

ANTHROPOLITAN

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 UCL



WELCOME

The academic year 2018/19 is coming to an end, with staff and students now looking forward to researching, writing, travelling and relaxing over the summer, whilst our graduates move on to the next stage of their lives.

It's been a busy academic year. We have seen the culmination of some of our large ERC grants, while two are in full swing and a further two have just been awarded. Many congratulations to Victor Buchli and Ruth Mace for having been awarded a five Year ERC grant each, on the 'An Ethnography of an Extra-terrestrial Society: the International Space Station and the Sex-specific Demography' and the 'Evolution of Gender-biased Harmful Cultural Practices' respectively.

The productiveness of our department was shown off this May when we celebrated the publication of seven books by our academic staff this academic year alone. The variedness of the subject matter addressed in these books speaks volumes about the sheer breadth of expertise represented in our department. Titles ranged from *Best Practice: Management Consulting and the Ethics of Financialization in China* to *Orthodox Christian Material Culture*; from *Ethnography of a Data Saturated World* to *Being Young, Male and Muslim in Luton*; from *Mafia Raj: The Rule of Bosses in South Asia* to *Medical Materialities*, and *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti*. The book launch was a wonderful opportunity for the department to regroup

and look at the task ahead.

The academic year has seen many changes and many are still to come. Last summer, we welcomed our new departmental manager, Rikke Osterlund. Together with Rikke, we have started to address the long-standing understaffing of our office and we are now looking forward to the physical transformation of our office space this summer to allow for our increased number of administrative staff to be seated in comfort. These changes are coming just in time for the implementation of our ten strategic visions, which will see many new activities as well as an enhanced teaching and learning environment for our students and staff.

Our department is still growing every year. This academic year, we welcomed Deniz Salali Gul and Aida Robles Gomez to our biological anthropology section; Antonia Walford to the material culture section and Kimberly Chong to the social anthropology section. At the start of the next academic year we will welcome Mark Geraghty to the social anthropology section, and Mark Dyble and Alicia Carter to the biological anthropology section. We will also welcome Guilherme Orlandini Heurich to join us for the duration of his Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship.

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

Professor Susanne Kuechler
Head of Department



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The Collection in the Classroom: The Anthropobox and Schools Outreach

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Ever been to the basement? Those of you that have will know it contains a wealth of objects from across the world that curator Delphine Mercier and a team of volunteers save from gathering dust. Known as the Ethnography Collection, it stands out as one of the few spaces in London dedicated to the study and preservation of non-Western material culture. The collection played a key role in the historical development of the Anthropology department at UCL and continues to be used for teaching and research purposes today, but a recent initiative is set to shake things up by bringing the collection out of the basement and engaging with completely new audiences.

Daryll Forde, the first head of UCL Anthropology (1945–1969)¹ and seminar room namesake, created the Ethnography Collection partly from various collections both within and beyond UCL. These include the Petrie Museum, the Wellcome Collection, the London Missionary Society, and the British Museum, as well as a number of private collections. As there are very few well preserved archives relating to the history of the collection and as we know

for only a fifth of them where the objects were before joining UCL Collections, it can only be assumed that many objects were taken from fieldwork sites by initially visitors and travellers, followed by missionaries and members of the colonial administration and later by visiting researchers and academics. In total, the Ethnography Collection comprises over 2,000 objects and 5,000 photographs representing material cultures from all five continents.

With particular strengths in Africa and Oceania, most of the objects were produced in the 19th and 20th centuries with a small amount of Paleolithic and Neolithic, Pre-dynastic Egyptian, and Pre-Columbian collections. This includes many different kinds of objects such as weaponry, armour, tools, textiles, jewellery, furniture, masks, instruments, pottery, basketry, hunting and farming equipment, and ritual objects, which represent the history of research in the Anthropology department at UCL. According to Professor Michael Rowlands², Daryll Forde's practice of collecting objects among academics and students was driven more by spontaneity than scientific organisation. After his

retirement, objects continued to join the collection but at a much slower pace than before. Only around fifty acquisitions were made since Forde's departure, most of these taking place since the 1990s.

