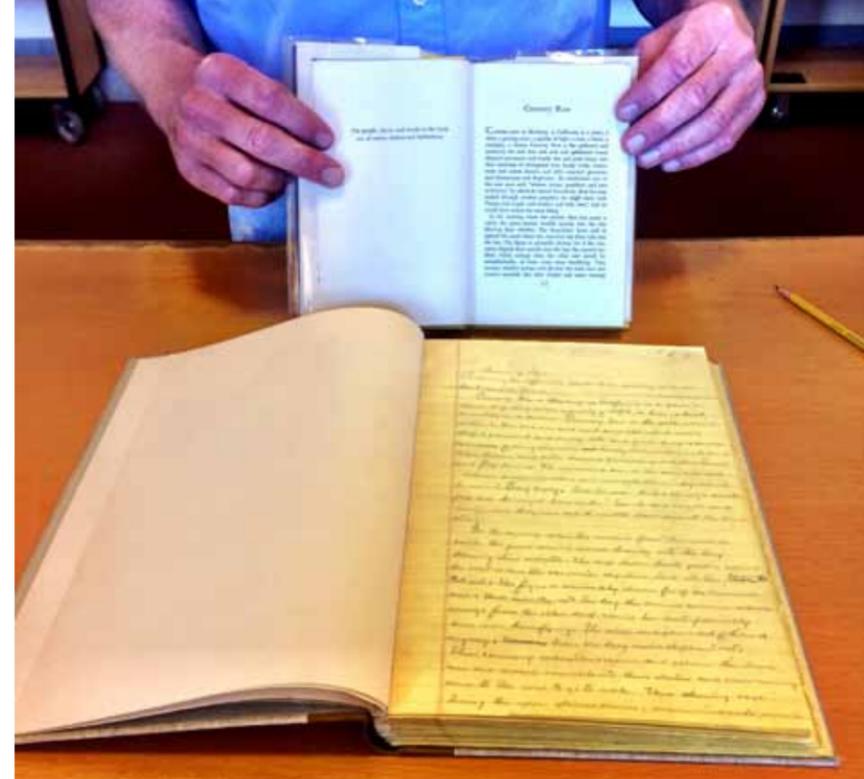
How did you become an anthropologist?

I'm not sure how it happened. A simple answer would be that I did an undergraduate in anthropology at Queen's University Belfast. I moved to Cambridge to complete my Masters and PhD, after which I stayed on, appointed as a College Lecturer at Pembroke College for one year and a Research Fellow at Christ's College for four years. Five years ago I moved to London, for a lectureship at Goldsmiths before taking up my position here at UCL.

But that's only a partial answer. There's a game I like to play (that I stole from the writers of *The League of Gentlemen*): If you went back in time and had to artificially reproduce all of the chance meetings and moments of serendipity that have brought you to where you are, could you do it?

At Queen's I enrolled in Philosophy and Psychology, with some vague notion that I was 'interested in people', and then skipped off on a gap year. I heard the word 'anthropology' six months later while rock climbing on a beach in

southern Thailand, changed my course (knowing nothing about it) and haven't looked back since. At the end of first year undergrad I decided I needed another gap year and flew back to Southeast Asia. I mention it now only because it was on that trip that I first ordained as a Buddhist nun, something that became central to my anthropological research for a decade. This is just to say that the 'how' of becoming an anthropologist doesn't seem straightforward to me.



Tell us a bit about your career so far?

I worked on Buddhism in Thailand for a long time. I was very interested in meditation and my research focused on Buddhist monks and nuns who practice and teach vipassana meditation. In the monastery, much of life is organised around practice – it structures the work of the monastery, the interaction between members of the community, and ways in which people relate to themselves. It is also quintessentially Buddhist. A few years ago, I became fascinated by the introduction of meditation techniques into secular contexts, particularly mental healthcare in the UK. Meditation practice here had a lot less to do with enlightenment and a lot more to do with preventing depression. I found

this completely fascinating. How did people understand themselves and the challenges that they faced? And how was meditation understood in the light of that?

I began working on Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) a few years ago. This is a psychosocial group-based intervention for people who have had three or more depressive episodes but who are currently well. My fieldwork has included participant observation in patient groups, on the two-year therapist-training programme, and in Westminster with an all-party group investigating the policy potential for mindfulness in civil society. One of the fascinating aspects of this research has been riding the wave of the mindfulness boom. Love it or hate it, it seems everyone has an opinion on it.

What are you currently working on?

This academic year I am away at Stanford as a British Academy Senior Research Fellow to get my head down and write with none of the distractions of London life. I've grumbled about not having time to write to anyone who'd listen for the past few years. Well, be careful what you wish for. I do miss colleagues and students at UCL but (touch wood) the book seems to be on track.

It will be an ethnography of mindfulness in the UK. I'm particularly interested in the ways in which living well has become associated with relating to the mind in particular and intentional ways. Thinking about the mind as a site for ethical work extends much further than mindfulness practice, and is reflected in the multiplicity of ways in which mindfulness is being employed.

Are you only an anthropologist?

At the moment, yes. My days are spent in a happy rat run between my home, the library and the gym. I'm absorbed in reading and thinking but pretty soon there'll be need of dancing, friends and fun.

Top: The librarian in Special Collections showed me the pencil written manuscript and first edition of Steinbeck's Cannery Row. (That's not the pencil he used.) You'll notice there are no crossings out – that is not my experience of book writing.

Below: A meeting of the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group in Westminster.



A Peek into Feminist Activism: Palestinian Women Citizens of Israel

Natalie Garland

MSc Social and Cultural Anthropology 2015-16

Popular Western discourses continue to portray women in the Arab world as trapped and powerless due to patriarchal and religious control. News coverage simultaneously depicts Arab and Muslim men as potential threats to Western national security. I find it quite problematic how the West receives such generalisations regarding people in the Middle East without hesitation. This complicated region of the world demands unpacking; anthropology presents a perfect tool for this undertaking.

For six weeks I travelled across Israel and the West Bank, eager to establish rapport with young Palestinian women. My anthropological questions pertained to womanhood and the role of the Israel/Palestine conflict in shaping their daily experiences with reproduction and sexuality. I quickly found myself involved with Palestinian feminist activism: a highly controversial topic

in Western scholarship. The depth of my ethnographic research on this topic stemmed from participant observation at a unique feminist organisation in Haifa, Israel.

I watched as Khulud, a 41-year-old Palestinian feminist activist, puffed vigorously on her cigarette. "Don't write this down, I have a lot to say. Just listen." It was my first day at *Isha L'isha*, Haifa's radical feminist collective.

Two days after this initial meeting, Khulud rescued me in her pyjamas from an unbearable Couchsurfing experience. It was one o'clock in the morning when I jumped into her car. "I don't know how I can ever thank you," I said. With two hands on the wheel, Khulud turned to face me: "This is your first lesson of Haifa feminism. You don't owe me anything." We drove back to her apartment, where I lived for the entirety of my Haifa research.

Isha L'isha, Hebrew for woman to woman, is a non-hierarchical organisation which strives for the equal representation of Palestinians, Ashkenazi Jews, Mizrahi Jews, and lesbians. These female feminists identify as radical and pronounce solidarity with all women. *Isha L'isha*, established in 1983, is Israel's oldest grassroots organisation. It is also the only solidarity feminist movement in Israel; other feminist organisations in Israel lack this drive for Jewish-Arab-lesbian partnership. Feminism in the Israeli context, I learned, is not so clear cut, but instead full of contradictions. Here, Jewish and Palestinian feminist activism embodies a complex set of overlapping ideologies and behaviours.

My experiences at *Isha L'isha* revealed how solidarity can produce extremely powerful social change. But solidarity movements can also be rather challenging: women from different

communities embody unique needs and perspectives. While this finding may seem quite obvious, witnessing the unravelling of a sexual assault incident was an extremely revealing experience.

A Palestinian café owner had inappropriately touched his Palestinian female employees, while also sending suggestive messages via Facebook. The activists at *Isha L'isha* gathered to discuss how to take action against the reported perpetrator. An argument erupted. Although I had difficulty following the Hebrew dialogue, the tension that filled the room was clear to me. Later that evening, on our drive home, Khulud explained the controversy:

The Jewish activists argued for police involvement while the Palestinians argued that police involvement would only harm the women's reputation in the insular community. The Arab society does not

trust the police, Khulud explained. Cases of sexual assault and harassment in the Arab sector must be dealt with differently than in the Jewish sector. Khulud quickly initiated a local grassroots movement which entailed an active boycotting of the well-known café. My research in the urban Haifa context demonstrated clearly how young Palestinian women and men are receptive to feminist activism. In fact, later that month, I walked in Haifa's annual 'SlutWalk', where Jewish and Palestinian feminists marched side by side demanding reproductive and human rights.

