

ANTHROPOLOGICAL

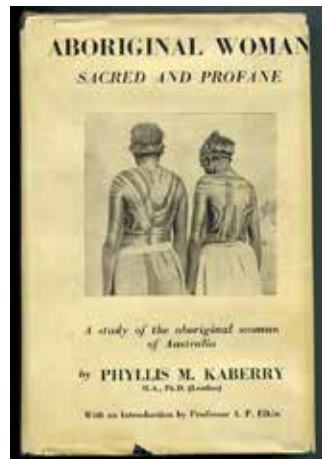
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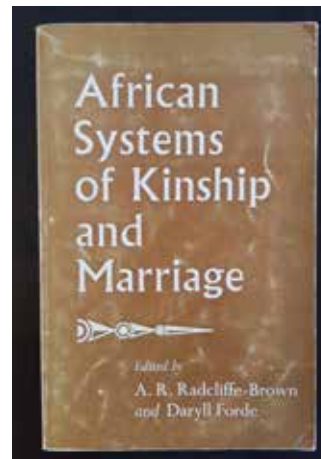
Special Issue: Anth75+@UCL – a departmental history since 1945



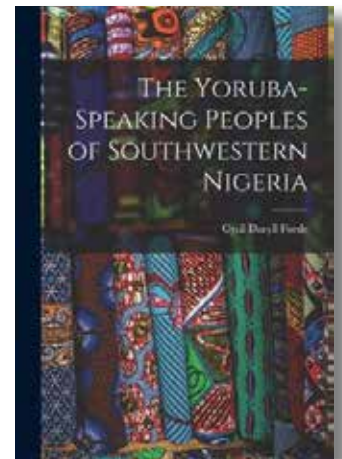
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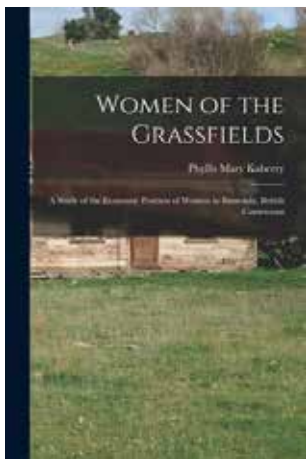
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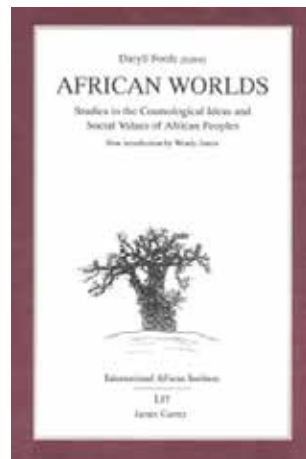
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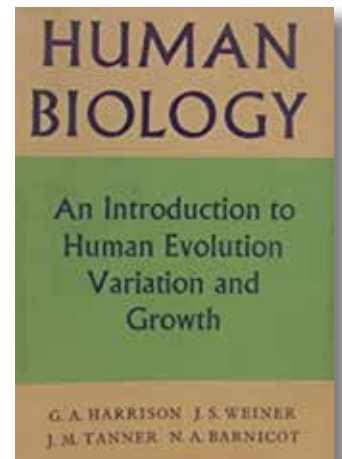
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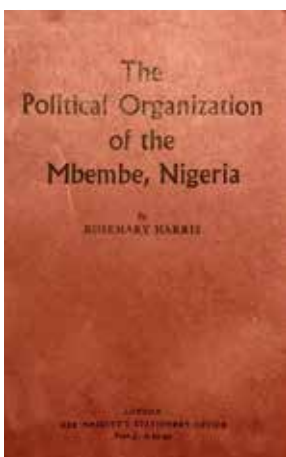
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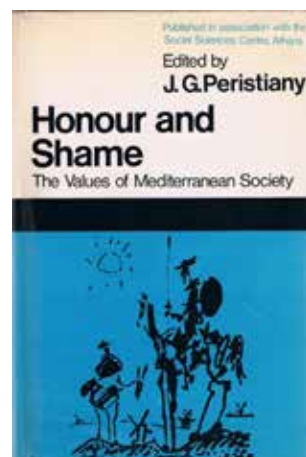
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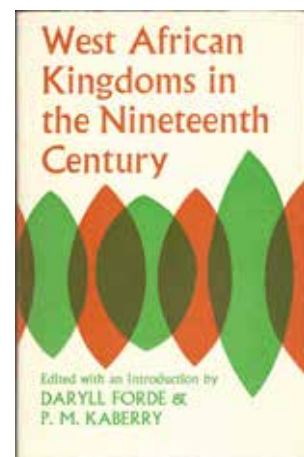
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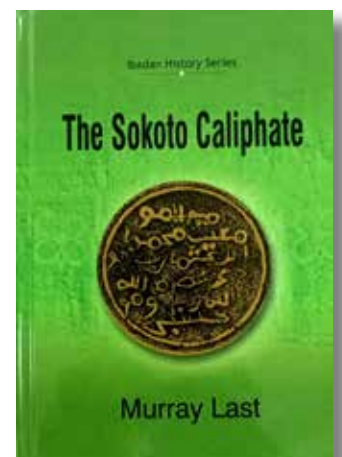
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Anthropolitan | Spring 2023

A WORD OF WELCOME

Dear Readers,

The Department of Anthropology, back in 2020, celebrated its 75th anniversary; UCL's venerated Cloisters as well as our own building at 14 Taviston Street, inaugurated in 2006, were awash with scores of students, alumni and VIPs, enjoying talks, performances, music and catering galore. That, at least, was the plan. Until the grand event got scuppered by that now infamous nucleic acid molecule that went viral...

Accordingly, my own role has been scaled back from MC to GE – that is, from master of ceremony to guest editor. Because, instead of reviving 'life' celebrations, we have settled for this special issue of our departmental magazine, the *Anthropolitan*.

Fancifully entitled 'Anth75+@ UCL – a departmental history since 1945', the booklet presents material originally written for our anniversary happening. Still, given their 'historical' tone, these contributions are rather timeless. Hopefully, they will enlighten and entertain a wide readership – from current students, staff and administrators at departmental, faculty and university level to academia at large and even the wider public.

The volume assembles six texts, most notably Phil Burnham's reconstruction of the development of anthropology at UCL. Phil, whose association with the department dates back half a century, was able to provide a 'long view' in terms of a retrospective, given that he personally knew key figures and characters who, for the younger generation of students and staff, are mere names, such as Daryll Forde, Mary Douglas, Nigel Barnicot or Phyllis Kaberry (whose extraordinary achievements are honoured in a separate essay). The narrative delves

into the past, present and future of our institution, not shying away from critical reflections upon topics such as colonialism and gender, but also chronicling a rich intellectual journey that began when WWII had just ended.

The department has been the intellectual home for hundreds of PhD students and professional anthropologists. Many joined from other parts of the globe, being messengers of disruptive thinking, and many moved on to other institutions, taking along an experience textured by their stint at UCL. Four prominent shakers and movers were so kind to ruminate about the influence UCL had on their careers: Howard Morphy, Barbara Hendrie, Robin Dunbar and Leslie Aiello.

The issue also sports covers of publications by former and recent staff members (plus write-ups of some impressive doctoral thesis), mostly books, but also jackets of journals edited by departmental academics. The portfolio begins with Daryll Forde's iconic 1934 textbook 'Habitat, Economy and Society', which set the tone of

his efforts to start, a decade later, a 'proper' anthropology department at UCL. Mind the gap: the 124 featured covers, the vast majority of them first-edition jackets, are a mere fraction of our published output. There are hundreds more books, not to speak of thousands of research contributions to journals and edited volumes. (Given that biological anthropologists tend to publish their findings as articles and not monographs, these colleagues are, somewhat unfairly, underrepresented in the cover collection.)

The chronology of titles and authors imprinted on those jackets reveals how the subjects of inquiry have evolved and changed – but how we were always 'broad-based' in representing both social as well as biological aspects of anthropology. Or, as the old chestnut goes, engraved in stone in a slab which graces the entrance to our building: 'Anthropology is the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities'.

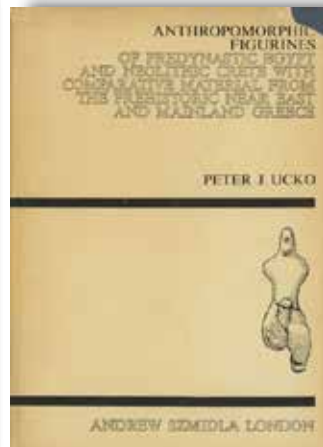
With this, I wish happy historizing – Volker



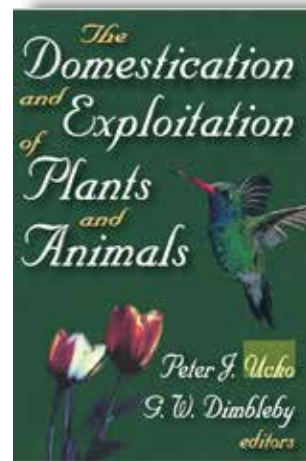
Volker Sommer, Emeritus Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology, taught in the department from 1996–2020 (v.sommer@ucl.ac.uk)