Today, the Ethnographic Collection remains at the heart of the department. Every undergraduate and masters student engages with the objects during their course, from the initial first year object analysis to postgraduate conservators in training. The collection also hosts a range of external visitors, including researchers and schoolchildren, for example with the Young Curator programme which promotes collection skills to students in year 10–13. The most important external visitors, however, are source communities themselves. The Ethnography Collection regularly collaborates with them to build relationships and develop a better understanding surrounding objects in the collection. While the collection has been in collaboration with a Congolese community since 2014, programs have already been developed with the Maori community and, most recently, representatives from the Igbo Conference 2019 were invited to view artefacts and further understanding of Igbo

culture, language and heritage within the department.

Objects from the Ethnographic Collection are also loaned for exhibitions throughout UCL and the wider University of London museum community. This includes the recent *Motions of this Kind* Exhibition at the Brunei Gallery in SOAS, curated by the department's own Rafael Schacter with the help of Delphine Mercier, and support from a number of anthropology students. Meanwhile, within the department, a replacement for the current exhibition on Phyllis Kaberry and women in Anthropology is being prepared for the foyer, exploring music and soundscapes from around the world. As part of the exhibition, a collaboration with the Biological Anthropology Laboratories promises to draw on their 3D scanning technologies to produce and include interactive reproduction instruments.

Besides teaching and research, the collection is also a valuable tool for promoting the department and anthropology as a discipline. In this regard, the collection has taken an active role in the departmental widening participation and outreach strategy, which aims to attract students from a broad and diverse range of backgrounds. Aligning with university-wide initiatives to expand outreach, it aims to increase the uptake of students from non-selective state schools and from groups currently

underrepresented at UCL.

So, what does the Ethnographic Collection do to promote engagement and anthropology as a discipline? Well, objects are a great way to get people's attention. The Anthropology department is one of the few institutions across UCL to have its own, in-house collection, which can be used to spark curiosity among students and engage with anthropological themes. For these reasons, Alison Macdonald and Delphine Mercier have come up with an idea which draws on the enchanting properties of the collection and delivers this to institutions around the country. In short, think of it as a kind of cabinet of curiosity on wheels.

We call it the Anthropobox. The Anthropobox is an interactive schools resource that uses artefacts and cultural objects from the Ethnography Collection to promote the study of Anthropology at university.

Most importantly, the Anthropobox is mobile and can be taken into schools to provide anthropology inspired lessons that are both interactive and pedagogical. Pupils can handle the objects and problem-solve about their origin and purpose, while the lessons connect the cultural objects and their anthropological themes to National Curriculum subjects. At present, the Anthropobox has been used to teach interactive workshops on specific subjects, while also being used more generally to promote Anthropology as a degree subject.

There are many benefits to learning through objects. For one, many of the core skills which have come to define Anthropology as a discipline cannot be taught from a textbook alone. As the term suggests, participant observation is made up of a mixture of participation and observation, both of which involve going out into the world and speaking to the people that inhabit it. While there are many difficulties translating this over to a classroom setting, object-based learning offers a partial solution: for when students cannot go out into the world, the world can come to them.

After receiving a green light from a focus group of secondary school teachers, the box was put to the test through a

four-week trial period in a secondary school in Croydon. Students explored traditional subjects from the national curriculum, in this case Geography, Religious Education, and Art and Design, through multisensory engagement with objects from the UCL Ethnography Collection. They learned to make informed judgements about the use of the objects and their source communities through reason and deduction based on physical characteristics. Indeed, it is not surprising that some students experienced a personal connection with objects in the collection. Whether it's an Arabic student recognising a central Semitic script, or a Chinese student paying respects to an ancestral tablet, the Anthropobox makes people think about themselves as much as others around them, bringing anthropology to life through cultural encounters and real world experiences.

The project is ambitious and we have high hopes for the future. The next phase taking place this year will see the Anthropobox rolled out in schools across London, as well as the development of an Anthroschools website and workshops themed around human diversity. Further down the line, the Anthropobox will be adapted to deliver workshops in other kinds of institutions such as nursing homes and prisons, continuing its mission engage audiences who are often overlooked. In line with the development of the project, opportunities will become available for students who are interested to participate and gain valuable experience working with collections for educational purposes. Through coordinating with UCL administration in widening participation, the Ethnography Collection can extend its reach and engage a diverse range of students for the future of the department and UCL at large.