In December 2015 Khulud initiated a grassroots movement called *Tuskuteesh*, Arabic for 'don't remain silent'. This movement provides the first ever safe forum for Arab women from across Israel, the occupied territories, and the Arab world to share experiences and testimonies of sexual violence on

Facebook in Arabic. Before *Tuskuteesh*, Palestinian women had access to sexual violence movements only in Hebrew. With over 10,000 likes on Facebook, *Tuskuteesh* has gained extraordinary momentum. In fact, the female employees involved in the café incident wrote about their experiences for the *Tuskuteesh* Facebook page. Although feminist activism has gained significant momentum in certain Arab contexts, there are still large barriers preventing many women in Arab society from speaking out about their experiences of sexual violence. *Tuskuteesh* represents the foundation to what activists hope will become a stronger movement.

My experiences at *Isha L'isha* introduced me to a larger network of Palestinian feminists. For example, the rapport I built with Selma, a 22-year-old feminist who lives in a Muslim village in the Western Galilee, provided me with an



incredible opportunity to deeply explore the relationship between Islam and feminism. Selma, who wears a *hijab*, self-identifies as a 'feminist activist'. She even introduced me to her friends and family as her 'feminist friend'. I found that, the term 'feminist' has a profound significance in the lives of many young Arab women residing in Israel's northern region. A 2016 study among university students in Northern Israel reveals that young Palestinian women endorse the self-label 'feminist' more than Jews (Sa'ar et al., 2016). This finding, which shocked researchers, contradicts and complicates previous assumptions regarding the incompatibility between Islam, the *hijab*, and feminism.

Selma's fight for self-expression, autonomy, and romantic love in her conservative Muslim village demonstrates how the experiences of young women can contradict Western assumptions. Selma is the CEO of Viewpoint Academy, a language school she began from the basement of her family's home. She drives her own car which she purchased with her own money. Her success is known across the region. Selma has been interviewed numerous times on a national Arab news channel to discuss feminism in Arab society and Viewpoint Academy.

Young female Palestinian citizens of Israel are negotiating a very complicated social and political milieu. Feminist activists at *Isha L'isha* argue that Palestinian feminist activism is considered political, since the mobilisation of Palestinian empowerment and autonomy ultimately threatens the preservation of occupation. My research therefore explored this complicated intersection between feminist activism and resistance to state control and surveillance.

This article is not meant to romanticise Palestinian feminism. Instead, it aims to re-orient how we may approach feminism in non-Western contexts. As notions of feminism emerge with great force in Israel's Northern Arab sector, I conclude that, notions of ideal womanhood among young Arab women in Israel are shifting. Future research on the topic is imperative, especially regarding a comparison between Palestinian feminism in Israel and in the Occupied Territories.



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Above: *The Separation Wall, Bethlehem, West Bank, June 2016*

Left: *The 'SlutWalk', Haifa, Israel, June 2016*

Below: *The Nakba March, The Negev, May 2016*

All photographs by Natalie Garland

Hasta siempre, Comandante

Two ethnographic snippets from three extraordinary days of fieldwork in Cuba

Martin Holbraad
Professor of Social Anthropology

"Estimados televidentes... dear viewers, I am bound to inform those of you who have just joined us that our Commander in Chief died last night. At 22.29, on Friday the 25th of November, as announced by Comrade General Raul Castro Ruz to the Cuban people an hour later through this medium, el Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz deceased".

Fidel, deceased?! F i d e l? D e a d? I feel a chill running up my spine (I still do now as I write this...). Messages have been rushing into my mobile all night, but having just got out of bed, only now do I start opening them. 'Hasta siempre, Comandante', one of them reads.

I've been coming to Havana a great deal in the past couple of years, doing fieldwork for a project on the anthropology of revolutionary politics. On this occasion I'm here for the biannual conference of the Cuban Institute of Anthropology, which ended the night before, and my plan for the weekend had been to see as many of my research collaborators as possible, before returning to London on the Monday. But this news changes everything. Even during my first fieldwork on the island, almost 20 years ago, I had promised myself that on the day Fidel Castro died (he was already old then), I would get the next ticket to Havana, just to be there. But now I'm here anyway, and I have three days.

It's now noon, and Mercedes, my landlady, comes up to my flat for a coffee. Coffees in Cuba go in a flash, like shots, but Mercedes is lingering. I've known her and her family for a couple of years



Castro billboard: "to fight against the impossible and win." By Jim [CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

now, and we've discussed the revolution a lot in the past, so I know that Fidel's death is a blow to her. "He gave us todo, todo, todo, todo ('everything'), she repeats, as if to survey all the regions of that 'everything' that in her eyes Fidel has bestowed. She's upset, and it's obvious that she's been crying. As she has told me in the past, she's an avowed 'Fidelista', even though, these days, after all she's seen, she wouldn't necessarily call herself a 'revolucionaria'. In many ways Mercedes is an exemplary case of what the revolution has done for ordinary people in Cuba. It did indeed give her a whole life. Dark-skinned and from a poor rural family, Mercedes was still a teenager when she was brought to Havana in 1960, as part of the newly instituted Cuban Women's Federation's (FMC) programme for rural women's training on sewing machines – one of the many mass

campaigns instituted for disadvantaged segments of the population in the first years of the revolution. It was only with the support of the FMC that she was able to finish her school education in the early '60s, and then work her way up in various jobs in state administration in Havana, ending up as a telephonist in the Ministry of the Interior – a responsible post reserved for committed revolutionaries. (She also became a member of the Communist Party at that time, though when she retired in the early 2000s she renounced her membership, fed up with the opportunistic scheming and the nepotism, as she once explained to me).

The idea that Fidel's grandeur and the revolution's – the two are in many ways synonymous – comes down to his capacity to 'give' is one I have come across repeatedly in Cuba. A lazy gloss

on this would be cast in the language of 'paternalism', and there was certainly a strong dose of that in Fidel's leadership. In fact, the comment I got again and again as I called my friends throughout the morning to offer my condolences was the same: 'We've grown up with him, I feel I've lost a father'.

But to dismiss this as just a matter of political paternalism fails to capture the depth and subtlety of feeling – political feeling – that people are struggling to express when they say that in Fidel they have lost a father. Perhaps there's a deeper question here about the significance of care as the basic premise of revolutionary politics. Less like the way a liberal might imagine the state – for example, as a guarantor of peace, liberty and security – and more like a Christian might conceive of God, the project of revolution that Fidel personified stands or falls by the care it is able to show for the people in whose name it was instigated. Fidel 'gave' because his ultimate role was to care.

'He was a leader. Not like the other one', Mercedes continues – 'the other one', here, referring to Fidel's brother Raúl, who has been running the country since 2006, when Fidel first fell seriously ill. Again, the standard comment is that Raúl is less charismatic than Fidel, more aloof in style, but perhaps also less megalomaniac, and more prudent and pragmatic. Still, I find the explanation given by Mercedes herself far more interesting: 'Fidel made himself *small*', she says, crouching her back as she emphasises the word. 'He *lowered* himself when he spoke to you. The brother doesn't know how to do that'. Part of what Fidel 'gave' to people, it seems, was himself. A very Christian thought, it strikes me. And a peculiarly Catholic one in its emphasis on the intimacy of divine power. That, after all, is what the Virgin and all the different Saints do in places like Cuba: 'lower' themselves from the otherwise commanding heights of divine transcendence, the more intimately to commune with the faithful.

Monday morning. Following a weekend of intense conversations with an array of friends in the shadow of Fidel's death, I've decided to make my way to the official

tribute that has been organised by the state authorities as part of the nine days of national mourning that were declared on the Saturday. I've been warned about how many people there would be, so I'm out of the door at 7am, on my way to the Plaza de la Revolución, where this 'act of the masses' (*acto de masas*), as the state-socialist argot has it, will begin at nine.

Conscious of the fact my previous experiences doing ethnography of public events have been only in religious contexts, I'm trawling across the centre of town looking for congregations of people heading towards the Plaza. Half way there, I bump into a throng of sleepy-looking teenagers pouring out of their school building, with teachers issuing directions none too somberly. I mix in with them to see how it feels. They're wearing the Pioneer uniforms children wear to school, which I've always found somehow moving (a great source of scholarly if not necessarily political pride for the wearer), but that on this occasion serve only to differentiate me from the crowd. Since this is exactly what I wanted to avoid, I break off a few blocks away from the Plaza and make my own way to what looks like a queue, outside the Teatro Nacional – an impressive modernist building where I've watched many shows in the past, but which today serves as one of three entry-points into the memorial space of the Plaza, as we've been regularly informed by the state TV over the weekend.