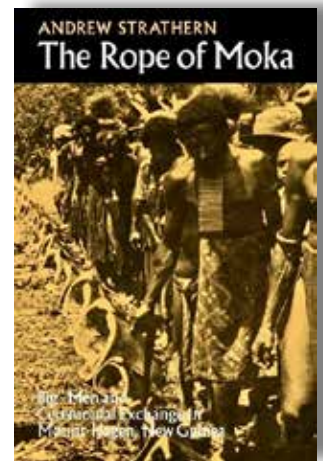
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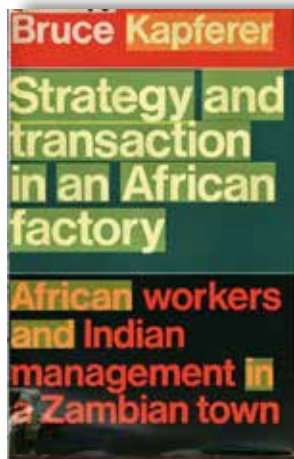
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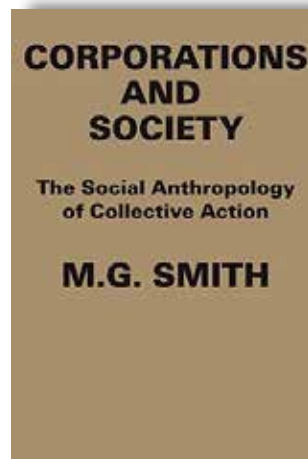
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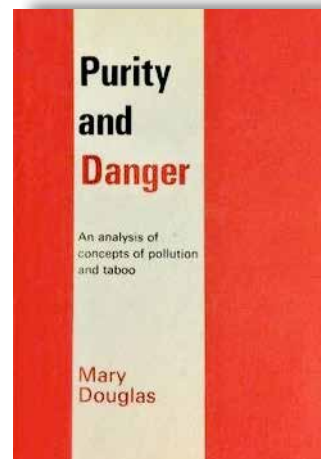
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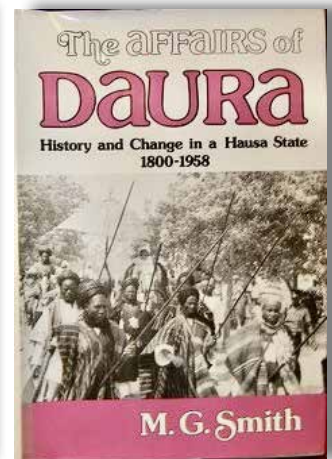
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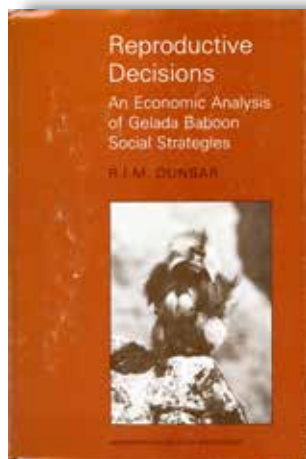
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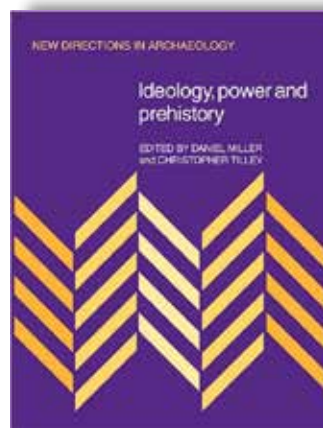
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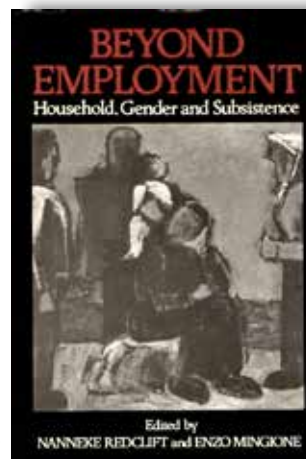
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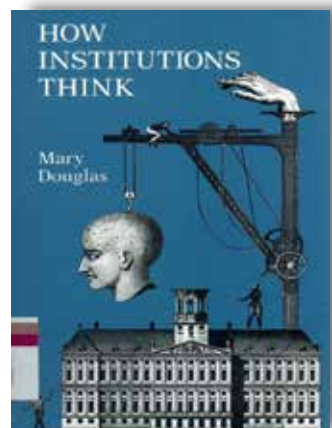
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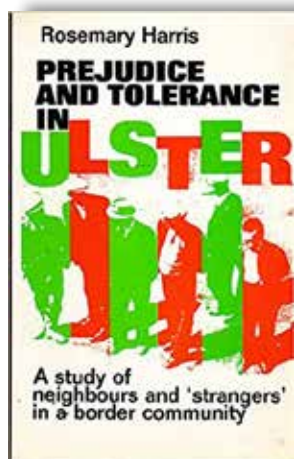
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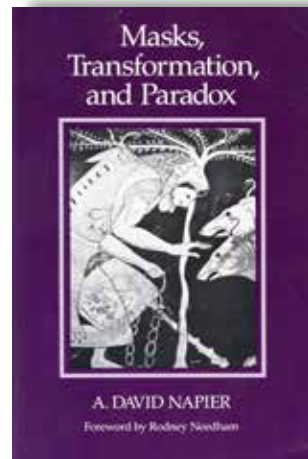
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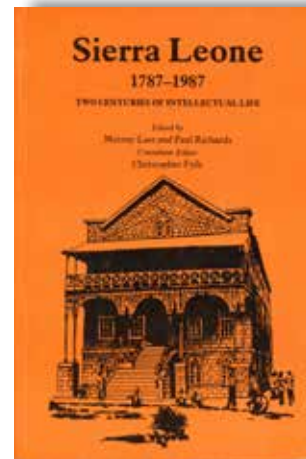
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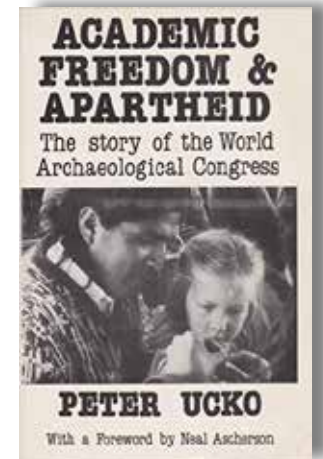
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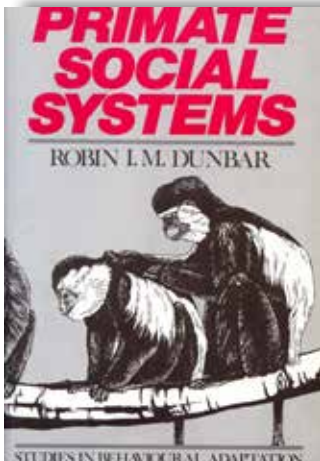
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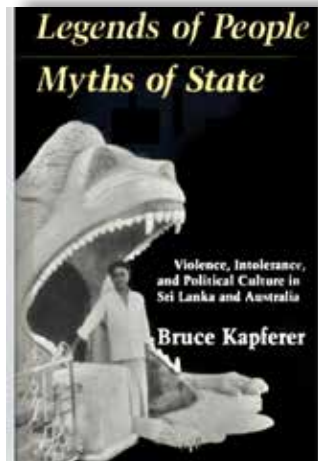
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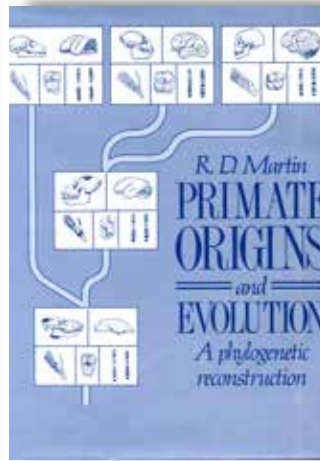
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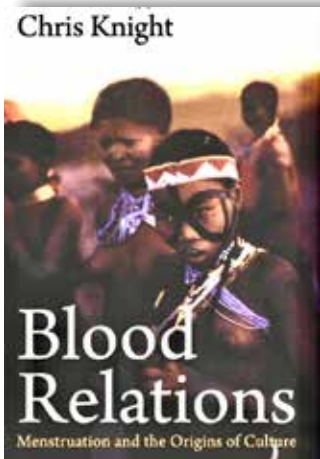
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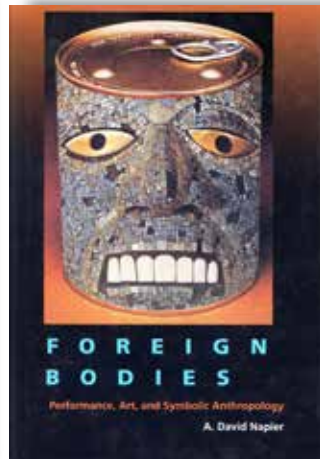
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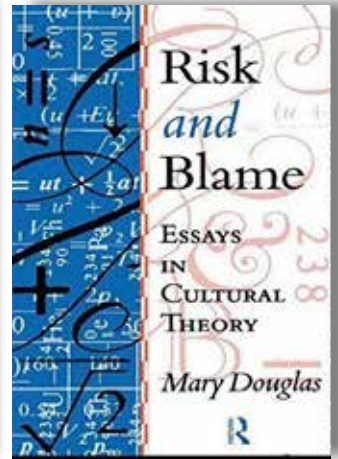
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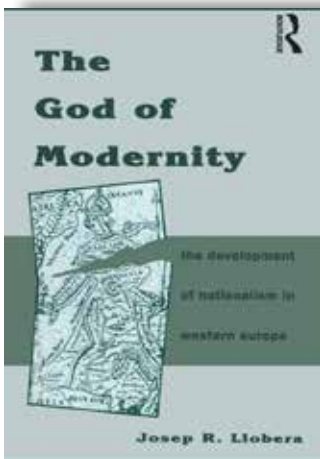
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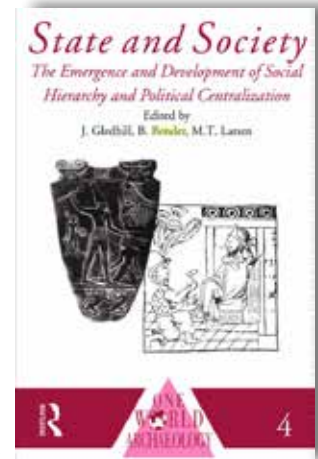
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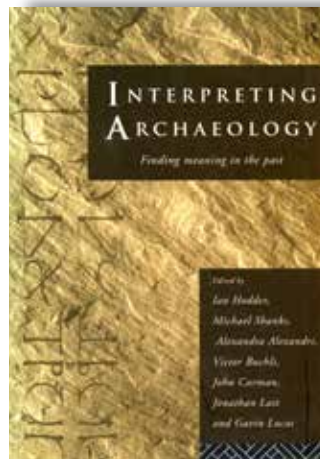
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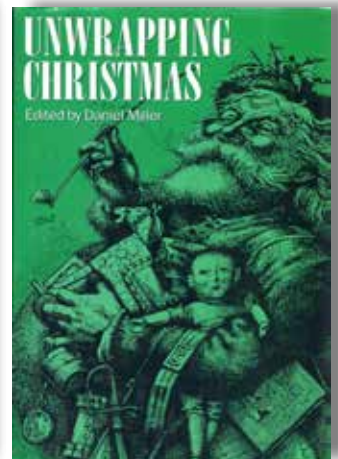
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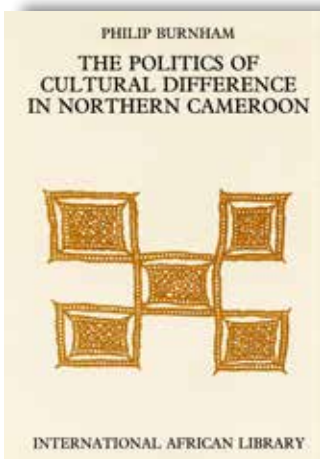
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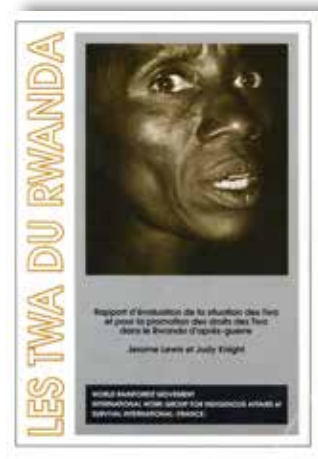
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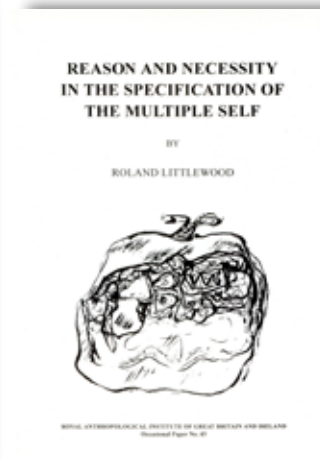
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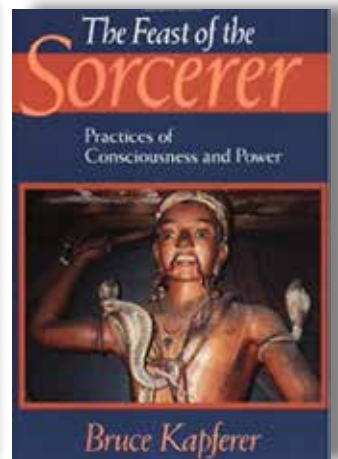
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ANTHROPOLOGY AT UCL: 75+ YEARS IN THE MAKING

Phil Burnham



Central Campus of UCL, founded in 1826 as London University (Photo David Iliff, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Two Approaches Under One Roof – and Questions to Ask

The Department of Anthropology at UCL recently had its 75th anniversary. This is a reason to celebrate, to reflect and look back at how it all began – with, of course, the future in mind. But before we reconstruct the history of our institution through brief notes on individuals and ideas that shaped its course, some general remarks may provide context.

Anthropology is the study of humans – the word deriving from the Greek words *ánthrōpos* ('human') and *lógos* ('study' or 'discourse'). As our 2020 website proclaims, we study humanity in all its aspects: from our evolution as a species, to our vast variety of social forms and practices. Thus, two main strands of exploration find themselves under one roof: biological anthropology (alternatively called physical anthropology) and social anthropology (alternatively called cultural anthropology). This two-in-one approach is embodied in an engraving at the entrance to our departmental building: 'Anthropology is the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities.' That sounds paradisiacal. However, there is a darker reason for these two rather distinct approaches to the generation of knowledge – which will often disagree and squabble – to find themselves under the same roof.

Both these anthropological perspectives have roots in an ideology which had its heyday in the 19th century: the teleological concept that history has a goal. In the biological realm, so the narrative went, this progression is evidenced through the evolution from lower to higher forms of life, with humans the obvious climax. In the cultural realm, advancement was marked by an alleged societal sequence from savagery via barbarism to civilisation as the high point, including a religious succession from animism via polytheism to monotheism. Consequently, the discipline, in its early days, aimed to provide evidence that humans are the pinnacle of physical evolution, and that European Christendom is the pinnacle of social evolution. Thus, in hindsight, there is no denying that anthropology has

been borne out of supremacist beliefs.

The schools of both biological and cultural evolutionism supported justifications to exert power, exploit and dominate others – whether non-human animals or non-white, non-Christian humans. Consequently, early anthropological practices were exercises to exoticise others, and to identify that 'anthropological difference' which separated humans from 'brute' animals, and 'civilised' Europeans from 'primitive' people. This agenda was well served by the inherent bias of anthropological exploration: the gaze of a white man.

Of course, over time, these supremacist viewpoints and the imperialist project of studying the exotic and foreign were questioned and slowly replaced. In biological anthropology, the concept of progress was substituted with 'adaptive radiation', i.e., the recognition that evolution is a process of change during which life-forms well suited to their environments will nevertheless go extinct later on, and that dividing them into higher and lower is pointless. In cultural anthropology, the stage-concept of evolutionism turned out to be empirically baseless and was superseded by 'cultural relativism', i.e., the recognition that values and social practices should not be judged against the criteria of others.

Still, as will be evident from the following brief history, the ideology of progress as well as the heritage of colonial practices echo well into the present. It is only recently that UCL has begun to engage with these problematic aspects. For example, the university has conducted an *'Inquiry into the History of Eugenics at UCL'* (UCL 2020). Similarly, our department has made efforts to set a new tone, reset relationships and create a context for conversation on institutionalised racism, classism and ableism. Thus, a student-led initiative has matured into a methodical effort to decolonise our curriculum, and the department, as of 2020, has instituted a permanent anti-racism committee.

Clearly, ongoing reflection will be necessary. Here are some of the questions we need to ask ourselves to devise critical analyses and practical changes:

– Our department was founded when Britain was a major colonial power. To which degree did anthropologists use their knowledge and practice to perpetuate political control and economic exploitation of other parts of the globe? Did they ever reflect critically on this or was the marriage of anthropology and colonialism rather seamless and taken for granted?

– Similarly, much early anthropological research was funded by bodies with direct links to colonial projects (e.g., the Colonial Office and the Colonial Social Science Research Council) or unfettered capitalism (e.g., the Rockefeller and the Ford Foundations, with money derived from oil and automobiles). Is there evidence that grants were tied to expectations of loyalty to the funders?

– To which degree did anthropological research projects construct inferior 'cultural others', e.g. by labelling people as 'primitives', 'natives' or 'indigenes'?

– Contemporary anthropologists often view concepts of 'race' as the result of racism, not its prerequisite. Thus, did our research and practice aid essentialist, purist ideologies by reifying terms such as 'mixed race'?

– Our department holds ethnographic and biological collections. Do we have reason to consider the restitution of artefacts and remains? Similarly, our collections hold many photographs of anthropologists depicting them with unnamed 'study subjects'. Can we display such images, if only to raise consciousness that they reflect colonial and neo-colonial hierarchies?

– To which degree were (and are) our 'applied' agendas driven by 'saviour interventionism', whether old-style colonial, neo-colonial or motivated by Western feminism, e.g. with respect to 'empowering women' or 'saving the environment'?

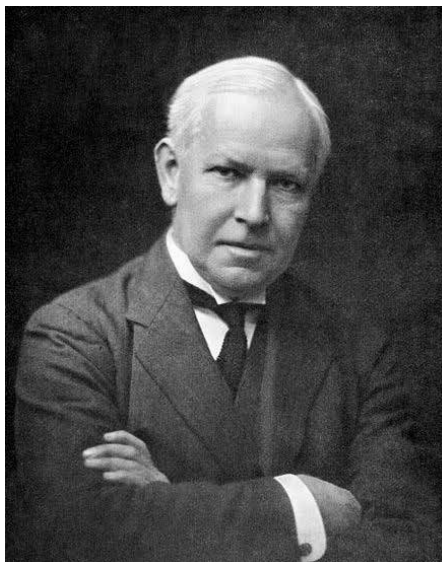
– How has the demographic make-up of the department's academics, support staff and student body changed over time, e.g. with respect to gender, sexual lives, socioeconomic background, geographical origins or age? Have we become more inclusive and diverse?

Many facets of the following brief historical account can and should be interrogated against such issues. In any case, our discipline has a long way to go to recognize our complicity in discriminatory policies and practices and transform our approaches for the good. With that, we may well have enough on our hands until our centenary.

The Prehistory of Anthropology at UCL

Although the department in its modern guise was created in 1945 with the appointment of Daryll Forde as professor, this was not the first presence of anthropology at University College London. The subject initially emerged at UCL within the Anatomy Department as a result of the research interests of Professor Sir Grafton Elliot Smith (1871–1937). Elliot Smith, as he was usually known, was an Australian who had studied medicine at the University of Sydney. Having established a reputation as a comparative neuroanatomist, he secured a travelling fellowship that took him to Cambridge in 1896 (Stocking 1996: 210–213). Over the next several years, he undertook extensive studies of animal and human brains, becoming a leading authority on primate brain evolution. Appointed Professor of Anatomy at the School of Medicine in Cairo, he had the opportunity to study the numerous ancient human remains that were being excavated in Egypt at that time and became interested in techniques of mummification. Following his return to England in 1909, in 1911 he published a volume entitled *The Ancient Egyptians and Their Influence upon the Civilization of Europe*, which reflected Elliot Smith's growing conviction that Egypt was the source from which had developed ancient megalithic civilisations around the world. 'Small groups of people, moving mainly by sea, settled at certain places and there made rude imitations of the Egyptian monuments of the Pyramid Age' (Smith 1911, ix).