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1. Daryll Forde 1902–1973. 1973. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 43 (4), pp. 281–283.
2. Michael Rowlands interviewed by Delphine Mercier in UCL Ethnography Collection on the 19 November 2018.



Constructing a Sacred Landscape through Secular Pilgrimage: Adventures in Liminality

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We were three miles from Canterbury when we first saw its cathedral's tower above a horizon of trees shielding the city from view. The tower would disappear as we drew closer, but the memory of it would remain as much-needed motivation to complete the journey's last leg, on nearly our own last legs—our field diaries log more complaints about blisters and sore feet than I'd expected. I had coerced a fellow anthropologist, possibly by under-representing the 25km distance I'd earmarked for the day, into accompanying me on a pilgrimage for fieldwork.

Questions of heritage, belief, and performativity intersect in modern, secular pilgrimage, which can be simultaneously bounded by questions of tradition and authenticity, and flexible enough to forge a new identity from its medieval counterpart. I'd given myself three weeks to conduct a small ethnography of the modern British pilgrimage tradition, which has been revitalised—and reconstructed—in part through the British Pilgrimage Trust (BPT), a charity dedicated to 'bringing pilgrimage back to Britain' with a new secular, inclusive philosophy. I wanted to explore how a sacred and 'memorious' (Harrison 2004) landscape was constructed through the practice of secular pilgrimage, through a lens of temporal, spatial, and spiritual liminality. To do this, I conducted an auto-ethnographic pilgrimage myself as well as several short, unstructured interviews with pilgrims recruited through the BPT Facebook group.

Pilgrimage was not seen as a classic anthropological subject until relatively recently. Edith and Victor Turner envisioned pilgrimage as a way in which people were taken out of the ordinary

structure of society, physically and socially, into an uncertain state of liminality, and formed bonds of *communitas* through this shared experience of being (temporally) 'separated from the rule-governed structures of mundane social life, becoming both geographically and socially marginal' (Badone and Roseman 2004:3–4). People on pilgrimage, therefore, could be considered to exist in a state of transformation.

Pilgrimage traverses culture and is found worldwide, increasingly even transcending organised religion altogether into a secular or political practice with diverse applications and proponents. With the rise of atheist or non-religious pilgrims going on historically Catholic pilgrimages in Britain, the landscape and the pilgrims themselves become liminal spaces, both secular and sacred, in a new, contemporary type of travel. British pilgrimage also has a temporal dimension, both ancient and new, as pilgrimage had been banned in 1538 during the Reformation, with many paths lost over time or converted into motorways and major roads. One such path is the so-called Old Way, rediscovered on the oldest known map of Britain, the Gough Map (c. 1360), which runs 250 miles from Southampton to Canterbury. Although the Pilgrim's Way from Winchester and London to Canterbury is the most famous pilgrimage route in Britain (think Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*), this new/ancient route fascinated me, as it represented an opportunity to witness how cultural memory could be constructed, enabling people to connect to a romanticised past. By drawing on many spiritual traditions, British pilgrimage constructs a Great Britain itself sacred and ancient,

embedded with meaning and significance. My pilgrimage to Canterbury, though bracketed by Christian churches and tracing the same path walked by medieval pilgrims, was waymarked with Bronze Age barrows and ancient oaks sacred to druids, highlighting the conscious temporal layering of the landscape as a place sacred for a long time, and indeed still sacred and meaningful even in an increasingly secular world.