Although there is no line as such – more a block – people are conscious of being in a queue, and all the talk is of the practicalities ahead. When will we be allowed to move past the barriers the state security and police have prepared to control passage into the theatre? There are two tasks ahead of us, and they seem to be sequenced. First, someone in front of me says, "we have to sign the solemn oath to the Revolution that the TV has been talking about". But there are so many people, will there be enough books, or will it take ages? And then we'll proceed to the obelisk at the centre of the Plaza, where Fidel's ashes will be. "First we sign and then we cry", I risk the joke, but no-one is amused and I feel stupid and foreign.



Fidel speaking at Plaza de La Revolución, under statue of José Martí: By Ricardo Stuckert/ABR. [CC BY 3.0 br (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/br/deed.en>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Soon, however, I'm at one with the crowd again, as we all turn in indignation to a phalanx of medical professionals who flank us rapidly on the right side and start pushing forwards. "Sixty years of this", someone says angrily, "and we still haven't learnt how to queue!" "Doctors don't like queues!", someone else shouts out. That's when I realize, most of the people around me have been bussed in from their workplaces. Dozens of busses are lining up behind us, all along Paseo, the grand avenue that leads up to the Plaza from the North.

At 8.30 on the dot the barriers are opened and within a couple of minutes the amorphous block of people is turned into an orderly file of individuals lining up following instructions from the state security guards, who are themselves lined up alongside the queue at regular intervals, controlling things. We are shown into the foyer of the theatre. Twenty or more tables are lined up, and on them rest large and official-looking notebooks, with blank lined pages open and ready to be signed. "Sign and print your name", the security officers instruct us. Above the notebooks there is a large placard displaying an extract from Fidel's iconic attempt, in his Mayday speech of 2000, to define what a revolution is: "Revolution is a sense of historical moment; it is changing everything that needs changing; it is full equality and liberty;...", and so it goes on, teetering on poetry.

I sign my name, wondering whether I should put my nationality next to it. I decide not to, still doing penance for my earlier remark. In any case, one thing I know about Fidel's oft-cited attempt at definition is that it renders the concept of revolution a classic case of what Lévi-Strauss called a 'floating signifier': a word that means nothing in particular because it can mean nigh anything. Although perhaps the point is that Fidel meant it to mean, again, *everything*.

Moved on by the guards as soon as I had signed, I soon find myself joining another orderly queue, this time on a line stretching into the vast expanse of the Plaza and leading to the square's central obelisk – the Jose Martí Memorial, dedicated to the 19th century national independence hero and intellectual. Built, ironically, in the late 1950s by Fulgencio Batista – the dictator the Revolution deposed – the whole Plaza has an unmistakably fascist feel to it. Monumentally enormous and somehow constitutively empty, it is surrounded by government buildings, bearing gigantic murals of the two archetypal martyrs of the Revolution, Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos, as seen from countless angles on tourist postcards.

The sun is now up and, as we wait in line to proceed to the Memorial, a white woman in her 60s manhandles me in jest, placing me between herself and the sun's already hot rays. "You'll do – you're tall!", she jokes. That's an ethnographer's cue if ever I've heard one. "Are you here with your workmates?" I ask her. "No, on my own. I came nice and early and from what I see we'll be out of here by 9.10", she smiles. "Yes, it's incredibly well organized",



Young Fidel, with guard of honour, inside José Martí Memorial, 28th November 2016, Photo by Prensa Latina

I agree. 'Well, if there's one thing that works in this country it's the security services.' There's irony in the comment, but I can't be sure if it's intentional and I'm not burning myself again. "Well, today the transport seems to be working well too", I say, hedging my bets and pointing at the buses lined up along Paseo in the distance. "I'm local", she replies, "so I walked. But for this I would have come from anywhere. This has really affected me. I haven't slept much..." Her voice is breaking but, keeping her composure, she adds solemnly: "He was so immense we thought he'd be eternal."

As we wait there are periodic ripples of chanting that run down the queue: "PATRIA O MUERTE – VENCEREMOS!" The action seems formulaic – people join in and then seamlessly resume their chatting – but the international press, who are running up and down alongside the queue with cameras and microphones, are loving it. A Spanish journalist approaches the group just behind me asking for volunteers for an interview. Soon one woman in the company is speaking to the camera. I didn't hear the question, but the reply is bellicose: "We have fought all our lives for our Revolution and no one is going to stand in our way, in the way of our dreams. No one, not the Yankees, not the people in Miami, nobody. This is our country and our revolution; we'll defend them till the end!" Two men just to the side of us are rolling their eyes. "Fuck this – just listen to her! I tell you man, keep that microphone away from me!" His friend giggles quietly and my lady also smiles.

At 9am on the dot there are 21 cannon shots, firing in the distance, and the

queue is immediately on the move. There's a perfunctory security check at the foot of the mound on which the Memorial sits, and in the process I lose my ethnographic companion. I'm on my own, climbing the mound in single file under the supervision of the security personnel. To my right there's a descending line of people who've already been inside. Some of them are crying – sobbing even. Others just look grim.

Before I know it I'm in the memorial. But I see no ashes – just a huge photograph of Fidel in his youth (the famous one from the time of the guerrilla in the Sierra Maestra, looking into the distance with a warrior's rucksack on his back), a series of his medals on display, and a small guard of honour standing to attention. I try to take it all in but we aren't allowed to linger, and in fewer than 10 seconds, I think, I'm back out in the sun, descending the hill, feeling a little short-changed. I'm frankly perplexed by the fact that others around me are as affected as they seem. Ahead of me I see the lady from before, so I hasten my step to catch up with her. "Did you like it?" she asks me. I know that tone. It's the tone people in Cuba use when they speak to foreigners about those things foreigners are expected to have come to Cuba for: beaches, salsa, Afro-Cuban folklore and the like. "It went too quickly", I say. "Well, I'm glad I came", she counters a little curtly. "Have a good day my child", and she walks off.

It wasn't until I was sitting in the plane back to London, later that day, that I began to reflect on my remarkable ethnographic 'luck' at having been in Cuba for these extraordinary few days. Most poignant in my mind was the way two elderly ladies who had lived the whole revolution, and loved Fidel through thick and thin, had between them articulated for me the power of his character and, with it, the character of his power. This is nothing short of an anthropological theory of charisma, it strikes me now, precisely expressed in a morphological idiom: a man who makes himself smaller than he is, even as he is so immense as to seem eternal. The ineffability of charisma as a matter of social shape-shifting.



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The Evolutionist's Pen is Mightier than the Sword

Carole Jahme
PhD Anthropology

With "Lock her up", still chanting and #MAGA - Make America Great Again still trending, the *New York Times* chose Armistice Day to report on Trump's White House-winning, evangelical vote. White evangelicals represent 26% of the electorate and Trump's rhetoric motivated 81% of them to vote for him, believing he will deliver unto them a promised land...

I'm sure most readers of this piece agree that suppression of evolutionary theory must be fought. But how? Reflecting on my conversation with Richard Leakey, at the Major Transitions in Human Evolution conference, reminded me that we have a secret weapon – open-access publishing.

I first interviewed Leakey in the Karen Blixen Garden, Nairobi, 1996. Leakey was busy, having just launched The Safina Party and published *The Sixth Extinction*. I was both producing a TV documentary and writing a book on primate ethology.

In 1996, what kind of genetics? Not genetics per se - genetics was in its infancy and animal behaviour held sway. Leakey was fabulous to interview and I thought he was probably the most impressive man I'd ever met. So, in October 2015, I trotted down to The Royal Society conference, excited at the thought of interviewing him again. But, on arrival, I was caught off-guard by bad blood between delegates, and a narrative I hadn't anticipated unfolded before me.

The antipathy was palpable. I listened as outraged geneticists recounted years of blocked access to fossils and when finally allowed a sample, the glue used to reassemble the parts had damaged the fossil's molecular structure. In a heated riposte, paleoanthropologists argued that geneticists' drilling causes permanent damage to unique, extinct morphology. Ownership of fossils, exclusivity and copyright offered further contention,

and the final straw were accusations of Science and Nature's elitism and stifling slowness to publish.

During Leakey's closing remarks he begged for scientists not to argue. I followed him to the drinks reception. Alcohol lifted the mood a little and Leakey laid it on the line: "There's too much emphasis on our recruitment policies based on citations in *Nature and Science*. Scientists need to bring those two institutions down a peg or two."

A possible new model can be seen in the way Lee Berger dealt with *Homo naledi*. I'd met Berger in London in January 2015. Ahead of his press conference, he gave a tantalizing talk on his momentous fossil find in the South African Rising Star cave system. After listening to Leakey, I telephoned Berger, "We did submit to *Nature* originally, we hoped for a dozen papers, at once, on full anatomy. But the

referees couldn't handle it, there was too much data." Berger's team discovered at least fifteen individuals of *Homo naledi*. "We stepped back and thought about eLIFE. It's a review process without paywalls with the huge advantage of greater scale. *Nature and Science* confine word count, not on eLIFE, we were able to make a monograph submission. With a team of 60 scientists collaborating and creating new networks we were able to publish in two years. If we had only six experts this find would have taken 10 to 20 years to publish. The process of referees is just as rigorous at eLIFE."