Elliot Smith's underlying supremacist ideology is evident in his biological work where he maintains that large-brained humans evolved in Europe as well as in his archaeological work where he claims that all major inventions were made by European–Mediterranean



Grafton Elliot Smith (1871–1937)

civilisations rooted in ancient Egypt and then transported across the globe by voyagers. Elliot Smith thus discounts the possibility of parallel, independent technological inventions, instead asserting that all 'cultures' can be traced back to a single one. Debates about this concept of 'hyperdiffusionism' would define the early development of anthropology at UCL.

With Elliot Smith's appointment as Professor of Anatomy at UCL in 1919, Gower Street became the intellectual home of what came to be popularly known as the 'heliolithic' school of diffusionist anthropology. From 1920, Elliot Smith was successful in obtaining substantial funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to support a new Institute of Anatomy at UCL where particular attention was given to medical education and to research in neuroanatomy, human evolution and diffusionist ethnology (Stocking 1996: 394f). Funding was also obtained to appoint William Perry (1877–1949), a student of the anthropologist W. H. R. Rivers at Cambridge, to a readership in cultural anthropology. Perry was soon to make a name for himself with the publication in 1923 of *The Children of the Sun*, a diffusionist study focusing on worship of a solar deity.

Few British universities taught anthropology during the 1920s. There were Oxford and Cambridge, while in London there were the London School of Economics and UCL. Perry was appointed to his UCL post at virtually the same

time as Bronislaw Malinowski at the LSE and, during the 1920s and 1930s, UCL's extreme diffusionist anthropology stood in opposition to the functionalist theory of social anthropology being developed by Malinowski. As George Stocking (1996: 275) reports, based on a reading of Malinowski's letters, 'Malinowski portrayed himself and Perry as started 'on a sort of race' in which Perry had a year's head start, but in which he himself was the beneficiary of 'a strong movement' to provide an 'antidote against Elliot Smithism'.

The Foundation of the UCL Anthropology Department

Given that Elliot Smith was incapacitated by a stroke in 1934, dying in 1937, and Perry having also retired, anthropology at UCL was in decline by the start of the Second World War. The College was evacuated in 1939 to share the campus of the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth and returned to the Gower Street campus, which had suffered substantial bomb damage, only in 1945. In that year, anthropology was re-established, this time as a separate department – albeit, because of its pre-war history, its lecture theatres and offices were in the Anatomy Department.



Cyril Daryll Forde (1902–1973)

The department's first appointed professor was Cyril Daryll Forde (1902–1973). Forde had received his early university training in geography at UCL, obtaining his BA in 1922 and being appointed there the following

year as Lecturer in Geography. While working at UCL, he also completed a PhD in prehistoric archaeology under the guidance of V. Gordon Childe with a thesis on European megalithic cultures. As Fortes (1976: 461) explains, despite Daryll Forde pursuing his own research and distancing himself from their hyperdiffusionist theories, he maintained cordial relations with Elliot Smith and Perry as a junior colleague. It was through Elliot Smith's influence that Forde was 'drawn into a wider circle of anthropologists and archaeologists', meeting among others the eminent American anthropologist Robert Lowie when he visited Britain in 1924. Several years later, Forde was awarded a Commonwealth Fellowship which enabled him to spend two years in the USA at the University of California at Berkeley under Lowie and A. L. Kroeber where he was exposed to the American tradition of cultural anthropology. While at Berkeley, he was able to carry out fieldwork among the Hopi and Yuma Amerindians and undertake an extensive review of the literature on relations between environment and social organisation in societies around the world. This research was later published in 1934 as *Habitat, Economy and Society*, which was to become a standard textbook for geography students well into the 1960s. On his return to the UK from the USA in 1930, Daryll Forde was appointed Professor of Geography and Anthropology at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth at the age of 28.

During the 1930s, Daryll Forde's research interests turned increasingly toward Africa and in 1935 and 1939 he carried out fieldwork among the Yakö people of south-eastern Nigeria. During the war, he worked in the Foreign Office Research Department in Oxford and there he became more closely acquainted with the growing Oxford circle of social anthropologists under the leadership of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. While in Oxford, Forde also became involved in a collaborative research project on Nigerian economic systems which was published in 1946 as *The Native Economies of Nigeria*.

In 1944, Daryll Forde was appointed Director of the International African Institute, an organisation based in

London which promoted research and publication on the cultures and languages of African peoples (Forde 1967), and Editor of its journal *Africa*. When Forde assumed the Chair of Anthropology at UCL the following year, the plan was for him to allocate half of his time to each post. But, in practice, 'the time, the energy, and the enthusiasm (that) he devoted to each would have taxed any full-time holder of either position to the utmost' (Fortes 1976: 465). Many have also commented on Forde's breadth of knowledge of the anthropological field; for example, Maurice Freedman (1963:16) remarked, 'We are all characteristically astonished when, as is outstandingly the case with Professor Forde, we find a man with encyclopaedic knowledge and the mental stamina to contain the subject as a whole under one skull'.



Nigel Barnicot (1914–1975)

The new Department of Anthropology at UCL had small beginnings but from the outset viewed its subject matter in the broadly-based manner that has remained its hallmark up to the present. In this, it reflected its roots in both the pre-war activities of Elliot Smith's Institute of Anatomy as well as in Daryll Forde's experience of the American four-field tradition of anthropology. Thus, in 1946, Daryll Forde was joined by Nigel Barnicot (1914–1975), who moved from his lectureship in the UCL Department of Zoology to teach physical anthropology. Nigel Barnicot had studied zoology and physiology as an undergraduate at the University of London and passed his

medical exams at the Middlesex Hospital in 1941. He completed a doctorate on the physiology of bone growth in 1950. Barnicot was promoted to Professor of Physical Anthropology in 1960, the first chair in this field in the UK. In stark contrast to previous eugenicist initiatives at UCL, Barnicot stressed that the term 'race' is not a valid biological category because it fails to capture the ranges of variation within and between populations. In addition, employing the word 'race' promotes 'racist doctrines that assert the purity and superiority of certain groups' that wish to 'dominate and exploit' others (Barnicot 1964 [1977], p. 185f). Barnicot was also ahead of his time in that he labelled the concept of a 'culture-free' intelligence test 'absurd', instead pondering whether 'non-Europeans', when given 'suitable education', might 'equal or surpass European standards' (ibid, p. 296f).

A third staff member recruited to the new department was J. G. Peristiany, an Oxford-trained anthropologist who had carried out pre-WWII fieldwork among the Kipsigis people of East Africa (*The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*, 1939). Peristiany, a Cypriot, remained at UCL for only two years, after which he returned to Oxford and went on to make a distinguished career in Mediterranean Studies.

Phyllis Kaberry (1910–1977) joined the department as lecturer in 1949 and was promoted to reader two years later. Kaberry had received her early training at the University of Sydney in the 1930s under A. P. Elkin, who encouraged her interest in ethnographic research among Aboriginal women in the Kimberley District of Western Australia (Toussaint 1999). This work, which later formed the basis of her PhD under Malinowski at the LSE, had been published as *Aboriginal Women, Sacred and Profane* in 1939 – decades before gender studies became a recognised sub-field within anthropology. Phyllis Kaberry was to establish a distinguished record of ethnographic research, particularly on women, working among the Abelam people of New Guinea before World War II and later undertaking the extensive research in the Nsaw chieftdom of Cameroon on which was based her *Women of the Grassfields* (1952). In many respects, one can say

that Phyllis Kaberry was the first feminist anthropologist in Britain. This, of course, still happened within the context of colonial governmentality, when, for example, in 1949, she recommended the creation of an Education Officer for Women's Affairs in West Cameroon, the first ever appointment made for women by the British Colonial Office.

Another new member of staff, who joined the department in 1949 as a lecturer, was John Barnes, who had just completed his fieldwork among the Ngoni people in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Barnes remained at UCL for only two years before accepting a research post at Manchester under Max Gluckman, with whom he had previously worked at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Central Africa. Barnes later taught at the LSE, at the University of Sydney, the Australian National University, and finally at Cambridge, where he was Professor of Sociology (Macfarlane & Harrison 1983).



Mary Douglas (1921–2007)

Mary Douglas (1921–2007) joined the department as a lecturer in 1951 after service during the war in the Colonial Office (Fardon 1999). She had recently completed her doctoral fieldwork among the Lele people of Kasai in the Belgian Congo (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) under the supervision of

M. N. Srinivas and E. E. Evans-Pritchard at Oxford. Mary Douglas went on to build an eminent career in social anthropology at UCL, both as a theorist of systems of cultural classification and as a public intellectual, with significant contributions to a diverse range of fields including economics, Old Testament studies, patterns of food consumption, environmental perceptions and risk. Her lasting reputation was established by her celebrated 1966 book *Purity and Danger*, in which she elaborated upon concepts of the sacred, the clean and the unclean in different times and societies. Appointed to a personal chair in 1970, she resigned from UCL in 1978 to take up a research post at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York and finished her teaching career at Northwestern University. In later years, she returned to London as Professor Emerita and Fellow at UCL.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Study at UCL from 1945

The immediate post-war years saw a large influx of demobilised veterans returning to university studies. In the early post-war period, there were few universities in the UK offering instruction in anthropology and even fewer that trained undergraduates. Oxford taught anthropology only at the postgraduate level. Cambridge had a small programme of anthropological training at both levels, and the LSE, which before the war had focused particularly on postgraduate teaching in line with Malinowski's views, was expanding its undergraduate teaching under the direction of Raymond Firth.

UCL, like other London colleges, was a member of the federal University of London founded in 1836, which was the seat of the central examination board also for UCL students. The new anthropology degree was therefore intercollegiate rather than college-based. It had its first undergraduate student intake in 1946 and was awarded on the basis of centrally-set final exams in Kinship, Marriage and Family; Religion and Morals; Politics and Economics; Ethnography; Archaeology and Material Culture; General Linguistics, and Physical Anthropology. Undergraduates also needed to demonstrate competence in

two languages, chosen from Latin, French or German. Teaching was organised on a collaborative intercollegiate basis, with courses given at UCL, the LSE, SOAS, the Institute of Archaeology, and the British Museum (Peter Morton-Williams, pers. comm.). By modern-day standards, the department was quite small – about ten undergraduates were admitted each year, with only a handful of PhD students.

As a result of Daryll Forde's dual role as head of department at UCL and director of the International African Institute, many of this early cohort of anthropological students went on to specialise in the ethnography of African societies. Through the IAI, Forde was able to attract significant research finance from bodies such as the British Colonial Social Science Research Council, UNESCO, and the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. Prominent Africanists who trained at the UCL Anthropology Department during its first fifteen years included Okoi Arikpo (later Federal Commissioner for External Affairs of Nigeria), Tanya Baker, Daniel Biebuyck, R. E. Bradbury, David Gamble, Rosemary Harris, C. E. Hopen, Robin Horton, David Tait, Jacques Maquet, Peter Morton-Williams, Johannes Nicolaisen, Farnham Rehfish, M. G. Smith, Victor Turner, and Jan Vansina. Other prominent Africanists who became lecturers or postdoctoral fellows in the department during this period included Ioan Lewis, John Middleton, Derek Stenning and James Woodburn. Not all UCL postgraduates focused on Africa, however, and Paula Brown Glick and Harry Powell did doctoral research in Melanesia.

Daryll Forde supervised most of the social anthropology doctoral students, with Phyllis Kaberry looking after those working in Melanesia and Australia. Mary Douglas (pers. comm.) recalled that Daryll preferred not to hold formal staff meetings and that much business was conducted over sherry in his office. During Forde's many absences due to International African Institute dealings, the department was run on a day-to-day basis by Phyllis Kaberry and Kay Attwood, the department's long-serving secretary.

Apart from its focus on social anthropology, the department's physical anthropology section under

leadership of Nigel Barnicot was also quite active in training undergraduate and doctoral students who would later rise to prominence in their fields. These included Don Brothwell, P. J. Garlick, Colin Groves, Karen Hiiemae, Clifford Jolly, Vernon Reynolds, Michael Rose, Chris Stringer, Eric Sunderland, and Alan Walker. Barnicot himself was primarily interested in human genetics, morphology and physiology and his *Human Biology: An Introduction to Human Evolution, Variation and Growth* (1964), produced in collaboration with G. A. Harrison and J. S. Weiner, became a widely used textbook. But the department was also well placed, with its links to the UCL Department of Anatomy, the Institute of Archaeology, the Museum of Natural History, the London Zoo and several University of London medical schools, to offer training in human evolution, palaeoanthropology and primatology.



Peter Ucko (1938–2007)

Also during the 1960s, the material culture wing of the department progressively emerged as a vibrant strand of teaching and research under the leadership of Peter Ucko (1938–2007). Material culture studies, under the rubric of ‘primitive technology’, had figured in the University of London undergraduate anthropology syllabus from the outset, and Daryll Forde, reflecting his study of Amerindian material culture during his stay at the University of California

as well as his archaeological training, had encouraged this interest within the department. Ucko did his undergraduate degree within the department and completed his PhD at the Institute of Archaeology with a thesis on anthropomorphic figurines of ancient Egypt and the Middle East. He spent ten years at the department as Lecturer and Reader in Material Culture from 1962 and can be said to have radically transformed the study of material culture, paving the way for its subsequent substantial development. Peter Ucko, in collaboration with Anthony Forge at the LSE, inaugurated the teaching of Anthropology of Art as an academic subject. He was also responsible for founding a group of anthropologists and prehistorians known as the Research Seminar in Archaeology and Related Subjects, which published influential works on domestication of plants and animals, settlement and urbanism, and the explanation of culture change. Ucko left UCL in 1972 to take up the post of Principal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra. His later posts included the Chair of Archaeology at the University of Southampton and the Directorship of the Institute of Archaeology at UCL from 1996 until his retirement in 2005.

The Decade of the 1970s – a Period of Major Transition

Given Daryll Forde’s influence in creating the department and the traditional practice in British universities which granted great power to the holder of the established professorial chair, Forde’s retirement in 1969 was to produce substantial change. There were three major contenders for the chair – two internal candidates, Mary Douglas and Ioan Lewis, who held readerships, and M. G. Smith, an external candidate from the University of California at Los Angeles. In the end, it was Smith who won out, with Lewis then moving to a chair at the LSE and Douglas being awarded a personal chair at UCL.