Throughout my conversations with interlocutors and my own auto-ethnographic experiences, several key themes emerged. The first was a strong sense of connection with the past, oneself, others, and the landscape, all of which were conceptualised in some kind of transcendent terms. An interlocutor on an 'atheist pilgrimage' nonetheless wrote that:

The landscape has always resonated with me on a spiritual level...[with] that feeling... directed somewhere else: not at a god, or being, but at the presence and vast complexity of the natural world itself. (Helena)

Tom and Kate chose to go on a three-day pilgrimage to Canterbury over Easter,



despite being 'both very areligious' (Kate). Throughout their pilgrimage, they reflected on why they had chosen to delineate their walk specifically as a 'pilgrimage'. 'I also can't help but think', wrote Kate, 'that there's something about the connection between suffering (I mean, blisters suck!) and worthiness/righteousness that—despite having totally different worldviews and ideas regarding God—connected our trip with pilgrimages for centuries before us'. The conceptualisation of temporal, spatial, and spiritual 'connection' was also noted by other interlocutors, with one couple explaining that pilgrimage was a way to 'reconnect with ourselves', and another describing a 'physical connection to the [distance] walked' measured in blisters.

Again and again, the physical connection to the landscape through the feet was emphasised, and that experiential landscape was in turn connected to long-gone medieval pilgrims:

You can visibly imagine medieval people taking the same steps as you... I left Wye with an almond croissant in one hand and a flat white in the other... it definitely wasn't very medieval! But ultimately you're still really doing the same thing that thousands of people have done for hundreds of years before you. (Kate)

The sensation of dwelling in-between

temporal states was one which I myself experienced on my own pilgrimage, which straddled the medieval and the modern world not simply physically, through the occasional anachronistic interjection of a car on a deserted country road or evidence of logging operations in otherwise dreamily medieval woodland. The role that imagination and performativity plays in modern British pilgrimage is thus an interesting one—it allows pilgrims to connect with a perceived historical tradition and reconfigure some elements of an 'authentic' experience. This manifested partly through the material culture of modern pilgrimage, especially the use of 'pilgrim passports', which are acquired at the starting points of major pilgrimages and stamped by various churches along the path as a memento. Replicas of pilgrim tokens, a common medieval souvenir, can also be picked up at destinations. Finally, the BPT's discourse on 'pilgrim staffs' represents a way to physically connect with the landscape and simultaneously adopt the persona of a pilgrim ('visibly, you can distinguish a pilgrim in Britain from an ordinary hiker by their wooden staff'). On our pilgrimage, my partner and I not only got our church passport stamps and purchased little pewter pilgrim tokens at Canterbury Cathedral, but we also found walking sticks to help us 'embody the pilgrim look' (Eric). Through performance, the

practice of pilgrimage allowed for not only a transformation of body and objects (into their medieval counterparts) but also a transformation of space, of the landscape around us which became both temporally and spiritually liminal as a result. Pilgrimage allowed us to find and maintain a state of being in between secular and sacred, medieval and modern.

Despite the temporal and spiritual distance from real medieval pilgrimage, my nonreligious 21st century interlocutors seemed to tap into a relation of liminality with an interconnected sacred landscape. By walking the same paths, modern pilgrims identify with the perceived experience of medieval pilgrims, giving them concrete ways of 'collecting—and, of course, constructing—images of the past' (Harrison 2004:135–6), in turn confirming both the stability and fluidity of meaning in the British landscape. Through embodied, intentional movement, by foot, the modern pilgrim navigates not only physical but temporal space as well.

Modern pilgrims find and maintain a consistent and conscious liminality by walking between past and present and between sacred and secular, distinguishing their walks as no mere ramble. Through an intentional, yet temporary, rejection of modern life, my interlocutors connected to the anti-structural state of pilgrimage identified by the Turners. Far from dying out in a secularising world, pilgrimage sits between and outside the everyday, constructing a new, sacred-secular mode of Being through the medium of landscape. For us modern pilgrims, it is worth a few blisters to transcend ordinary time and space and exist, for the briefest moment, in liminality.

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The Culture Conversation in Conservation: Whales and Dolphins

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Imagine you are a young orca, less than ten years old. The Argentinian sun is scorching your dorsal fin as you follow mum closely, keeping safe. You are hungry and there is no prey in sight. Then you see it. A white stretch of shoreline, a glorious sickle-shaped beach flecked with blubbery seals. You want them, badly. But there is one problem—you can't leave the water. Or can you? You watch as mum picks up speed, charging towards the beach. She slides in with a wave, catching a dormant, sun-soaked seal by surprise. The seal barks furiously, twisting and thrashing in desperation and, with the retreating surf, mum rolls back into the water, the seal firmly clenched in her jaws.