Leakey considers open access publishing key to combatting religious fundamentalism: "My call for co-operation between evolutionary theorists is because we must tackle fundamentalism. When people say they don't need to study evolutionary biology because 'God made us', it's dangerous. When fundamentalists knock science, I speak out! With climate change, agriculture and human health is threatened, and we need a substrate of evolutionarily trained medics and scientists across the globe." Berger again, "Fundamentalism results from a lack of education. I want to bring the story of human evolution to the public. Evolutionary scientists have not spent enough time reaching out; one result is a conservatism that can flip into fundamentalism. I hope to have 25 more years to communicate human evolution. There's no reason not to open source and reach the public."

Geneticist Mark Thomas attended the conference, "Fossil data should be made available to all on publication. In recent years massive leaps have been made in statistical inference and modelling methodologies, those with expertise in this area should be able to access data easily. The rise in fundamentalism doesn't seem to impact so much on genetics. But obviously I am concerned about its effects on education." Was Leakey an inspiration to a geneticist? "Of course! He has a strong, incorruptible character and wisdom in abundance. His is a massive legacy, amazing finds, with cautious interpretations."

One of Berger's more daring interpretations is that *Homo naledi* buried their dead, if so, does that

make him a grave robber? "No! That's an inflammatory view. Don't go there. They were not humans; it's arrogant to anthropomorphise causality." How long did *naledi* use the cave for? "I was just in a meeting discussing that and broke away to take your call, we're working on it."

Paleoanthropologist Tim White has been openly critical of Berger's speed of sharing, accusing him of jumping to conclusions. Berger responded, "Science is about hypotheses and then reevaluation. Tim White has sat on his findings for decades and wouldn't share. Our data is out there, academics and the public can make a better hypothesis." What inspires Berger's openness? "Filmmaker James Cameron taught me communication models, I observe Chris Stringer and Richard Dawkins, and Richard Leakey is my mentor."

Would Leakey use open access? Leaning on his walking stick the great man gave me a wry smile, "I've not been involved in academe for sometime as I've been looking after elephants and political parties, but I will use open access."

If evolutionary scientists support Leakey's call to co-operate and, via open access, quickly reach the public, the dissemination of that knowledge really could fight fundamentalism. If *Nature and Science* then lose their status they might evaluate if their alleged elitism has stymied evolutionary science out-reach, leading to an indirect facilitation of anti-evolutionary sentiment.

Clearly academia requires rapid reinvention, not least because if Trump delivers to evangelicals their promised land of defunded family planning, eroded gay rights, Supreme Court conservatism and a 'war' on Muslim Fundamentalism, there will be no armistice, the fall-out harming us all.



Above: ©Oscar Dunbar

Below: ©Carole Jahme



A Tibetan Mental Health Perspective

Ciaran Tobin
MSc Medical Anthropology

In 2013, I travelled to the Northern Indian hill-station of Dharamsala to conduct research exploring the concept and determinants of mental health (MH) among the Tibetan Community in Exile (TCiE). Amidst the awe-inspiring foothills of the Himalayas, I was very fortunate to meet and interview several senior government, religious, and medical scholars.

Research gaps were identified within the Western MH milieu, such as the British Psychological Society's call for alternative conceptual 'bottom up' approaches away from the current 'disease model', and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Volume 5 (DSM-5)'s continuous medicalisation of normal and natural experiences. Additionally, a survey of top psychological journals by Arnett found that 95% of articles were from Western countries – which house just 12% of the world's population. Given that a vast preponderance of studies are from Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic (WEIRD) societies, this highlights an inequity within the literature concerning alternative and traditional indigenous approaches to MH.

My research sought to understand:

- Whether a concept of 'mental health' exists amongst the TCiE (in contrast to the Western definition of MH that has been developed by UN/WHO).
- What a traditional Tibetan concept of MH might be.
- What the determinants of MH are in the context of the TCiE.

The Tibetan medical system does not define MH; however, an implicit concept

exists based on Buddhist epistemology, a system that has been progressively developing theory and practice since antiquity. Several participants provided working definitions derived from this perspective. Fundamentally, a mind that is free from the disturbance of afflictive emotions is a mind that is healthy – a happy mind is a healthy mind. The UN definition appeared incomplete to respondents as it fails to address ethics. Consequently, it may be applied to unethical people, yet they may be still deemed healthy.

Tibetans view the human being as an integrated unitary holistic system where the body enables the mind and in turn the mind is present throughout the body. They see both physical and mental aspects as a unified living system and the human being in context of their religious metaphysics, in a holistic, much wider and deeper context than Western medicine. Bequeathed from Buddhist principles, health entails the balance of body and mind, and the elemental energies of earth, water, wind, fire and ether. The Buddhist 'Middle Way' approach does not renounce the physical; the body must provide healthy support for the inner work of exploring the mind.

Tibetans discern between mind and mental factors. The innermost essence of mind is known as 'Rigpa'. This mind however, is concealed and enveloped within our ordinary mind, or 'Sem'. The mental factors exist in Sem, in an incessantly dissipative and capricious state of mind, which functions only in relation to a falsely perceived external reference point, or projection. While negative mental factors cloud the mind, a calm and clear mind is the antidote. Tibetans differentiate the individual from



the mental factors, and believe that categorising or labelling an individual (stigma) may exacerbate a MH problem

Mental attitude, and taking personal responsibility for how one views external circumstance, entails controlling the limitless desires of a boundless immaterial mind, experiencing contentment through cultivating mental stability, and not blaming others for personal mental disturbances. Although we have a tendency to address a problem or enemy outside, Tibetans believe if you understand the holistic nature of the ultimate reality, then there is no target. As consciousness is viewed as not material, desire or curiosity of mind are limitless. As we cannot get everything, the best approach is to control the mind, which means having less desire and having more contentment

Tibetans talk of three fundamental stages of learning that amalgamate in meditation: we may first hear or learn from a book; we then reflect and question if this is true of our own experience; the third stage is called meditation, a general term which basically means to practice repeatedly, deepen a familiarity or get habituated with a chosen object or theme. What one focuses on ultimately becomes internalised, spontaneous and naturally experiential. Actualising one's MH takes time and conviction; there is no push-button enlightenment.



The Buddhist contemplative method of mindfulness is an empirical use of first-person introspection, sustained by robust training and rigorous testing of the reliability of experience. The impermanent and immutable phenomenological entity of the mind is in a dynamic and constant flux of evanescent moments. In its normal state, the mind is mostly unfocused, with thoughts moving from one to another in a dissipative and associative manner. In developing mindfulness training, one can develop a highly refined sensitivity to the nature of reality and a transcendent awareness in which the subject may observe the object, or mind. Through this



emergent state of meditative quiescence, the fundamental awareness and nature of the mind begins to reveal itself. Consequently, a profound psychological shift may occur if this path is pursued diligently.

From the Tibetan ontological viewpoint, life is a constant flux of interdependent phenomena with no fixed immutable essence – devoid of any inherent independent existence. In avoiding reification, a mindful detached awareness allows the meditator to observe the non-solid nature of thought as impermanent and ultimately empty or free of attachment. Hence, a detached mindful awareness as a means to look at rather than through experience, to the irreducible reality of phenomena. Mindfulness techniques, in their traditional Buddhist cosmological context, aim to free or liberate the conceptualised self from the illusory nature and karmic cycle of death and rebirth.

Incongruent analysis in diagnosis and treatment are not uncommon between disparate cultural medical concepts. Treating the root cause of suffering is considered the perfect treatment in the TCiE. The primary negative mental factors, ignorance, attachment and anger, are known as the three roots of suffering, or 'The Three Poisons'. Treating symptoms is analogous to cutting the branch of a tree; disease will continue to grow unless treated at the root. A Tibetan

doctor treats the individual as though they are a family member. Tibetans believe these ethics to be quite humane and differ from the Western approach of adopting a quick fix solution.

The Tibetan view of human nature accentuates the cross-cultural commonality that we are all fundamentally the same in our quest for happiness and avoidance of suffering. Tibetans believe that our basic 'Buddha-nature' is compassionate, and have long celebrated the human potential for kindness, acceptance, and the social nature of our species. Compassion is considered a mind, a powerful engine, and a recognition of self with other. The compassionate mind seeks to actively benefit others, and cause no harm.

The Tibetan teachings on the nature of the mind may compliment Western medical science. Tibetans believe that scientists must develop a more holistic awareness of reality; to challenge, experientially explore and think for oneself – not just follow the existing tradition or system. If the researcher does not have equal respect for foreign concepts, they may not come to understand their value. Educating for changes in the existing way of thinking may prove crucial in closing the gap between East-West conceptual considerations and approaches to MH. Health education and practice may benefit by addressing cultural competence and the lack of colloquy in medical pluralism. The development of cross-culturally congruent models of mediation offer more inclusive and scientifically holistic conceptual models of MH, and a logical framework for exploring the Western view of the brain and the Eastern view of the mind.