Although an external candidate, M. G. Smith (1921–1993) was a UCL product, having completed both his undergraduate and doctoral degrees in anthropology at UCL under Daryll Forde. A Jamaican by birth, Smith’s doctoral

research had focused on the Hausa people of northern Nigeria. He then worked at the Institute of Social and Economic Research in Mona, Jamaica where, over a period of some ten years from 1951, he conducted ethnographic and applied studies of Caribbean societies which remain unparalleled in their scope and theoretical impact. Smith’s tenure of the UCL chair lasted only until 1975, when he took up the post of cabinet-level advisor on social and economic affairs to the administration of Prime Minister Michael Manley in Jamaica. He continued his academic career from 1978 to 1986 in the Crosby Chair of Human Environment at Yale University (Hall 1997, Burnham 2011).



M. G. Smith (1921–1993)

While he headed the UCL department for only six years, M. G. Smith did much to modernise and expand the anthropological programme. A contextual influence for this change was the Robbins Report on the British university system, produced in 1963, which concluded that university studies ‘should be available to all who were qualified for them by ability and attainment’ (en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Robbins_Report). This led to substantial university expansion and, in the case of UCL Anthropology, both undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers trebled over the decade from 1965. It was also during this period that the longstanding intercollegiate final-exam-based undergraduate degree shifted to a college-based BSc Anthropology

course unit degree. This allowed the department to substantially diversify its undergraduate course topics. A related development was the introduction of combined studies degrees including Economics and Social Anthropology, Anthropology and Linguistics, and Ancient History and Social Anthropology, with Anthropology and Geography being introduced a few years later.

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Given expanded enrolments, M. G. Smith was able to increase considerably the number of staff. In Daryll Forde's last year in the chair (1968–69), the department's teaching staff consisted of 2 professors (Forde, Barnicot), 3 readers (Douglas, Kaberry, Lewis), and 3 lecturers (Robert Brain, Peter Ucko, Peter Morton-Williams). Only ten years later, this had more than doubled to 2 professors (Mary Douglas, Andrew Strathern) and 17 lecturers (Leslie Aiello, Alan Barnard, Barbara Bender, Fred Brett, Philip Burnham, David Coleman, Nicholas David, Peter Fry, Peter Garlake, Michael Gilsenan, John Gledhill, Rosemary Harris, Sally Humphries, Joel Kahn, Murray Last, Todd Olson, Michael Rowlands, Hazel Weymes).



When M. G. Smith resigned from the Chair of Anthropology in 1975, he was succeeded by Andrew Strathern (b. 1939). Having trained at Cambridge under Meyer Fortes and Edmund Leach, Strathern was a noted specialist on the peoples of Highland New Guinea. During his ten year stay at UCL, Strathern presided over a further substantial expansion of undergraduate and postgraduate numbers as well as continued diversification in the curriculum and range of research interests. With all this expansion, it became increasingly apparent that the old model under which the holder of the Chair in Social Anthropology would serve perpetually as administrative head of department was becoming outmoded, not least because it placed great constraint on the head's potential to continue active research. Thus, in Strathern's case, he found it increasingly difficult to combine the

headship with his New Guinea research and his sometime role as Director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies in Port Moresby, PNG. He therefore resigned his professorship in 1984.

Although Bruce Kapferer (b. 1940) was appointed to the professorship vacated by Strathern, it was agreed that the headship of the department would no longer be linked to the chair. The department was henceforth administered by rotating heads of department drawn from the different sections.

Towards the Millenium

The movement to undergraduate degrees based on course units combined with the major expansion of the academic staff during the 1970s allowed for a much greater range of teaching and research topics to be undertaken by UCL



Staff at the Examiners' Meeting (1998) near Malet Place Offices (Photo: Volker Sommer)

anthropologists. Since that time, UCL Anthropology has expanded greatly and played a leading role not only within the UK, but also internationally, by fostering anthropological teaching, research and practice, and attracting students and researchers from across the globe.

Over the last decades, with ever-increasing numbers of students and staff, coupled with often outstanding success in grants awarded for teaching and research, numerous research groups formed as the traditional sections consolidated and diversified. A few selected developments shall serve to exemplify how this truly broad-based approach towards the discipline evolved.

Marxist Anthropology: A noteworthy 1970s development within social

anthropology was the application of Marxist theory to non-western societies. Thus, working under the rubric of the London Alternative Anthropology Group, UCL staff and postgraduate students including Anne Bailey, Felicity Edholm, Jonathan Friedman, John Gledhill, Joel Kahn, Josep Llobera, Stephen Nugent, Maila Stivens and Mike Rowlands founded the journal *Critique of Anthropology* in 1974.

Material Culture: Peter Ucko's promotion of material culture during the 1960s was to bear fruit in the early 1970s by the arrival of new staff members working in this field. Michael Rowlands, who had completed his undergraduate degree in anthropology at UCL and his PhD in archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, was soon joined by Barbara

Bender, an archaeologist of the European Bronze Age, and by Peter Garlake and Nicholas David, ethnoarchaeologists of Africa. From the 1980s, the material culture section continued its rapid expansion, with Chris Tilley and Barbara Bender working on the Anthropology of Landscape, Danny Miller on consumption, social media and digital anthropology, and Susanne Kuechler and Chris Pinney on Anthropology of Art and Visual Anthropology.

Medical Anthropology: In 1967, Daryll Forde, as ever open to new ideas, had welcomed Murray Last who, based on his history of Nigeria's pre-colonial Sokoto Caliphate, had three years earlier been the first recipient of a PhD from a university in the newly independent Nigeria, University College Ibadan. Last became a post-doctoral researcher in the then-new subject of the ethnography of ill-health and healing. His interest in medical anthropology emerged out of his research on the Maguzawa, a non-Muslim Hausa people of northern Nigeria. Subsequently, in 1975, Last began to teach Medical Anthropology as a specialist final-year course. He was later joined in the department's Centre for Medical Anthropology by Roland Littlewood, a medical doctor who had obtained a DPhil in social anthropology at Oxford with a thesis on a Trinidadian religious movement. With Cecil Helman (a GP and anthropologist), they started a deliberately non-centralised British Medical Anthropology Society and, with Sushrut Jadhav as Editor, initiated the journal *Anthropology & Medicine*.

Biological Anthropology: With the unexpected death of Nigel Barnicot in 1975, it was unclear whether biological anthropology would continue at UCL. However, by the end of the decade, the sub-discipline was able to broaden its scope with the appointment of Robert Martin (a comparative primatologist), Leslie Aiello (a palaeoanthropologist), and Katherine Homewood (an ecological anthropologist). Beginning in the 1980s and after the departure of David Coleman to Oxford, John Landers and then Sara Randall strengthened its demographic focus, while Hazel Weymes and Simon Strickland developed nutritional anthropology in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene

and Tropical Medicine, and Ruth Mace introduced evolutionary anthropology with an emphasis on human behavioural ecology.

Ecological Anthropology: Daryll Forde's training in American environmental anthropology had enabled him to become the leading practitioner of ecological anthropology within the UK. Once Forde left in 1969, this approach was expanded by Philip Burnham, an American ecological anthropologist, through collaboration with Katherine Homewood, a UCL-trained biological anthropologist with interest in East African pastoral societies. Burnham and Homewood went on to found the Human Ecology Research Group, which also drew in Sara Randall, thus bridging into demography, while on the social anthropology side, Paul Richards and Barrie Sharpe likewise engaged with ecological perspectives. Homewood was also one of the key influences in the establishment of the inter-departmental Human Sciences undergraduate degree,

UCL's first and longest-running cross-faculty interdisciplinary degree.

UCL Anthropology Today

This brief historical reconstruction has aimed to provide an account of how a one-man operation beginning in 1945 with a dozen or so students has expanded into a global and very large operation. From their make-shift accommodations in the Anatomy Department, anthropologists began to encroach into more and more offices and seminar rooms, including into edifices in Malet Place. Finally, in June 2007, we moved into our own building just outside the main campus, sharing some walls with an important historical and intellectual partner – the Institute of Archaeology.

While most academic members of the department's first 50 years are mentioned by name in this brief reconstruction, those who joined during the last 25 years are not featured in the

same way – not because they are less important but simply owing to the fact that the last quarter of a century has seen a tremendous growth in numbers.

To illustrate where we are now, a good 75 years into our history as a department, we may invoke some statistics. We are continually ranked amongst the best anthropology departments in the world (but of course, all such rankings are flawed, unless we come out at the very top . . .). We carry out what anthropologists like to call 'fieldwork' in more than 60 nations across the globe – including the UK and Europe. Our academic staff has grown to the staggering number of 55 lecturers, readers and professors. Actually, there are 20 professors by now. Moreover, the UCL Anthropology Department might well be the most successful in Europe in securing prestigious ERC (European Research Council) grants: a solid dozen over the last decade.

Inside our base at 14 Taverton Street,



there is a continuous buzz – created by 1,000 people! Thus, the 55 academic staff members are supported by 16 administrative staff. Together, they enable the teaching of 300 Anthropology BSc undergraduates, while the department is also home to about 200 Human Sciences BSc students. At graduate level, we have close to 400 PGT (post-graduate taught) students enrolled in a dozen or so master-level programmes, plus close to 100 PGR (post-graduate research) students, i.e., PhD candidates. These student numbers have increased by 50% over the last 10 years.

Regarding the thorny issue of equal gender representation, the department doesn't have to blush – given that there is anything but equality. As of 2020, undergraduate as well as graduate cohorts include more than 80% female students, the administrative staff is 75% female, and academic staff is 56% female. Such preponderance or equal shares of women tend to be lost in most institutions when considering only senior

staff. To a degree, that is also true at UCL Anthropology, since amongst professorial staff, while 55% are men, only 45% are women. However, we can take some solace in the fact that, during 23 of the last 25 years, we have had a woman as head of department. Having said this, a predominance of men characterised much of our history, notwithstanding that a prominent number of women scholars have shaped our institution. Moreover, we still have far to go on addressing the minimal representation of scholars from minority backgrounds.

Looking back over the 75+ years of its existence, it is apparent that the UCL Anthropology Department has long had a distinctive character which makes it stand out among other anthropology departments in the UK. In some respects, this may be linked with the founding liberal philosophy of University College London itself. While other anthropology schools, such as at Cambridge, London School of Economics and Oxford, curated the influence of their founding

'ancestors' and the traditional core of social anthropology, UCL anthropology fostered an ethos closer to the inclusive ideals of UCL. Also, perhaps because UCL did not have a sociology department, it has embraced a breadth of perspectives, ranging from more philosophical work through to natural science approaches.

As a consequence, the department embodies a broad variety of engagements, reflected in a wide range of ever-evolving sub-disciplines and programmes. Thus, against the backdrop of the multiple fields structure established by Daryll Forde three quarters of a century ago, UCL Anthropology has pursued an eclectic vision: welcoming the engagement with, and the challenges of, contemporary and dynamic changes in the world.



Staff at the Examiners' Meeting (2014) in Gordon Square gardens (Photo: Volker Sommer)

Heads of Department from 1945 till 2023



Daryll Forde (1945–1969)



Leslie Aiello (1996–2002)



M. G. Smith (1969–1975)



Katherine Homewood (2002–2007)



Andrew Strathern (1975–1984)



Nanneke Redclift (2007–2010)



Phil Burnham (1984–1986)



Susanne Kuechler (2010–2017, 2018–2019)



Bruce Kapferer (1986–1990)



Christophe Soligo (2017–2018)



Paul Richards (1990–1992)



Martin Holbraad (2019–2022)



Mike Rowlands (1992–1996)



Caroline Garaway (2022–)

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Philip Burnham obtained his PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of California Los Angeles in 1972, and is now *Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at UCL*



Departmental Building at 14 Taverton Street, Bloomsbury, inaugurated in 2006 (Photo: Volker Sommer)

‘SHE WAS THE FIRST ONE’: PHYLLIS KABERRY, A WOMAN IN THE FIELD

Delphine Mercier and Sigrid Losche

Phyllis Kaberry (1910–1977) grew up in Australia and completed her undergraduate degree in anthropology at the University of Sydney before joining the London School of Economics for her PhD. She returned to Australia, then left for Yale University and returned to London during World War II. As a Reader in Social Anthropology at UCL for 26 years, she also became a research fellow of the International African Institute.

At her three major fieldwork sites in the Kimberley district of Western Australia, among the *Abelam* of Northern New Guinea and amongst the *Nso’* in the *Bamenda* division of what used to be the British Cameroons, Kaberry worked on many topics, from ritual and kinship to land tenure and political structure. However, most of all she was a pioneer in the anthropological study of women’s place in society (Firth 1978).

Kaberry’s fieldwork in north-western Australia’s Kimberley region from 1934–1935 was the basis for her PhD from the London School of Economics and was published in 1939 as *Aboriginal Woman: Sacred and Profane*. However, her focus was not solely women but rather the structure of gender. Her volume argued that the culture she studied was based on gender complementarity: ‘If my theme is women, it is one that has involved a contrast and comparison of their activities with those of men with due recognition of the co-operation that exists between sexes’ (Kaberry 1939: xii–xiii). During her fieldwork, she received an Aboriginal name, *Nadjeri*, and the memory of her stay has been recorded into a number



Phyllis Kaberry (1910–1977)

of indigenous historical narratives (Toussaint 2002). ‘She was the first one’ is a description by an inhabitant of the area which reflects that she was the first woman anthropologist in the Kimberley – and the first researcher generally who explored the lives of Aboriginal women (Williams 1988). Her work garnered considerable academic attention as well as coverage for the public in newspapers. She was much influenced by Bronislaw Malinowski and his field methods. As one of his first postgraduate students at LSE (1936–1938), she dedicated her book to him. In return, Malinowski stated in a letter to her that her dedication bestowed ‘a great honour’ on him (Kaberry 1974).

Subsequently, Kaberry worked in New Guinea in 1939–1940, basing herself in

Kalabu village in the *Abelam* speaking region of the Sepik District. Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, who had both worked in the region, had suggested the area to her. Kaberry writes: ‘Fortunately, the men put me in another category from their own women, referring to me as *white-skin*; they made no objection to my entering the yam gardens and often invited me to attend their ceremonies, and to go inside their ceremonial house or house-tamberan’ (1940: 237). In line with these interests she took detailed photographs of yam cultivation and the processes involved in the construction of spectacular ceremonial houses (Coupaye 2013). Kaberry’s study of the *Abelam* was functionalist, with an emphasis on kinship, yam culture and ceremonial and political organisation as well as exchange.

In 1944, the International African Institute was contacted with concerns about the *Bamenda* area, then part of British Cameroons, particularly with respect to the situation of women ‘whose low status was held to be one of the obstacles to the social and economic development of the region’ (Chilver 1978). After having been appointed to this research, this led to numerous and at times lengthy field visits (1945–1946, 1947–1948, 1958, 1960, 1963). Her work was prompted by conditions during the 1940s when, despite considerable natural resources, there was under-population, very high infant mortality and the status of women was low. ‘One’s starting point is not the women but an analysis of a particular aspect of culture. On that basis one may then proceed to examine



Aboriginal women and Phyllis Kaberry (r.), Kimberley, Australia, 1934 (©Toussaint 2002: 16)

in more detail the way in which the structure and organization of rights, duties and activities within a group of institutions affect the position of women' (Kaberry 2004: vii). Her subsequent publication in 1952 of *Women of the Grassfields* examined the social and economic status of the Bamenda area's Nso' women. Kaberry's work became one of the foundational works of gender studies and demonstrated that women's agricultural role was not an index of low status, but a way of preserving their rights. Kaberry's study incorporated a holistic understanding of how women functioned in that society and their central role in constructing economy and

community.