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The Effects of the Adoption of Information and Communication Technology on Merchant Marines' Health-Seeking Practices

Annamaria Dall'Anese
PhD Anthropology

The world's 1.2 million merchant marines are responsible for transporting around 90% of global cargo. In spite of their importance for the international economy, they have not been featured prominently in the anthropological literature. The reason why even those ethnographers who have conducted fieldwork on this topic have spent very short periods at sea (e.g. Bloor 2005:768) can be related to the challenges in boarding a merchant vessel. These are numerous, and include vaccinations, insurance, training and visas. These difficulties also explain why I decided to present a library-based dissertation (entitled 'The Effects of the Adoption of Information and Communication Technology on Merchant Marines' Health-Seeking Practices').

Drawing upon sources of various types (e.g. anthropological, corporate and medical), my guiding question was: what impact can the implementation of ICT have on the health-seeking practices of cargo-ship communities?

Just as ships in the past used to be an incubator for epidemics, absorbed at one port and spread at the next (Echenberg 2007), they are now a hub of medical information transmitted to and from land, formally and informally. In fact, because of this information transmission, the implementation of ICT on board merchant vessels turns out to be a double-edged sword.

Whilst the upside is perhaps obvious,

the downside is that it can exacerbate the inverse relation between illness and employability. An ICT-empowered telemedicine can lead to sensitive information about seafarers' health being passed on to their employers, thus threatening their occupational chances. Therefore, merchant marines may be tempted to hide their clinical conditions in order to keep a job that allows them to gain economic resources, which in turn contributes to their wellbeing. Clearly, the medical problems that are concealed can deteriorate if left untreated.

I propose a shift from 'right to health' to 'right to illness' to counter this phenomenon. At present, the underlying principle of telemedicine is an idealistic

'right to health' rather than a realistic 'right to be ill'. I suggest that a shift from the expectation that crewmembers should be healthy to the acknowledgement that health does sometimes fail them would entail a more pragmatic approach to the management of sickness on-board. As employers could not, by any good reason, deny their employees the right to be ill, they would be pushed to dissect the notion of illness into less vague and more manageable components.

There is room to be optimistic, though. In the past, if a crewmember was 'under the weather', a ship could contact a doctor on land via radio or satellite telephony. Nowadays, the options offered by telemedicine are manifold, and include email and faster data transmission. This is why modern telemedicine can offer seafarers a level of healthcare comparable to that enjoyed by land-based communities.

Additionally, the informal use of personal communication devices can contribute to seafarers' wellbeing by allowing them to consult medical websites and join online health support groups. Independent internet access can also allow merchant marines to receive the emotional support of their families. This is crucial on board, as I had the opportunity to discover during a brief passage on a cargo ship. In 2009, I sailed from Newcastle, Australia, to Singapore as a passenger/English teacher, which triggered my interest in merchant-marine communities. This



remains a rather uncharted territory in the otherwise densely populated waters of anthropology, and therefore one well-worth exploring.

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The dissertation was completed as part of my MSc in Social and Cultural Anthropology.



Top and left: Officer Wang XiaoShun, whom I met during my voyage

WhatsApping the Field

Pauline Destrée and David Whyte
PhD Anthropology

With thanks to the 2014-2018 PhD cohort for sharing their messages,
and to Tess Altman for comments/editing



Above: Appropriately named fishing boat in Winneba, Ghana

From Yaoundé to Melbourne, Accra to Dushanbe, the flickering lights of messages on our WhatsApp screens jump from icy Irish beaches to an American space station, blending into a Mongolian marketplace and through the sanitised corridors of a London hospital. During the past two years, our UCL 2014-2018 Anthropology PhD cohort has been using WhatsApp to stay in touch in the field.

What's WhatsApp? For those unfamiliar with social media platforms, WhatsApp is a free, encrypted messaging service that enables users to send text messages, documents, images, video, user location

and audio messages on smart phones. Established in 2009, it's now the most widely used messaging application worldwide, with over one billion users.

Sharing the field

As might be expected, throughout fieldwork our cohort has been a physically dispersed bunch, occupying space on every continent excluding Antarctica. As such we are grappling with very different questions in very different contexts. Our fields are our own, and yet at the same time they are being shared amongst us. As a 'live feed' of our lives, this WhatsApp group gradually became a digital headquarters for our 'diasporic network'

of lonely researchers.

Our WhatsApp group materialised into a strong support platform, through which we planned Skype discussions and WhatsApp calls, providing 'live' advice, support, solutions, empathy, safety and emergency help. In the 'real time', ephemeral quality of WhatsApp, we found a comforting sense of 'talking there' – a space of instant discussion and intimacy that became fundamentally part of our everyday fieldwork experience.

Rather than being just another support source as part of a disembedded fieldwork toolkit, social media platforms

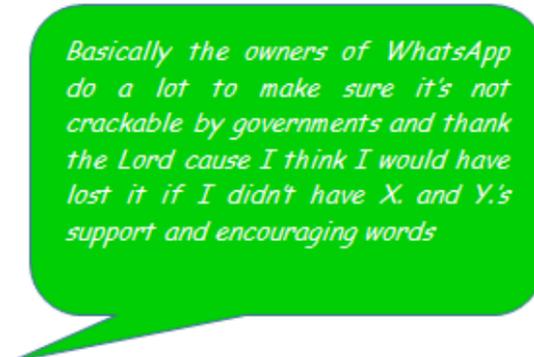
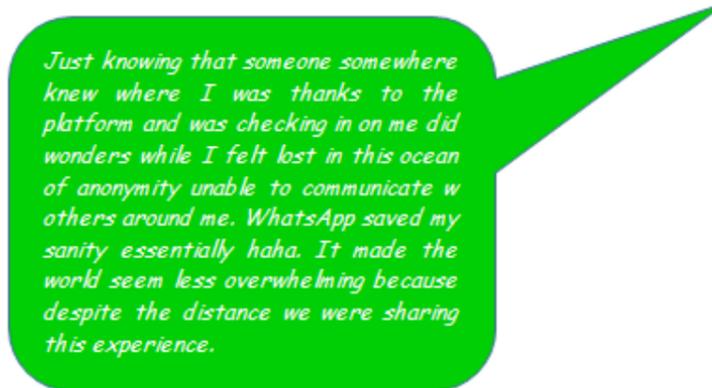


are becoming an integral extension of our fieldsites, challenging the traditional foundations of fieldwork as an individualised, particularistic, place-based and isolated experience.

In Ghana (one of our fieldsites), one would declare: "I'm in Jesus' pocket!" to express confidence in divine care and protection, a highly desired condition of invincibility and security. Through WhatsApp, we were all "in each other's pockets", quite literally – our cohort group a digital salvation at the swipe of our fingers.

Safety and accessibility

In a few cases, WhatsApp became an emergency lifeline. En route to a border zone, one of us suddenly found herself in a series of unfortunate events, as the visit of a foreign dignitary resulted in internet restrictions while simultaneously her credit cards were blocked by the bank.



Without money, or knowledge of the local language, her only means of rescue was WhatsApp – which allowed her to contact a few of us (see WhatsApp bubble) to organise a money transfer as well as checking on her wellbeing and offering support. Thankfully, after a few days the situation cleared and she was able to contact her British bank – but this stands as a testimony to the complicated detours of digital technologies around state controls and border regulations.

We also used the quick 'Share Google Location' link in WhatsApp when confronted with unexpected situations, as in the case below, where a student found her plans for transport (taxi, public bus) thrown off as her informant gestured to his car. While the practical efficacy of this strategy was, of course, limited in cases of real danger, it nonetheless points to the emerging capabilities of digitally-operated safety measures.

Collaboration and smoothing the return from the field

Apart from being a source of comfort, connection and safety, our WhatsApp group has also become an important intellectual platform for scholarly contribution – a "brains trust just a group

text away." Together we have planned and penned a grant proposal, a roundtable discussion and potential entries to peer-reviewed journals. What started as a convenient way of keeping in touch has transformed into an academic platform. All of these set us on a much clearer and more cohesive path when we return from the field. A PhD cohort is its own greatest resource. We are excited to see how WhatsApp and other digital platforms might reframe the experience of fieldwork for following cohorts, thereby transforming the nature of academic collaboration and accessibility.



BODIES, REPRODUCTION, AND PERUVIAN POLITICS

Rebecca Irons
PhD Anthropology

Reproductive governance can be seen as the control over the biological (and therefore reproductive) bodies of its citizens, a concept not dissimilar to the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics, although reproductive governance in this sense can come not only from the state but from within civil society, religious institutions and NGOs as well. In Latin America, Morgan & Roberts (2012) highlight how use of law, morality and coercion works to “produce, monitor, and control reproductive behaviours and population practices” (241), effectively controlling how people think about, and relate to, their reproductive bodies. When better to observe the clash of wills and the visibility of public opinion on the matter than during a general election?

15th June 2016 saw Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (or ‘PPK’ as he is commonly known) elected as the new president of Peru. His opponent? Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of a man who has all the makings of an archetypal villain. President from 1990-2000, Alberto Fujimori’s career involved such highlights as mass human-rights abuses and murder charges, bribing government and religious officials, a self-coup to gain absolute power over congress, and eventual fleeing to his native Japan where he *faxed* in his resignation as president. But perhaps one of his most lasting legacies is the *absence* of children that will be born to the 200,000+ men and women who were forcibly sterilized on his orders, as a form of population control amongst what he saw as an undesirable demographic: the rural poor.

Whilst these mass abuses were kept quiet during his presidency, with testimonies only released towards the end of his second term in 1999, they have finally become more visible. And

during the 2016 elections? Recriminations against *Fujimorismo* and reproductive rights took centre stage.

There were two campaigns of particular interest; one from a grass-roots anti-Keiko protest (‘Keiko NO VA’), and one campaign run by a large Peruvian feminist organisation, Manuela Ramos. Both of these campaigns attack [Alberto] Fujimori’s past abuses and Keiko’s present stance on reproductive and human rights. However, in contrast to what one may originally suppose, that people want less state ‘reproductive governance’, when analysed in context it would appear that they are actually asking for *more*. Furthermore, if Alberto Fujimori was criticised for being too intimately involved and controlling over citizens’ reproductive bodies, then Keiko is arguably criticised for not intervening enough.

The first banner, from the ‘Keiko NO VA’ protest march is a copy of the ATRAZO MENSTRUAL (Menstrual Regulation) advertisements that are found plastered across poorer neighbourhoods. Using a play on an Andean-ethnomedical complaint (delayed menses), when presented in this format, these iconic signs can be recognised as clandestine (and dangerous) abortion. As abortion is illegal in Peru, the ATRAZO MENSTRUAL arguably does not represent direct state abuses, but a lack of state intervention that leads to women seeking dangerous solutions to unwanted pregnancy. Rather than reading this protest as an accusation that Fujimori would directly endanger women, it could be seen as a charge that under her presidency women’s reproductive health would be ignored, and through her negligence be forced into dangerous situations when seeking abortion.

De los 5 partidos líderes, **SOLO 2** incorporan la Educación Sexual Integral en sus planes de gobierno.



¡Ya es hora de **PRIORIZAR** e **IMPLEMENTAR** la Educación Sexual Integral!

Aprende más sobre la ESI en: facebook.com/manuela.peru

The second campaign, from Manuela Ramos, criticises Keiko’s lack of sex-education implementation policy, in comparison to PPK’s pledge to do so. Again, it is Fujimori’s lack of intervention, rather than fears about too much involvement, that is the problem. As the campaign flyer notes, Keiko offers *nada*, whereas PPK proposes to improve information and activities surrounding family planning and sex education, eventually including it in the national curriculum.

These campaigns are interesting because rather than assert a fear about repeats of past-injustices to reproductive bodies, they suggest a fear of lack of intervention; a full 180 it could be suggested. Yet who was it that suffered the forced sterilizations, and were they involved in these campaigns?

The majority of abuses were performed on people from the rural Andes. The ‘Keiko NO VA’ campaign, however, was in Lima, the capital. Manuela Ramos’s campaign,



whilst speaking for the whole country, could also be seen to be catering to the needs of middle and upper-class women, rather than the poorer sub-sectors, as have many Latin American feminist organisations in the past (Rousseau, 2009). Is sex education in schools a main priority when some rural communities don’t even have schools to go to in the first place? Does everyone encourage a renewed state intervention in reproductive health, or would those affected by the past abuses prefer that the state retreat from any ‘reproductive governance’?

Only time will tell what progress, if any, will be made for reproductive rights during the presidency of PPK. But for now, the

call for more state intervention in the bodies of its citizens has seemingly been answered. If, and how, this may affect the experiences and subjectivities of those Peruvians whose voices were less visible during the elections remains to be seen.

Morgan, L. & Roberts, E. 2012. Reproductive Governance in Latin America. *Anthropology & Medicine* 19:2, 241-254

Rousseau, S. 2009. *Women’s Citizenship in Peru: The Paradoxes of Neopopulism in Latin America*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York.

UCL Changemakers Update: PhD Reintegration Retreat to Wales

*Tess Altman, PhD Anthropology
with thanks to Rosalie Allain, Maria Ignacia Arteaga and Pauline Destrée
for comments/editing*

Deep in North Wales, eight anthropologists in a rustic stone barn saw two locals walking by. Pressing their faces to the window, they jostled for pens and notebooks yelling: 'Informants! Informants!'

The joke, an inversion of the classic Far Side cartoon (where stereotypical 'natives' dash around their hut hiding TVs and record players while one warns of incoming 'Anthropologists! Anthropologists!') was the brain-child of fellow retreat-goer Jo Aiken; just one of many anthropologically-inspired hilarities on our recent 5-day PhD retreat, organised as part of a grant funded by UCL Changemakers and the Anthropology Department.

Through the grant we were piloting a new 'fieldwork curriculum' that seeks to cultivate strong cohorts for pre-fieldwork preparation and post-fieldwork reintegration.

The retreat was about reconnecting and transitioning into the writing-up phase. We travelled for 6 hours in a minibus with 14 bags of food which we lugged over a stile and up a muddy path-turned-river in the dark and rain. A real bonding experience.

Surrounded by dramatic mountains and around a roaring fire, we debriefed about diverse field experiences, gave in-depth feedback on writing, and engaged in high-intensity group writing sessions. Work was interspersed with hikes, yoga, pub trips, and visits to our new sheep pals. The retreat brought us closer as colleagues and friends: we now understand much more about each others' work and have a stockpile of in-jokes. This was an extremely rewarding and productive experience and we hope it can be repeated!

Upcoming Events

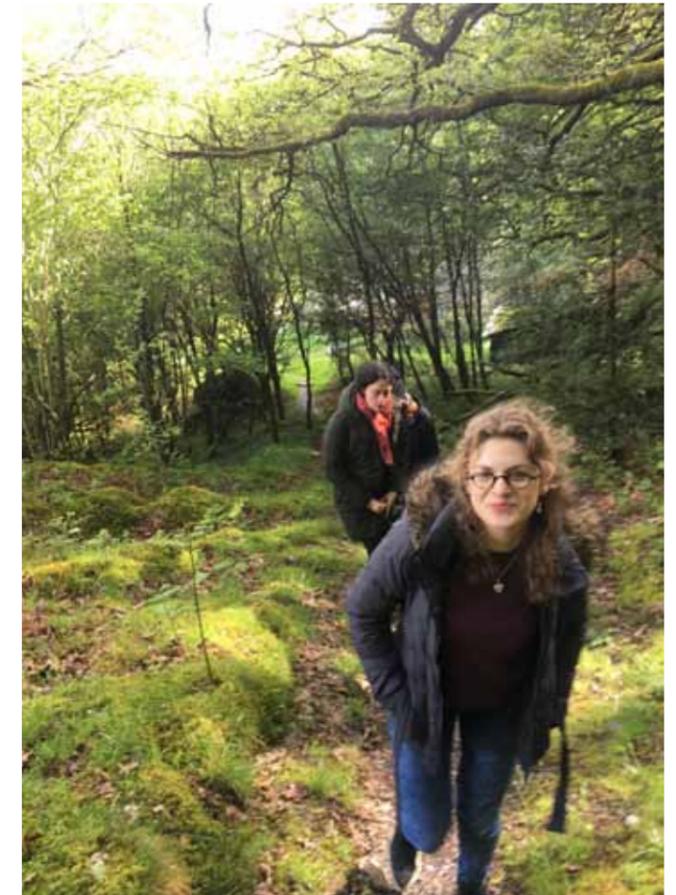
During our retreat we planned the following events:

Summer Thesis Writing Sessions: Fridays 2-6pm from 16 June to 15 September in the department – all post-fieldwork PhD students welcome. Contact Tess at tessa.altman.14@ucl.ac.uk or Ignacia at maria.arteaga.13@ucl.ac.uk

Saloon Sessions: Regular get-togethers for pre-and post-

fieldwork students to share fieldwork experiences and fieldwork questions in a relaxed environment over coffee. Contact Ignacia at maria.arteaga.13@ucl.ac.uk

Fieldwork Preparation Panel Discussion: To be held in December 2017 in the department for pre-fieldwork PhD students. Post-fieldwork students will present on the topics of gender, power and positionality; risk and safety; ethics and accessibility; and mental health and wellbeing. Risk officers, counselors and staff will share handy tips and resources. Watch this space! More details to follow shortly.