Kaberry was made a Yaa Woo Kov (Lady of the Forest) and Queen Mother by the Fon of Nso' (Chilver 1978; Toussaint 2002), which she considered her most significant honour (Michael Rowlands, pers. comm).

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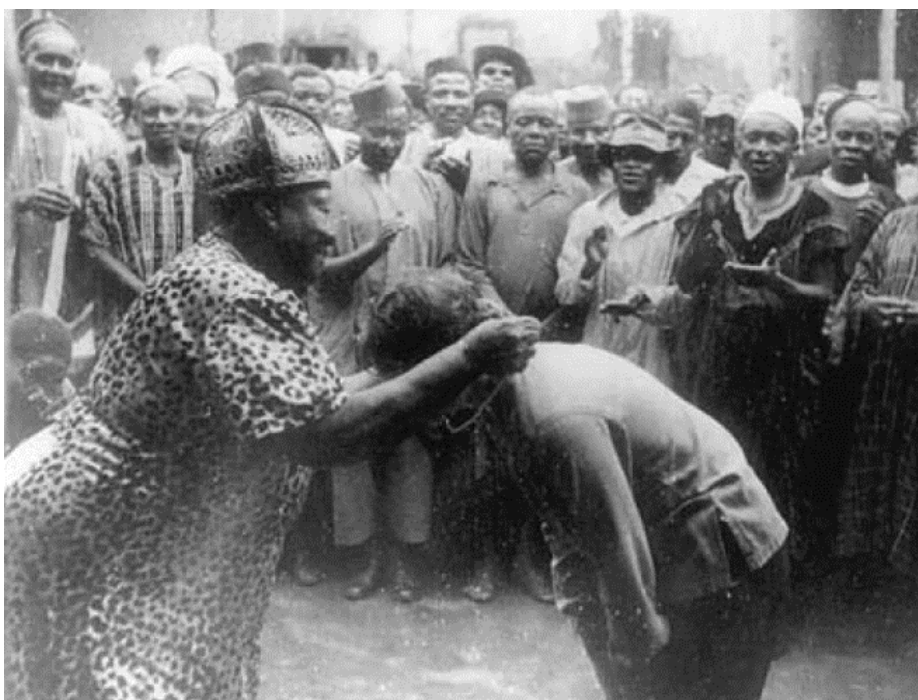
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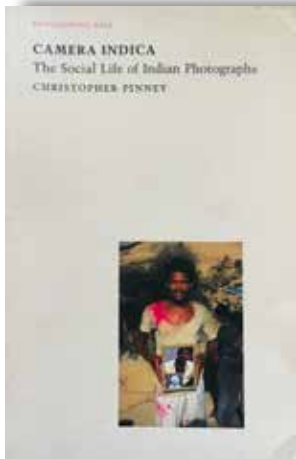
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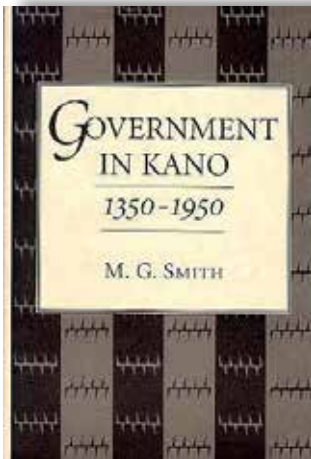


Kaberry at the Nso' Queen Mother Ceremony, Cameroons, Africa, 1947 (©Toussaint 2002, p.17)

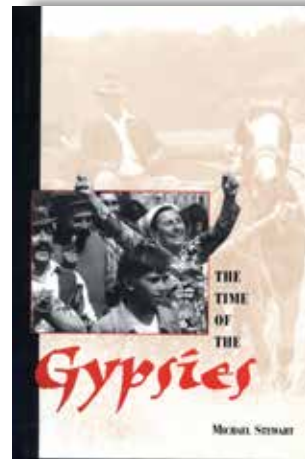
Delphine Mercier is Curator in the UCL Anthropology Ethnography Collection



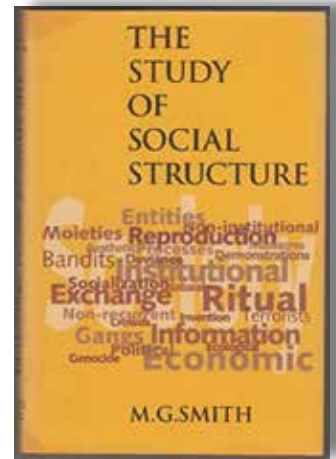
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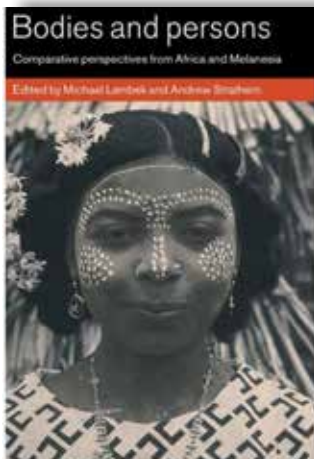
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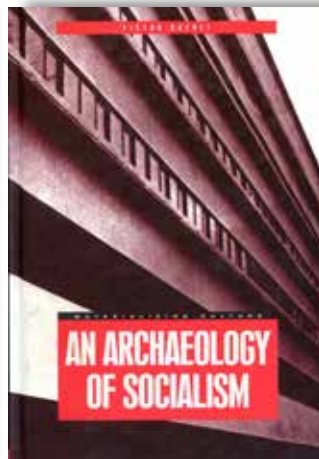
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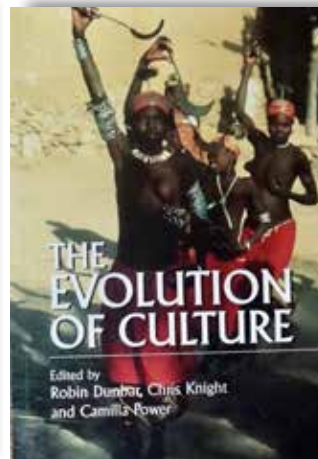
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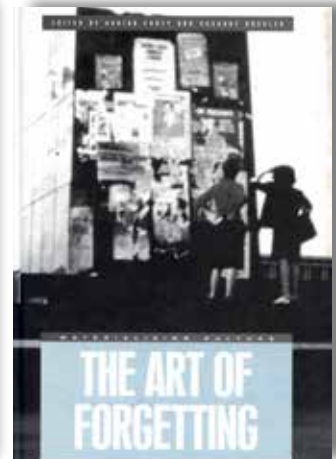
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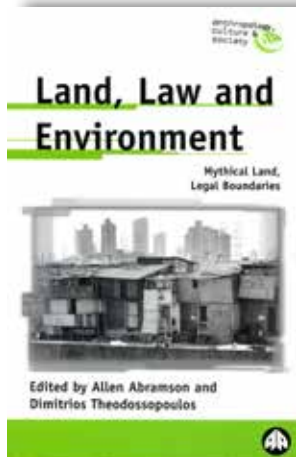
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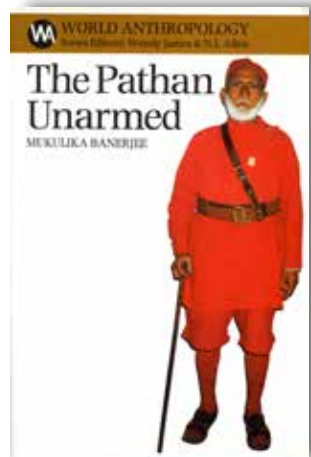
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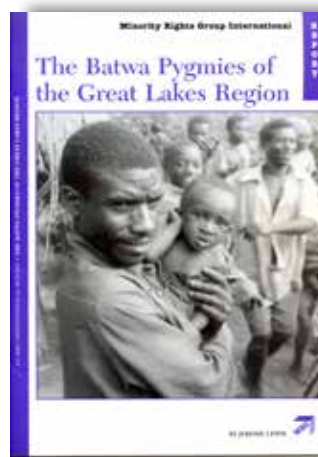
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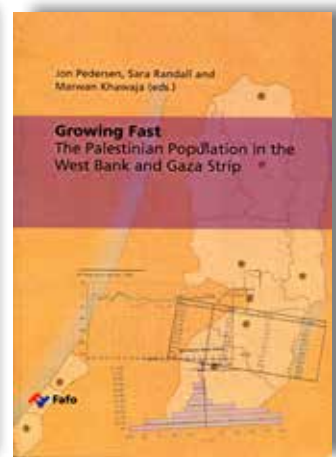
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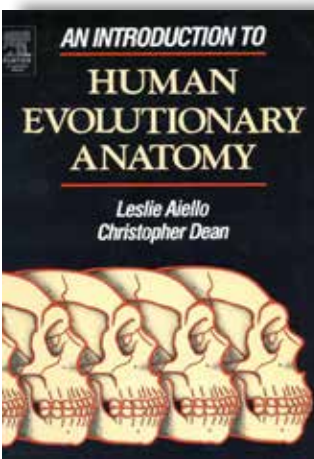
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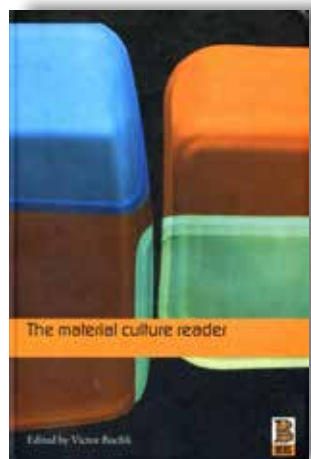
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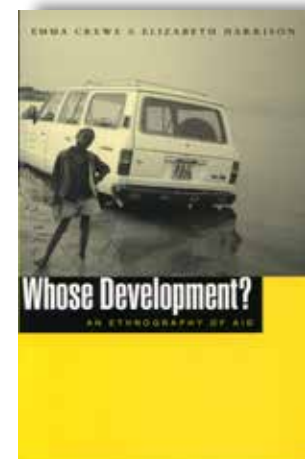
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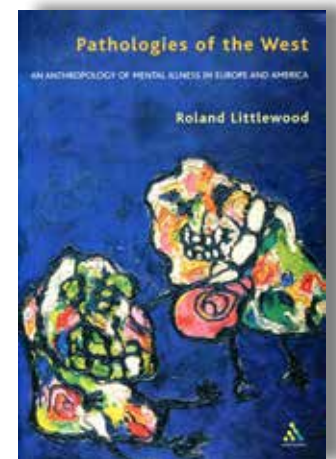
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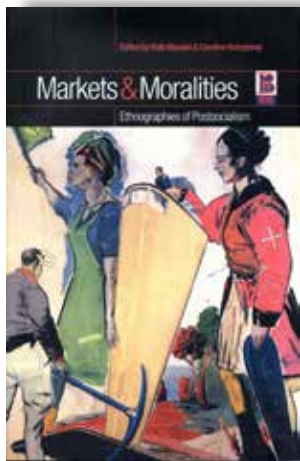
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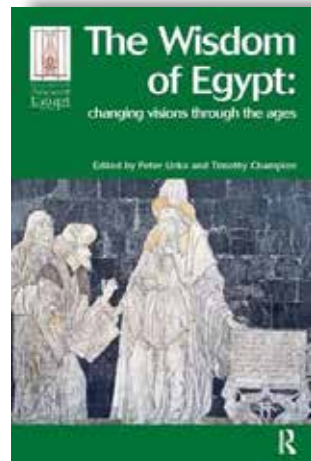
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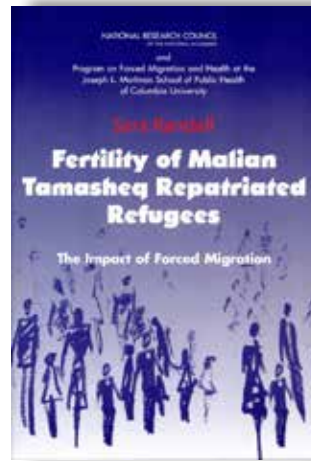
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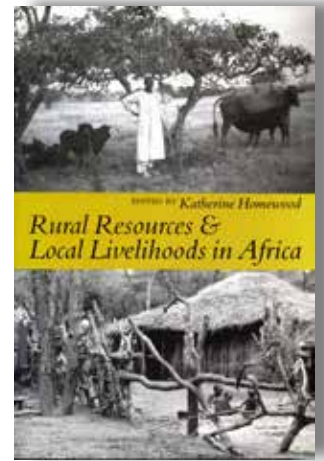
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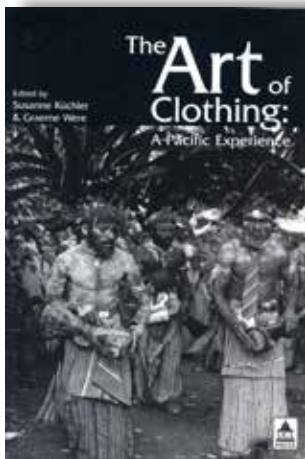
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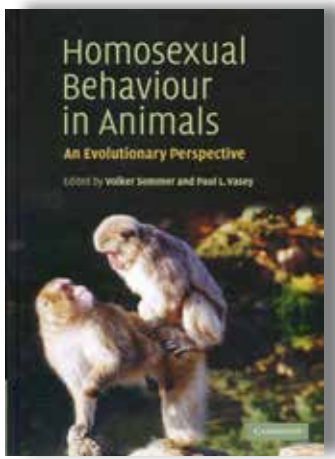
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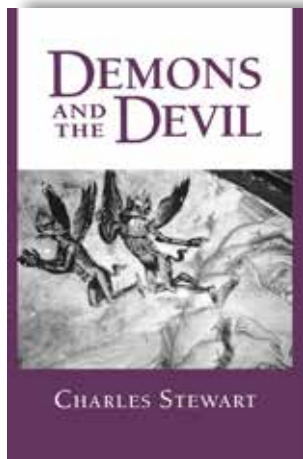
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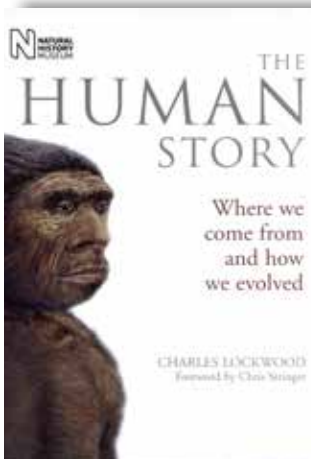
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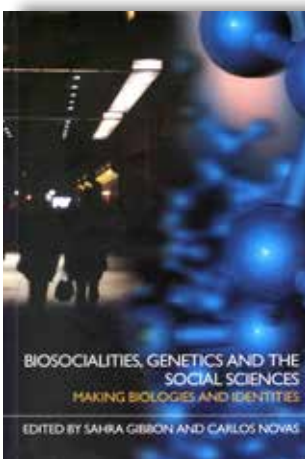
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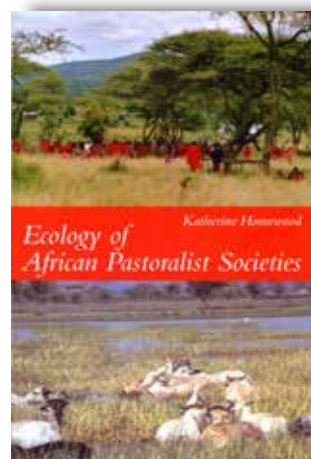
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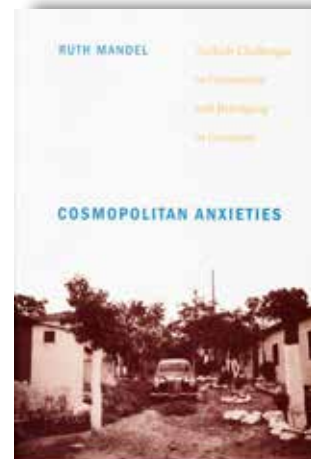
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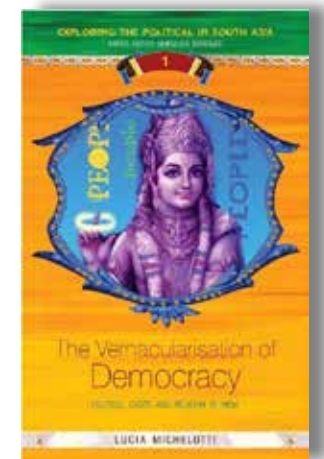
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THE HOW OF MEANING