Chimp&See: Citizen Science Explores Wild Ape Behaviour

Kristin Haverkamp
MSc Human Evolution and Behaviour

Hunting for asteroids to protect our planet, decoding Darwin's handwriting to process thousands of records of natural history, and sending in samples of Fido's saliva to better understand canine evolution – these are just a few examples of how volunteers have been working together with researchers to better understand some of science's most interesting questions. A citizen science project is born when researchers require public participation in providing and/or analysing huge amounts of data. Since April 2015, volunteers have been contributing to an exciting project by exploring and analysing footage of wild chimpanzee behaviour in the forests of Africa.

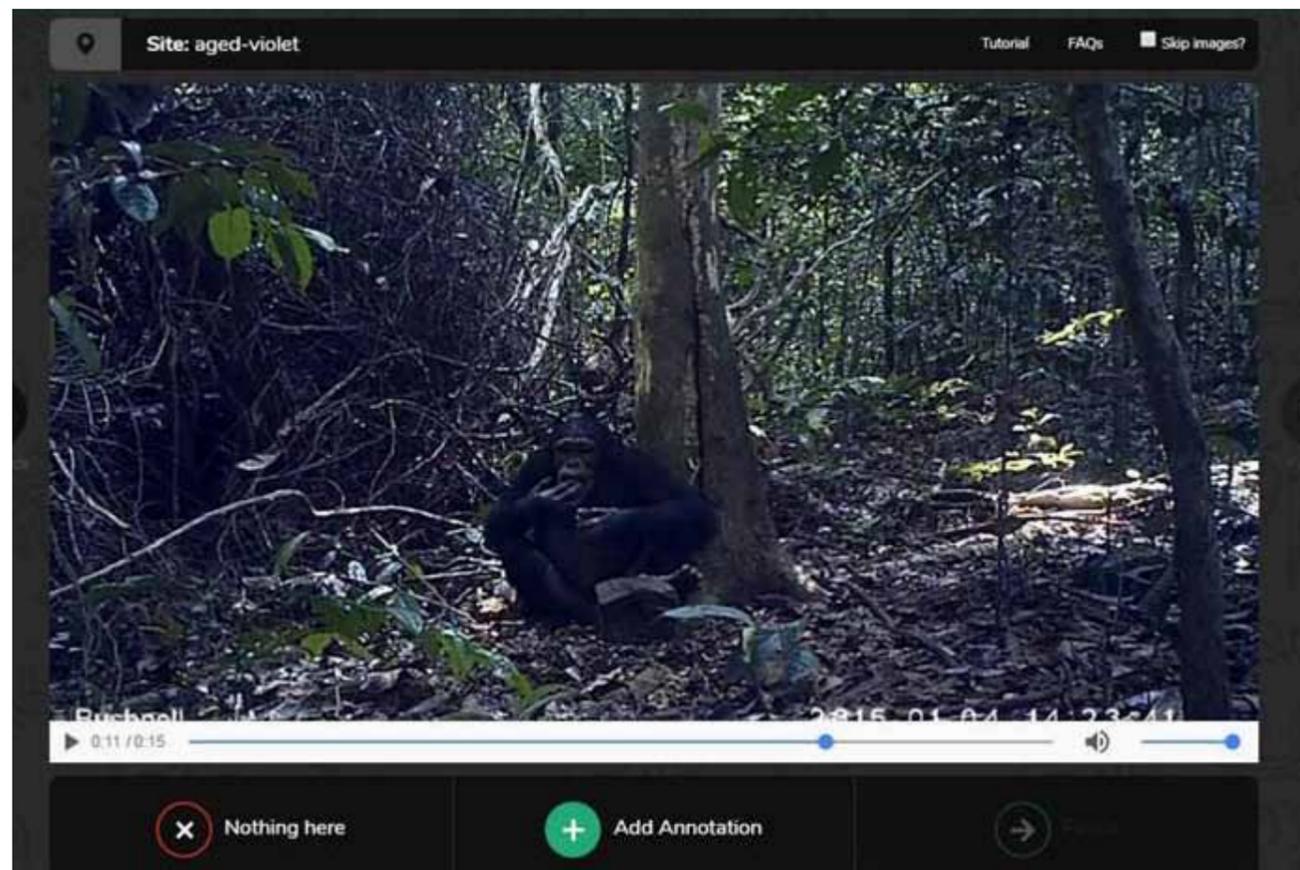
Chimp&See (chimpanzee.org) is an online citizen science project initiated by

the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI-EVA) in Leipzig, Germany and developed by Zooniverse. The project aims to collect demographic and behavioural data on wild chimpanzees (and other animal species) living in the forests of Africa by analysing footage captured by camera traps. As part of the Pan-African Programme: The Cultured Chimpanzee (panafrican.eva.mpg.de), cameras were installed in dozens of sites across Africa, many of them hardly explored, by teams of trained volunteers (one of whom is a recent UCL anthropology graduate, Theophile Desarmeaux, who roughed it in Lopé National Park in Gabon). The data from the project will improve our understanding of the behavioural and cultural diversity of chimpanzees and may help to protect them and the associated species that

share these habitats. Scientists also hope to learn more about humans, such as how the earliest hominids lived and evolved.

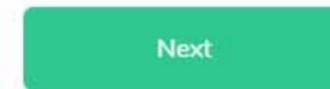
Thanks to a collaboration between my supervisor, Volker Sommer, and primatologists at the MPI-EVA, I have analysed thousands of clips from four field sites that are each home to one of the four subspecies of chimpanzees. For my dissertation, I will use the data from these video clips to investigate female social relationships.

Models on the evolution of primate social organization predict that relationships between females should be characterized by relatively weak or no bonds, due to female dispersal and thus to fewer surrounding kin (Sterck et al. 1997);



Welcome to Chimp & See!

Thanks for checking out Chimp & See! In this project, you'll watch videos taken by various camera traps in Africa. As you mark the behavior of chimpanzees and other animals, you'll help our researchers learn more about both the environment and human evolution.



however, findings from long-term field sites suggest that the degree to which female chimpanzees are gregarious (i.e. social) is not consistent across subspecies. This variation can be driven by both social and ecological factors such as the number of females in oestrus and resource aggregation (e.g., Wittiger & Boesch 2013). The classic model therefore fails to take into account the possibility that females are highly social in male philopatric systems (Lehmann & Boesch 2008).

The data gathered from the camera trap footage will allow us to examine the issue on a broader scale than was done in the past. While female gregariousness has been studied in the Eastern (*Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii*) and Western (*P. t. verus*) chimpanzee subspecies, much less is known about the social lives of Central (*P. t. troglodytes*) females, and even less about Nigeria-Cameroonian (*P. t. ellioti*) females (e.g., Sommer & Ross 2011). I hope to be able to present the findings of my research in a future issue!

If you wish to get involved with the project, it is easy: simply hop online and start exploring clips! Citizen scientists range from complete novices with no experience watching animals to primatologists and wildlife experts with years of expertise, so all are welcome regardless of experience level. There is a short tutorial that will assist you in navigating the site as well as a "field guide" to help you identify species and behaviours. Although chimpanzees are only present in about 2% of all clips, you may run into the occasional passel of red river hogs in pursuit of food, a troop of sooty mangabeys with a batch of new infants, or even a forest elephant on its bathroom break.



Another way to contribute is by heading over to the discussion boards (<https://talk.chimpanzee.org/>), where you can assist in identifying individual chimpanzees from different field sites. So far, more than 250 chimps have been identified and named; if you discover a match (the same unknown individual in at least two different clips) you might be able to name an individual as well! But be sure to check out the list before you settle on one – Mojo is already taken.

Become a citizen scientist and start exploring at www.chimpanzee.org!

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INDIGENOUS ELEPHANT HUNTERS AND EXTREME CITIZEN SCIENCE

Simon Hoyte (@SimonHoyte)
 Extreme Citizen Science Research Group
 (ExCiteS)

One thing most people agree upon is that the conservation of biodiversity is a good thing. It's good for the ecosystem services on which our survival depends (the anthropocentric view), but of course it's also good for the survival of endangered species which have an intrinsic right to be alive (the ecocentric view). Unfortunately, the exclusionist methodology of 'fortress conservation', characteristic of colonial-era Africa, whereby 'wild' areas are considered best preserved by forcibly evicting any human presence – that includes indigenous peoples who have ancestral claims to the land – is still employed in contemporary conservation efforts. However, consult any anthropologist with local knowledge and one quickly learns that natural spaces considered 'wildernesses' are largely a figment of a modern Western

imagination. Indeed, indigenous peoples have been shaping and co-evolving with Earth's ecosystems ever since *Homo sapiens* emerged as a species.