Howard Morphy

Howard Morphy (*1947) is a British-Australian socio-cultural anthropologist. BSc (1969) and MPhil (1972) in anthropology from University College London, PhD (1978) from the Australian National University. Morphy taught at the ANU (1978–86) before moving to the Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford as a lecturer and curator (1986–96). He became Professor of Anthropology at UCL (1996–99), returning to the ANU in 1997 as a Senior Research Fellow. Morphy was ANU's founding Director of the Research School of Humanities and the Arts (2009–2013) and is currently an Emeritus Professor and Head of the Centre for Digital Humanities Research. A Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, Morphy was awarded the Huxley Memorial Medal of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 2013 and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Council for Museum Anthropology, American Anthropological Association in 2017.

On reflection, although I would spend most of my academic career at Oxford and Canberra, I have always remained a UCL anthropologist. The story began in my final years at school, when I helped run a folk club, – Fennario Folk – for young OXFAM. This inspired me to find out more about the communities to which aid was being directed. I asked my geography teacher about studies that might best suit that interest. He suggested anthropology at UCL. I withdrew my applications for law, and reapplied for that degree instead.

And so, with an interview in 1966, my formative years as an anthropology student at UCL began. The admissions panel consisted of Mary Douglas and Phyllis Kaberry. I remember two of their questions. If in Africa in the middle of a drought I saw someone pouring the



last remaining water on the ground: how would I explain it? And what did I think about the findings of the Wolfenden Commission report which recommended the legalization of homosexual relations between consenting adults? Although I can't remember my answers, I was awarded a place.

The department underwent an era of undergraduate expansion. There were 13 students in my year, and in the following more than 20. Undergraduates and graduates crowded together in G4, our de facto Common Room, on either side of tables that extended along the centre. In my second year, I heard a voice from the far end of the space, when for no apparent reason, all others were silent. Her name was Frances Hunter. Fittingly, the first film we saw together was Harold Pinter's *Accident* about a fateful university love affair. The rest is history, as more than fifty years on, we are still anthropologists together.

The UCL degree was structured on

the basis of three fields – biological anthropology, social anthropology and material culture – with a narrowing of focus in the third year. We had exceptional grounding in human genetics and evolution from Jim Garlick and Nigel Barnicot, from which no one could have emerged with a simplistic understanding of 'race' concepts. Joan Lewis taught social anthropology with Beattie's *Other Cultures* as a well-chosen text book, thus providing a clear intellectual synthesis of British structural functionalism. A parallel course, 'Analysis of Culture', was tutored by Daryll Forde, in his penultimate year as Professor. No contemporary undergraduates at other British Universities would have found themselves confronted with the themes and values of Kroeber, Opler and Kluckhohn, and bed-time readings of *The Structure of Social Action* by Talcott Parsons and *Patterns of Culture* by Ruth Benedict thrown in for good measure. Material culture was the third stream, lectured by the

charismatic and challenging Peter Ucko. We had to field essays on topics central to his own research interests and intellectual puzzles. Ucko's courses would often question and contextualise the discipline's 19th century approaches when he addressed the history of technology, processes of innovation, cross-cultural and cross-temporal comparison as well as the nature of types and categories. Consequently, we had to learn about how things were made, how they changed and the contexts and consequences of innovation.

Memorable topics in subsequent years included analyses by Mary Douglas on religion, purity and danger, group and grid, and by Phyllis Kaberry on kinship and social organisation. These courses reflected the heated 1960s debates about the structural properties and behavioural correlates of different terminological systems. In my final year as an undergraduate, M.G. Smith took over from Darryl Forde as head of department — an inspired appointment.

Throughout our studies, we benefited from being in London and access to museums and cultural institutions beyond UCL. Thus, Anthony Forge travelled from LSE to lecture in Peter's anthropology of art course, and introduced me to the work of Nancy Munn. We learned about the Swanscombe skull by Don Brothwell in the Natural History Museum, drew model ploughs across trays of sand in the basements of the British Museum under the tutelage of Bryan Cranstone, and in my case failed to make coil-built pots in Henry Hodge's classes at the Institute of Archaeology. And best of all, we had privileged access to the wonderful library in the premises of the Royal Anthropological Institute a short distance away in Bedford Square. Here, as we went up the stairs, we walked past photographs of ancestral greats, and on rare occasions some of the still living ones passed us on the way down...

After graduating I began a master's degree with Peter Ucko as my supervisor. I spent the first year working up a theoretical treatise on material culture as action, until Peter told me to look for objects to explore. In the RAI

library, I stumbled upon the *Records of the South Australian Museum* from 1919. This offprint illustrated some 400 *toas*, – direction signs from the Lake Eyre region of Central Australia. Bob Edwards, curator of the South Australian Museum, had them photographed for me and provided all the documentation their archives held. And while the RAI library was closing for a year, the formidable Brownlee Kirkpatrick allowed me to take the offprint out. Thus, I earned my MPhil with an analysis of the system of communication – the 'how of meaning'.

As UCL students in the late 1960s and early 1970s we felt connected to world anthropology as it was then. The reifications and oppositions created between different national or theoretical frameworks did not lock us in to prescriptive boxes. Instead, there was a sense that anthropology was developing into a diverse and complex discipline. As Michael Rowlands has written, the anthropological study of material culture at UCL reflects an integrative approach to the study of humankind. Ever since, my career followed that same trajectory, always bearing in mind that anthropology throughout its history had been both an exercise in cross-cultural understanding and entangled with value creation processes. Hence I was quizzed about the pouring of water and the Wolfenden commission!

My first job at the British Museum, registering unregistered objects, further opened my eyes to the value of collections as a source of knowledge about societies and histories. But having worked on artefacts long separated from their source communities, I wanted to undertake fieldwork and meet the people. This would become reality for Frances and myself after we moved to Australia. We took with us Phyllis Kaberry's farewell advice from her own fieldwork in the Kimberley — take a leather bag with holes in the bottom to hang over a tree branch for a shower, and the works of Jane Austin to read about kinship.

Ever since, we have spent much time with the Yolngu-speaking peoples of north east Arnhem Land. We added a fourth field to our anthropology when Frances became a linguist and wrote a

grammar of a Yolngu dialect. My work on Yolngu art moved from semiotics to an interrogation of the categories that occurred as Yolngu moved their 'art' into global contexts. We also became involved in the politics of the Indigenous Australian struggle for the recognition of rights in land. As expert witnesses we undertook research for the *Blue Mud Bay* case, in which the high court ultimately decided that the water lying over Aboriginal land should not be treated differently from the land itself, and the intertidal zone along the Northern Territory Coast was thus recognised as indigenously owned. Our collaborative research for the Blue Mud Bay claim had linked archaeology, linguistics and socio-cultural anthropology. This has made possible the reconstruction of the history of a hunter-gatherer society going back 3000 years that perhaps only UCL-trained anthropologists could have produced.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose – what goes around comes around.

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CULTURE SHOCK

Barbara Hendrie

Dr Barbara Hendrie has been the Director of UN Environment North America since September 2017. Dr Hendrie has over two decades experience as a senior international diplomat/negotiator and development/humanitarian professional, including on behalf both the United Kingdom and United States governments. She was a senior official in the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) from 1999 to 2015, and a senior political appointee of President Obama based in United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2015–2016. In 2016, Dr Hendrie led USAID's work on conflict and fragility, the G20, the World Humanitarian Summit and the President's Refugee Summit. In 2015, she was Chief Negotiator for the UK on the UN Financing for Development agenda and UK co-leader for establishment of the global Sustainable Development Goals. Prior to that, she was Minister-Counsellor for development,

human rights, climate change and peacebuilding at the UK Mission to the UN in New York. In the early 2000s, Dr Hendrie led the UK's global humanitarian response and the UK's first government-wide Security and Development strategy. From 2006 to 2007, she led the UK reconstruction effort in Iraq. In 2009, Dr Hendrie was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. She is also the first recipient (and inspiration for the creation of) the Bowdoin College Common Good Award in 1993. Dr Hendrie began her career in the mid-1980s when she led a civil society consortium providing emergency relief to famine-affected people in the Horn of Africa. Barbara, a native of New York, has a PhD and Masters in social anthropology from University College, London, UK, and a BA in English from Bowdoin College in Maine, USA. She is a dual US-UK citizen.

I arrived in UCL Anthropology to start a master degree more or less directly from the Horn of Africa, where I had spent four years working on a famine relief operation in the war zones of Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. It was a culture shock to say the least. After years of working with poor peasants and negotiating with guerrilla fighters, I found myself sitting in a classroom with young British students who looked about half my age. Instead of taking action and making decisions each day that had real implications for many lives, I was reading and talking and discussing and debating. It seemed to me that I was suddenly looking through the wrong end of the telescope. I came very close to quitting in those early days.

And yet, there were people at UCL anthropology that I had huge respect for. Surely, if they thought this crazy academic endeavour was valuable, there must be something in it. My great friend and fellow American Ruth Mandel – one of the first UCL lecturers I met – kept me just interested enough to carry on. Another American, Phil Burnham, would eventually become my PhD supervisor. My attachment to Phil was sealed when, as a master student, I asked him whether I had to take statistics. ‘Well’, said Phil in his slightly laconic style of speech, ‘it’s not a requirement, but it will be good for your moral fibre’.

So, I stuck with the department and the endeavour – through a master’s degree and into a PhD program, which would eventually take me back to some of the same villages in northern Ethiopia for my fieldwork where I had been years before. I settled in a little hamlet with a large peasant family, and stayed there for two years. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done, but also one of the best. That fieldwork helped me get under the skin of the lives of people in one of the poorest districts of Ethiopia, the targets of numerous aid programs. I had barely scratched the surface of understanding their world in my previous life. Now I was seeing it from the inside. How they managed the extreme precariousness of their farm-based livelihood with its unrelenting hard-scrabble. What they thought of the government, the international aid

agencies, the people in the next village, me. Their flint-dry sense of humour. I was privileged to gain this knowledge and insight. And I have used it directly and indirectly in my professional life ever since. Returning to the world of international development, I would know in my gut whether a proposed aid project would work or not, and imagine exactly what my Ethiopian family would say about it.

But first I had to get back to London, write up my field notes, and somehow produce a thesis that would earn me a PhD. This was an agonizing, seemingly impossible task. Where even to start? UCL did try to make it easier, by offering a regular seminar for PhD candidates. Here, we would take it in turn to provide mind-numbing detail about our own ethnographies-in-the-making. The social life post-seminar was better. I was lucky to have a particularly lively cohort, including a scholarly and soulful Spaniard named Ramon Sarro. Ramon and I decided to keep each other company while undergoing the torture that is known as ‘writing your thesis’. So every day he came to my little flat in Kentish Town and we would work for five or six hours, hammering it out. Somehow, we managed to finish. The Wednesday Departmental Seminar was also a high point of the week, and a valuable moment of connection to the academic discipline I had, at least for a time, made my own. I loved listening to these lectures, and to the conversations afterwards over a drink, with staff and students alike. The department always seemed to me to have the right balance of serious scholarship and subversive wit, of tradition with a dash of creative anarchy, which I cherished.

I eventually left the department, realizing that an academic life was not for me, and went back to doing stuff. Throughout my career, with the UK and then US governments and now the United Nations, I have always been thankful that I stayed on at UCL and acquired an academic training in a unique discipline which has served me so well over the years. And it probably didn’t hurt my moral fibre either.

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SEVEN YEARS

Robin Dunbar

*Robin I.M. Dunbar (*1947), FBA, is a British anthropologist and specialist in evolutionary psychology and primate behaviour. Dunbar's academic trajectory began at the University of Bristol (PhD, 1973) and includes a stint as a research fellow at the University of Cambridge, (1977–1982) before becoming lecturer, reader and then professor at the UCL Department of Anthropology (1987–1994). He then moved to a professorship in Evolutionary Psychology at University of Liverpool (1994–2007). He subsequently moved to the Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology, University of Oxford (2007–2012) as professor of Evolutionary Anthropology, and then to the Department of Experimental Psychology (2012–present) where he is Professor of Evolutionary Psychology.*

To carve a career out of a fascination for the social organisation of gelada baboons in the Horn of Africa – the topic of my PhD which I had earned back in 1973 at the University of Bristol – would have been challenging at any time. That my fieldwork in Ethiopia had also made me a published expert on the behavioural ecology of common duiker and klipspringer didn't help that mundane cause, either. Fast forward to the mid-1980s, and I found myself in a particularly bad time to be looking for a permanent academic job. The great Thatcher Squeeze on the Universities mean that there were no positions being advertised at all, except in important subjects like medicine. An entire cohort of prospective young academics vanished into other careers, and I was about to follow them.

By 1985, I had already spent two years unemployed, earning an intermittent income from freelance science journalism. Which, I am sure, the world still remembers for such helpful headlines as 'Stress is a good contraceptive' and 'More than one way to get a mate'. Anyway, someone then decided not to take up a research fellowship at Liverpool University, which provided a lifeline when the position was eventually offered to me as one of the reserve candidates. Half way through the fellowship, a lecturership in primate biology came up for grabs in UCL Anthropology when Robert D. Martin resigned. His comparative work on primate reproduction and morphology had earned Bob the enviable directorship of the Anthropological Institute at the University of Zurich. There were only two other academic posts in primate biology in the UK at the time, and neither was likely to become vacant for a very long time since both holders of the posts were younger than me. But here was my lucky break. So it was that in mid 1987, I was busy preparing first year lectures about biological anthropology. I was to spend the next seven years at UCL.

It turned out to be a period of unexpected creativity that laid the foundations for my subsequent research career. It marked the turning point at which I switched from exclusively

researching animals to working mainly on humans. In part, the transition was forced on me because the Thatcher Squeeze meant there was no money at all for field work on large animal behavioural ecology – a field that had, until then, been generously funded for the better part of two decades. Casting around for topics on which research could be done without the need for grants and lengthy field trips, my attention was drawn to humans simply because they were there – right in front of you, on the street. I could ask exactly the same kinds of questions as I would have asked of any monkey or ape, and could collect data in much the same sort of way by direct observation. I am, however, sure that the idea of working on humans was also in part stimulated by not being surrounded by zoologists but by anthropologists who did just that.

Being in the Anthropology Department provided other important, if unanticipated, benefits. I learned a lot about human evolutionary anatomy under the tutelage of Leslie Aiello, and I was introduced – not least through the personal interest of Mary Douglas – to social anthropology in a more formal way than my previous rather casual reading in the subject had allowed.

I had grown up in East Africa during the last decades of Empire, where I had been steeped since earliest childhood in a multicultural environment of considerable ethnic complexity and much greater social integration than most people now seem to realise. It led me to be fascinated by the variety of local tribal societies and by the cultural intricacies of the large Indian and Arab communities, not to mention the rather eclectic mix of people from Europe, North America and the Antipodes. UCL enabled me to gain a proper anthropological framing for what, as I only came to realise later, had been half a lifetime of immersive first hand participant observation on more different cultures than most people would experience in several lifetimes. Looking back, I now realise just how important that early exposure to so many different cultures at first hand was to my later interests.

Just how profitable my seven years at

UCL were is summed up by the fact that, shortly before I left in 1994, I published four papers, that laid out four key ideas. They were the Social Brain Hypothesis (the claim that a species' brain size determines, or more correctly constrains, the size of its social group), what later came to be known as Dunbar's Number (that humans can only have about 150 social relationships at any one time), the significance of time as a constraint on a species' group size and biogeography (and especially the time devoted to social grooming, with its neurobiological underpinnings in the brain's endorphin system), and the gossip theory of language evolution (that language evolved to allow the exchange of social information as a partial solution to the time constraints on social bonding).

In due course, it became clear that these four seemingly unrelated ideas were in fact intimately linked and were the unifying force underpinning social evolution in mammals in general, primates in particular and humans as a special case – although it took another 25 years, several large research grants, and several hundred publications for me to realise this. Dunbar's Number (or more strictly, Dunbar's Numbers, since it is in fact a series of numbers linked by a distinct mathematical formula) turned out to be the fulcrum off which my subsequent career was launched. Because it was picked up and used in the design of social networking sites, it came to the attention of computer scientists, statistical physicists and neuroscientists, not to mention people in business consultancy, many of whom contacted me with a view to collaborate.

These partnerships not only resulted in a great deal of fun (as well as a Visiting Chair in Statistical Physics and an honorary DSc in Digital Technology) but were exceptionally productive in allowing me to develop a real understanding of the structure of social networks and the nature of friendships. As a result, in the 2010s, 'friendship' became the watchword for advertising agencies, who tried to link every product they were commissioned to advertise to friendship in some way. A curious by-product of this was my being asked to be involved in marketing campaigns

for as diverse an array of organisations as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, Guinness, Pernod Ricard, Samsung, Thomas Fudge (the Dorset biscuit makers), CAMRA and the Big Lunch, as well as in research projects for Unilever and Hewlett Packard.

Not only were these projects fascinating insights into a world I knew nothing about (not to mention opportunities for real acting on screen), but they were often valuable scientifically in ways I could not have anticipated. Most provided real hardnosed quantitative data based on national surveys properly done by major polling agencies that I would never have been able to afford. In addition, I discovered that Dunbar's Number had encouraged the reorganisation of several schools in Sweden and Holland, the restructuring of a Swedish Government department, a café in Holland (the CineCafé Dunbar in Katwijk), the design of at least two social networking sites (Path.com and Camarilla), and a hilarious YouTube advert by an Amsterdam tattoo artist.

If that isn't impact, then I don't know what is. And all because of an inspired discovery late one night in the UCL library...

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BRAINS AND GUTS

Leslie Aiello



*Leslie C. Aiello (*1946) is an American evolutionary anthropologist with special interests in the evolution of human life history, diet, the brain and cognition. B.A. (1967) and M.A. (1970) in anthropology from the University of California, Los Angeles, PhD (1981) from the University of London. During her career at University College London (1976–2005), she was professor of biological anthropology (1995–2005), Head of the UCL Anthropology Department (1996–2002), and Head of the UCL Graduate School (2002–2005). From 2005–2017 she was President of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (New York, USA). Aiello is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the British Academy (corresponding fellow). Other distinctions include an honorary doctorate from University of Alcala, Spain (2017) and appointment to the Board of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (2020-present).*

My arrival at UCL in 1976 was largely unplanned but turned out to be a major turning point in my life. I had come to the UK in 1975 with enough money to barely support myself through a PhD at St Thomas's Hospital Medical School with Michael Day, the leading comparative anatomist working in the field of human evolution. Research during that first year was exciting, but I missed a larger university environment. Recognizing this, Day encouraged me to apply for a temporary junior lectureship that had opened up at UCL Anthropology in 1976 after the untimely death of Prof Nigel Barnicot. I was the only one of the four applicants with any teaching experience and was hired and then rehired for three subsequent years – until biological anthropology was finally re-established as a permanent subdiscipline in the department. My appointment alleviated my financial situation and made me part of a more conducive academic environment. And little did I realize how

important it would become to both my personal and profession life.

During my first year at UCL I met my life partner and husband, Richard Bruce, a social anthropologist who had just returned from his PhD research in Nigeria. I also forged connections with the UK human and primate evolution community, much of which centered on the Primate Society of Great Britain, a small and supportive group that introduced me to new colleagues and their exciting research. The down side of all of this was that my PhD became a part-time enterprise and was not completed until 1981.

Although my doctorate focused on the evolution of human walking and the relationships between body size and skeletal morphology, I am perhaps best known for two other achievements that would not have been possible without UCL. The first is the major reference book, *Introduction*

to Human Evolutionary Anatomy, co-authored with Chris Dean from the then UCL Department of Anatomy. This was born out of my frustration with the many indecipherable papers appearing on the anatomy of the Lucy skeleton (*Australopithecus afarensis*) that used terminology unknown to the average biological anthropologist. The book proposal was written over one weekend in 1985 and a positive response was received within 24 hours of snail-mailing it to Academic Press – a turnaround speed that would be impressive even in today's electronic era! I rapidly became scared that I had bitten off more than I could chew and contacted Chris for help. This started a four-year partnership that involved breakfast every morning in the UCL nurses' dining room as well as long-enduring research, teaching and mentoring collaborations between UCL Anthropology and Anatomy.

The second achievement was

the Expensive Tissue Hypothesis, colloquially known as ‘brains and guts in human evolution’. Robert (‘Bob’) Martin was a UCL biological anthropology colleague in the 1980s and we had many interesting discussions about primate brain evolution. He asked me to write the entry on primate energetics for the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution*. This was not as strange as it sounds because at the time much of the primate energetic work focused on locomotion. But while researching for this contribution I realized a major unknown: How could humans energetically support their large and energy-hungry brains? The idea that I came up with and further developed with the physiologist Peter Wheeler from Liverpool John Moores University centered around an evolutionary trade-off between brain size and the dimensions of other expensive organs, particularly the gut. Gut reduction is only possible with the adoption of a high-quality diet. Peter and I therefore posited that this trade-off coincided with the adoption of more animal-based foods about 2 million years ago, which also coincided with the first expansion of the human brain.

The Expensive Tissue Hypothesis generated considerable media attention, including many arguments with vegetarians and vegans as well as praise from as far afield as the California Cattlemen’s Association! Academically it spawned the still-growing field of evolutionary energetics and also sent me off in other directions exploring the development of human language and cognition. Robin Dunbar, who joined the department in 1987, was an important influence throughout this period and our joint paper on neocortex size, group size and the evolution of language is a lasting memento of our stimulating discussions and warm friendship.

The cutting-edge research that came out of the department through the 1980s and 1990s never ceased to amaze me because when I took over as Head of Department in 1996, Anthropology was the worst accommodated of the then 72 UCL departments by any metric. Things were so bad that over the millennium UCL dug a hole in the floor of our cockroach-infested biological

anthropology store room in the sub-basement of the Darwin Building for a garden pump to remove the water that continuously seeped in from unrepaired pipes in Gower Street. We had been promised new abodes by half a dozen successive Provosts and nothing of substance ever materialized. There were no dedicated labs for biological anthropology and virtually no facilities for postgraduate students and we were bursting at the seams on three separate locations – the Darwin Building housing colleagues from biological anthropology, the Malet Place building those from social anthropology and material culture, while teaching rooms were in Foster Court. I made it my challenge to remedy this situation – and a challenge it was to become. Arranging accommodation at UCL was once described to me by its seasoned bursar as playing Chinese checkers without the vacant hole in the centre!

Katherine Homewood, who took over as Head of Department in 2002, was my compatriot in arguing over every square meter with numerous parties, from UCL administration to architects to our future neighbours, the Institute of Archaeology, Chemistry, and the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies (SSEES). A memorable blunder involved the award-winning design of the SSEES building next door. Inexplicably, architects had failed to equip the edifice with a staircase, and we therefore, at the last minute, lost an entire column of offices – ground to third floor inclusive – to allow the construction of that essential feature. The design of our building monopolized two to three years of our lives at UCL. Thus, future anthropologists, beware of unforeseen battle-grounds that may lie ahead! By the time I left UCL in 2005, new facilities were ‘only’ one year away from opening – with several colleagues already squatting expectantly in make-shift porta-cabins near the building site. And so, against all odds after 30 years of ever increasing improvisations, anthropology was finally reunited on renovated premises in Taverton Street.

My final years at UCL saw me in the position as Head of the UCL Graduate School (now Doctoral School), and in that context I rolled out the UCL Ethics

Committee and a year later the UCL Skills Training Program, both of which were steep learning curves for me but have proven to be lasting successes. However, the new Anthropology building remains my proudest accomplishment during my long tenure at UCL.

Leaving in 2005 was a hard choice. It meant not moving into the dedicated biological anthropology space – now known as the Aiello lab (albeit I had protested against that honour on grounds of not yet being dead!). I also had to say goodbye to my colleagues in the department as well as in Anatomy, the Institute of Archaeology, Genetics, Biology, and the Natural History Museum. However, finding sufficient funding for my research and to support my students had become increasingly difficult. So, the offer to run Wenner-Gren and to be on the other side of the funding equation was too tempting to turn down. The New York Anthropology community welcomed me enthusiastically and it all has gone very well over the past 15 years. Still, UCL Anthropology will always be my cherished academic home.