After thinking about this in relation to current conservation issues, one arrives at a seemingly clear conclusion: effective conservation cannot involve the expulsion of indigenous and local communities (ILCs), either on environmental or ethical grounds. Instead, such communities must be directly engaged in protecting their local biodiversity, and in having a say in how to manage the forest resources on which they depend. It is not, after all, ILCs hunting for food which is contributing to the Anthropocene's biodiversity crash, but rather the illegal wildlife trade and land-use change.



Forest Elephant: By dsg-photo.com (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

The Extreme Citizen Science Research Group (ExCiteS) at UCL, spearheaded by Jerome Lewis and Muki Haklay, is developing tools which aim to give power back to those who know their environments best: indigenous and

local people. An app created by ExCiteS, 'Sapelli', has been trialled in the Republic of Congo alongside the indigenous Mbendjele people in an attempt to reverse the power dynamics of resource control (see Gill Conquest's article in *Anthropolitan*,

Issue 12). However, in an attempt to focus primarily on the illegal wildlife trade, a new and exciting project has been launched in collaboration with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). Working in the South and East regions of Cameroon, an area

of the Congo Basin rife with poaching (of forest elephants, western-lowland gorillas, chimpanzees and pangolins), the effort will develop specific Sapelli projects in collaboration with chosen villages. For the first time, both indigenous Baka hunter-gatherers and Bantu farmers will be provided with the means of reporting and monitoring their experiences of poaching and poachers in their forest through using a completely text-free interface. Users can also use Sapelli to report abuse at the hands of eco-guards (a common occurrence amongst the Baka who serve as easy targets for corrupt officials). The methodology adopted relies crucially on a free, prior, and informed consent process (FPIC), with every aspect – from designing the icons to deciding who is able to access the data and how it will be used – discussed openly with communities, ensuring that they have the final say. I've recently returned from the Dja Biosphere Reserve for the third time, having identified and talked with communities about their concerns for the forest and their interest in joining the project, guided by Samuel Leboh and Simeon Eyebe from ZSL. Five villages have now successfully completed the process and are already providing valuable data to take on the illegal wildlife trade.

The importance and urgency of this project is two-fold. Firstly, greatly enhanced protection of the aforementioned species is critical for their survival – gorillas are otherwise likely to be a relic of the past within ten years (Nellemann *et al.* 2010). Secondly, those who, more than any others, deserve the right to live and hunt in the forest, yet are forcibly removed and continually marginalised, can finally be empowered to regain some control over the resources of their ancestral land. It is, after all, only through fundamentally shifting the very concept of conservation to work cohesively with local people rather than antagonistically, that biodiversity and ILCs have a hope of a sustainable future.

Nellemann, C., Redmond, I. and Refisch, J. (eds). 2010. *The Last Stand of the Gorilla – Environmental Crime and Conflict in the Congo Basin*. UNEP

Gill Conquest

1984-2017



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Gill Conquest on 5 May 2017. Diagnosed with late stage cancer in 2016, Gill approached her illness with dignity, courage and positivity, bringing out the best in the community of friends and family that surrounded her until the end. We want to mark here the significant impact Gill has had on those staff and students lucky enough to have known her in the anthropology department.

Gill was a polymath who beamed with intelligence and friendliness in equal measure. She was a visionary

anthropologist, a skilled geek, a humanist, an activist for social and environmental justice, an artist, a designer, a photographer, a film-maker, a sailor, an actress, a sci-fi writer, a comedian, a poet, a story-teller, a dancer, a gamer, and so much more. Not only was she good at all these things, she excelled at many of them. This multi-talented and exceptional woman has made a loud impact on the lives of all those who knew her despite her tragically short, but very bright life.

Gill joined the anthropology department

as a Masters student in Anthropology, Environment and Development in 2011. Her Masters' dissertation examined the potential of new technologies to support environmental justice movements led by indigenous peoples in the Congo Basin as part of the Extreme Citizen Science (ExCiteS) research group. The high quality of this research led to her recruitment as a PhD student in 2013 to study the ExCiteS project supervised by Jerome Lewis and Haidy Geismar. Her multi-disciplinary project researched both the struggles of forest people in the Congo Basin and the geographers, computer

scientists, and anthropologists working with them to develop mobile applications to address issues they identified.

Gill was remarkably intellectually generous, constantly seeking to understand issues from as many perspectives as possible, so perceptive in her comments and constructive in her criticisms. She was an intellectual adventurer willing to explore daunting questions and ideas, to equally enthusiastically examine them from both mainstream and more marginal positions, to deftly jump between disciplines and find the productive interfaces between them, and to take on whatever was required to better understand the issues she was exploring.

This wasn't limited to just books and journals. She learnt French and Lingala to work in Central Africa, Portuguese to work in the Brazilian Amazon, and she voraciously read ethnographies of the groups living in these places. Working closely with forest people, she developed new iconic languages to represent their environmental knowledge in ways they felt would empower them and improve their situation. She mastered software programming to be able to independently support them develop bespoke interfaces for smartphones that enabled them to document and communicate their concerns to powerful outsiders. To understand the parameters of advocacy for these marginalised groups she studied lengthy international and national environmental and human rights legislation, attended international meetings and workshops, including the last COP meeting in Paris with the Ashaninka delegation from the Brazilian Amazon. She also wrote funding proposals to support local NGOs and their projects in the Congo Basin, copy edited several PhD theses and took a year-long course in Human Computer Interaction to better understand how to improve the ExCiteS research group's work.

Her research was exemplary in not simply examining what exists, but in its reflexive engagement with co-developing solutions to transform situations of environmental injustice, cultural discrimination and social marginalisation. While supporting Pygmy forest hunter-gatherers and their agriculturalist neighbours, Gill learnt

about the intricacies and details of tropical forest ecology, of tropical hunting and gathering, of subsistence farming techniques and crops, of the modern industrial logging industry and the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria, of wildlife conservation strategies and law enforcement practices, and the problems and issues facing these different groups and organisations. She could slip effortlessly between tough training sessions with busy management staff in a huge multi-national logging company in the morning to interviews with non-literate hunter-gatherers in the afternoon, and then studying our research group and advising us on social and technological issues in the evening. Her energy and enthusiasm were boundless.

In classic Gill style, she did not balk or hesitate in taking on some of the most complex modern challenges: she was committed to the idea of sustainability in a sophisticated way. Understanding the impossibility of constant growth on a finite planet, Gill did not seek to promote sustainability by perpetuating the current system, but rather by encouraging, supporting and creating spaces for cultural diversity and alternative lifestyles to thrive and live well together. She worked determinedly in creating tools and spaces to facilitate non-Western, non-scientific knowledge systems to be taken seriously, and to interact on a more equal basis in key environmental decision-making processes. She was designing for the pluriverse.

Her theoretical work focused on how to articulate the process of 'futuring' – of turning dreams, or myths as she considered them, into reality. By understanding and demystifying the processes involved in invention and innovation she identified the productive importance of mess and challenge in furthering the processes by which such myths become reality. This is a subtle and perceptive conclusion that I am deeply sorry she could never articulate completely.

To work with Gill was a pleasure shared by all who did so. She was attentive to whatever needed doing, and proactively doing it, whether collecting firewood, providing inspiration with a thoughtful comment, or simply cheering everyone

up with a loud joke and big smile. She was the emotional and intellectual glue of the ExCiteS group, ensuring that despite our different disciplinary biases we still managed to understand each other and work productively together. Gill will be terribly missed. We are very grateful for the extraordinary contribution that she made to the development of what is now called Extreme Citizen Science.

Gill was a huge amount of fun. In Brazzaville she once took us out dancing. We entered a mirrored club full of well-dressed Congolese dancers facing the mirrored walls, admiring their own manoeuvres. Finding the space in the middle, Gill began her exuberant free-style wild dancing to the thumping Congo-Rumba beat. Within seconds the Congolese stopped watching their reflections and were transfixed in admiration for this brightly coloured white girl bouncing around them with gay abandon.

Gill felt profoundly connected to the Congo forest and the BaYaka Pygmies she lived and worked with there. With a gesture rarely extended to outsiders, the women invited Gill to become an initiate of their most sacred ritual association: Ngoku. Knowing the ethnography, she understood their religious life and appreciated what this meant. Perhaps their religion appealed to her because it is not based on worshipping a person or a dogma, but exclusively on song and dance to take all who participate into a special world of time, where quality eclipses duration and people speak with the forest, play with forest spirits, connect with and enact mythical epics, and affirm their commitment to their profoundly egalitarian society. My old friend Bokonyo often ended his public speeches with advice that Gill strongly approved of: "Laugh a lot [she would have added 'loudly!'], and like people who laugh a lot!"

Jerome Lewis
Reader in Social Anthropology
Co-director of the Extreme Citizen Science Research Group (ExCiteS)



/UCLanthropology

Cover photo courtesy of María Martín-Torres

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