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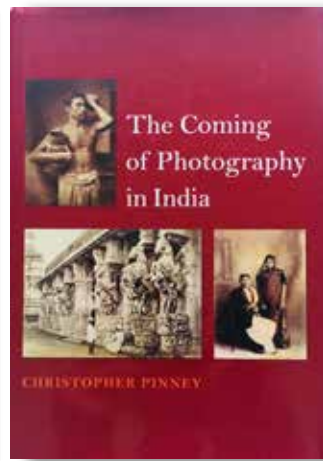
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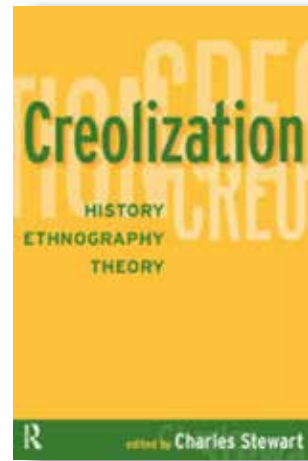
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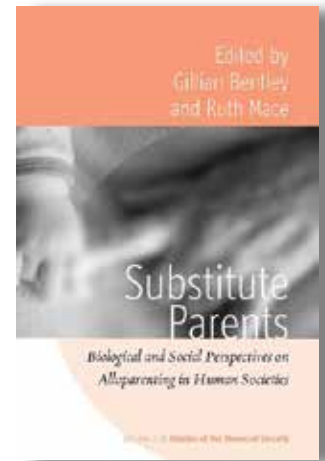
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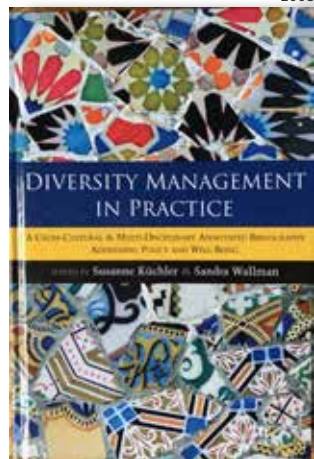
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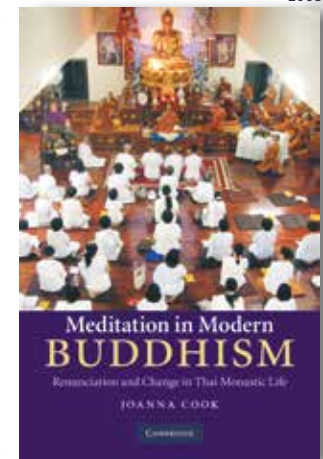
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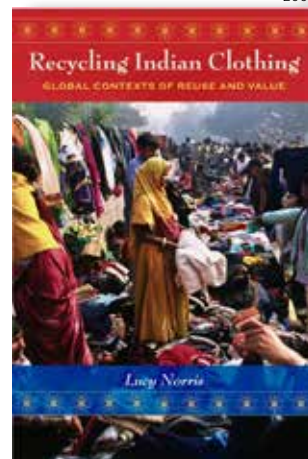
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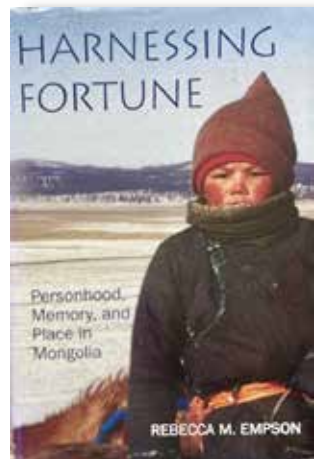
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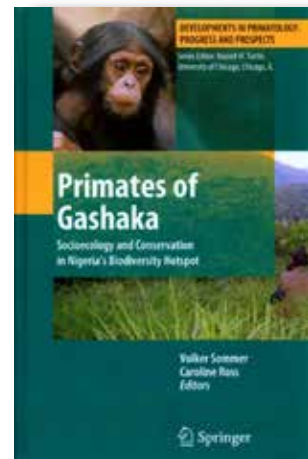
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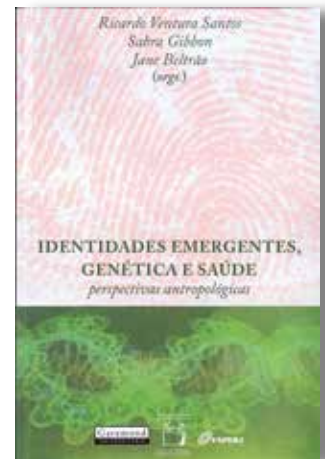
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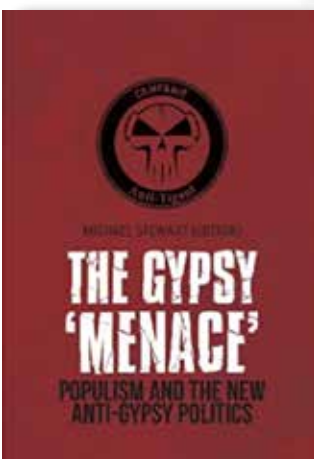
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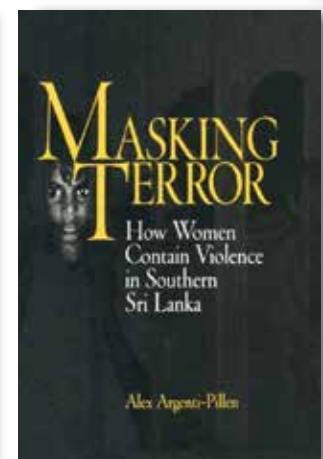
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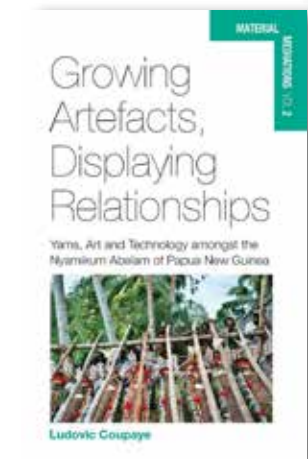
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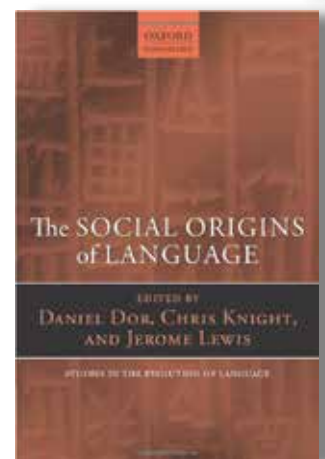
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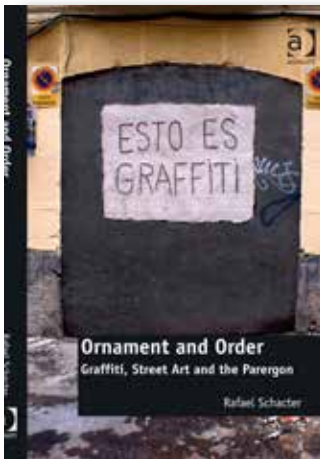
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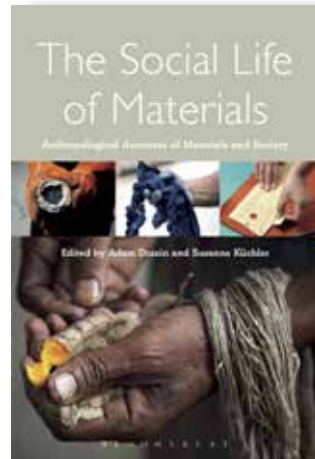
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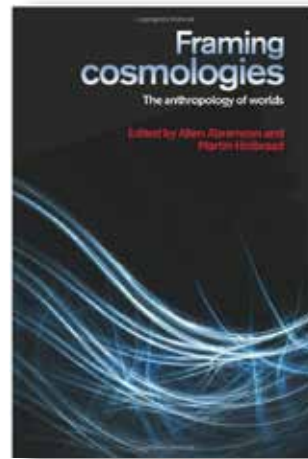
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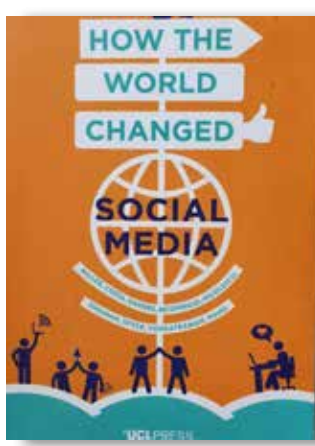
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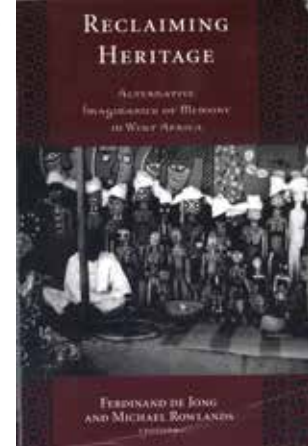
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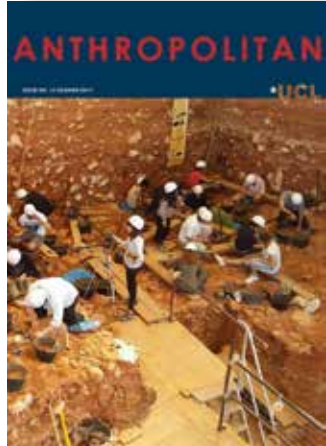
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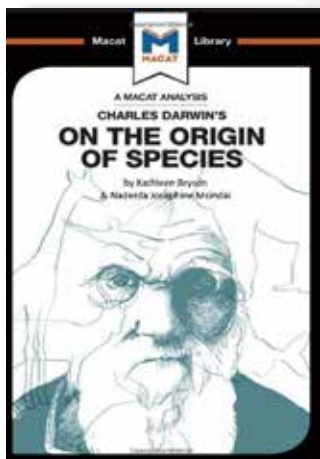
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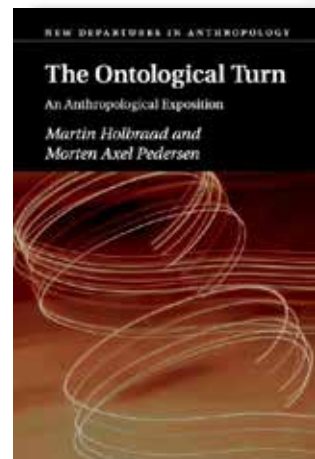
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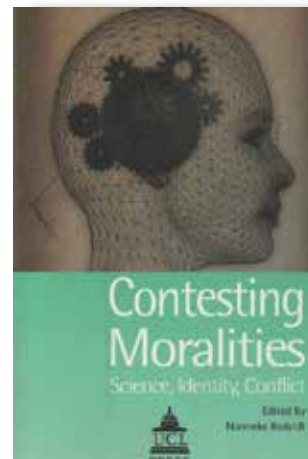
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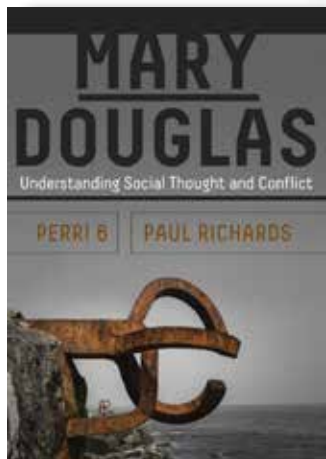
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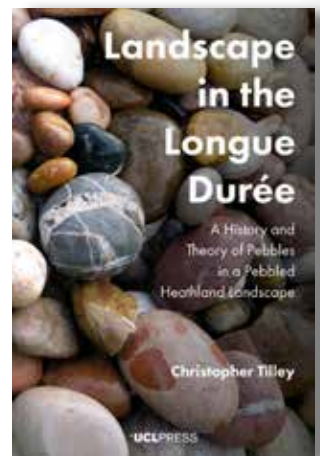
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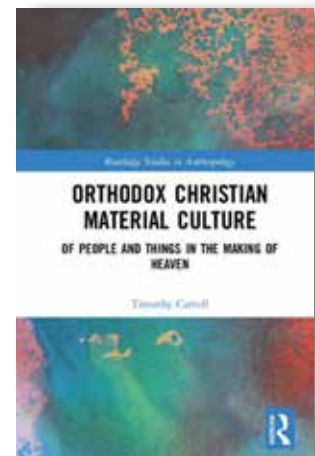
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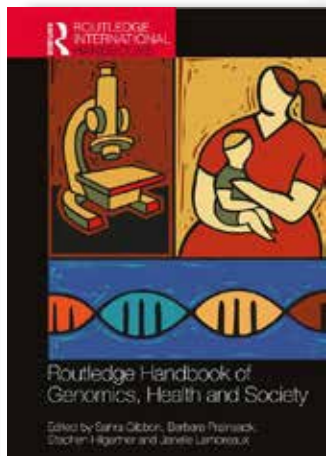
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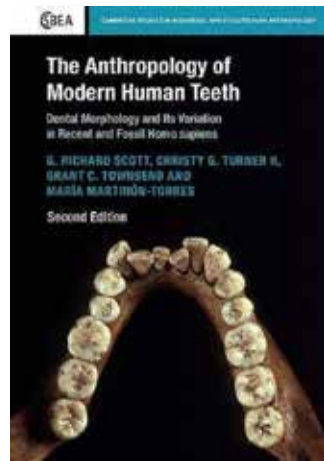
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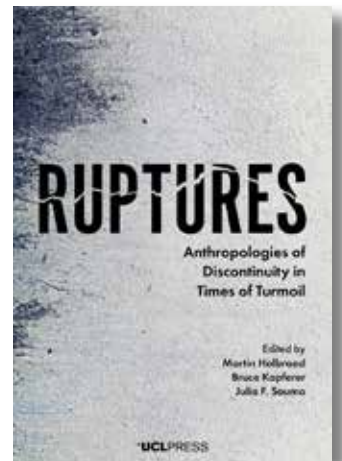
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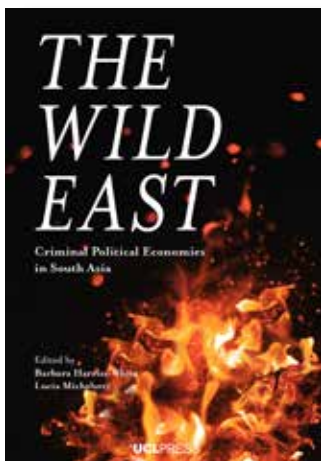
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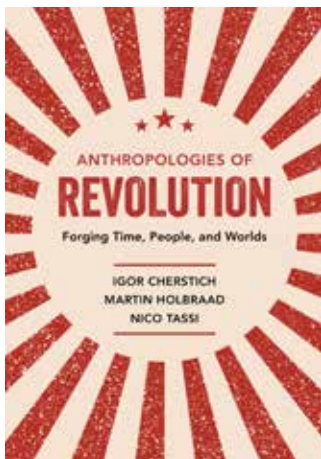
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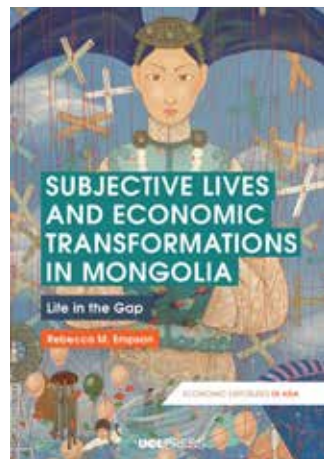
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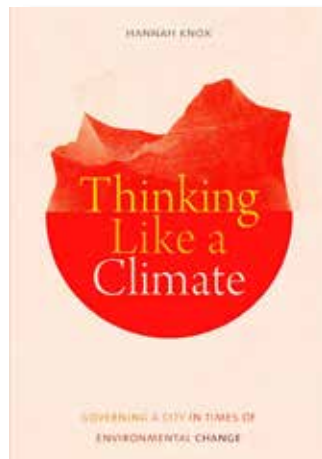
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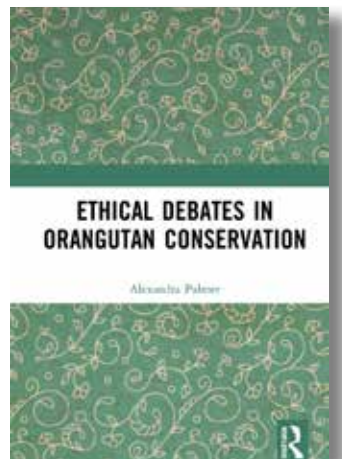
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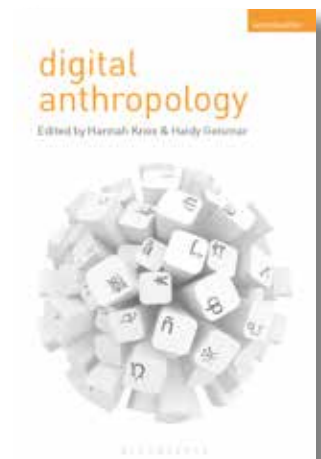
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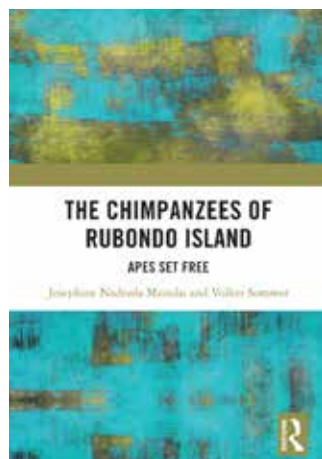
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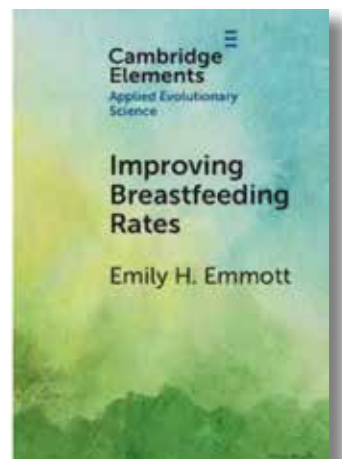
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