This highly specialised and dangerous technique is unique to a population of orcas at La Crozet archipelago near Argentina. It is an example of marine mammal culture (or socially learned behaviour) because it is a tradition which is passed down from parent to offspring, which takes up to six years to learn and perfect for juvenile orcas under close parental supervision. This scenario is one among many examples of whale and dolphin cultures—cultures that have recently come under increasing pressure from human-induced environmental change.

In the past few years, there have been several worrying reports concerning human impact on global wildlife populations published in some of the world's leading scientific journals (Bar-On et al. 2018; Ceballos et al. 2017). Amongst the animals highly affected are whales and dolphins, who have suffered a fivefold decrease in their biomass due to intensive whaling and over-exploitation. On top of that, a recent survey of marine mammals around the UK found that every single individual had microplastics in its

digestive system (Nelms et al. 2019). Seaborne pollutants are an increasing scourge to marine life and no case better demonstrates this than the plight of the orca, a recent research article finding that over 50% of global orca populations are at risk of being wiped out due to PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) contamination (Desforges et al. 2018). Amongst those most affected are the resident fish-eating orcas of the Pacific Northwest. With them would disappear a suite of unique behaviours that have been passed down from generation to generation—their culture.

The idea of cetacean culture, slowly gaining ground since the 1970s, was recently given comprehensive treatment in a landmark book by famed cetologists Hal Whitehead and Luke Rendell titled *The Cultural Lives of Whales and Dolphins*. What became apparent was an astonishing range of unique learned behaviours across and within species. While many of these learned behaviours are useful for survival, such as common call systems for better group communication or learning a special technique to hunt better, other behaviours are seemingly random fashions or fads.

But what makes these behaviours 'culture' and not just random curiosities? Well, in the species that have strong culture, individuals—much like humans—associate predominantly with those others who behave in the same way and, in some cases, actively avoid groups with different cultural 'markers'. This could be compared to the fans of two sports teams who avoid (or are belligerent towards) those wearing shirts and colours of the opposing team. Not only this, but within each group, the cultural traditions are learned and passed on—again, similar to human societies—and help a population learn skills and

behaviours that increase their chances of survival in their local environment.

Orcas, the most widely distributed animal on earth after humans, have multiple populations scattered across the globe with many such cultural traditions. One year, one group of southern resident orcas began carrying dead salmon around on their heads. One individual started the behaviour, which then rapidly caught on before eventually dying out, like a seasonal fashion trend. These orcas also have unique dialects within pods, which they use to recognise and communicate with each other. Further out at sea, groups of the offshore shark-eating orcas have a habit of performing unique greeting ceremonies when they bump into each other.

Yet unique learned behaviours are not just found in orcas. A group of Irrawaddy dolphins in the Ayeyarwady River population in Myanmar has long maintained a tradition of fishing co-operatively with local fisherman, herding fish towards them for easy netting and then dividing the spoils. The bowhead

whales of Spitsbergen in the Arctic, which can live for more than 200 years (there are likely some individuals older than the unification of Italy!), sing through the night with hauntingly beautiful learned songs. In captivity, the beluga whale has been known to invent games and to imitate human observers. Examples include a marine version of 'king of the hill', in which individual belugas fight to gain and maintain a perch on a platform, with one beluga calf blowing her mother's milk at an observer who was smoking a cigarette, mimicking the effect of smoke.

No discussion of dolphin culture, however, would be complete without mentioning bottlenose dolphins. A striking example



is a population in Moreton Bay, Australia which, for a time, was rigidly separated into two groups: those that would beg for fish from passing trawlers and those that (to anthropomorphise) you can imagine refused to stoop so low. The groups barely associated with each other, passing down their respective traditions until trawling in the area ceased, after which they promptly re-joined into one group!

Apart from culture, what do all these species have in common? They all have populations which are vulnerable or endangered (IUCN 2019). And some—like the Ayeyarwady River dolphin, the Spitsbergen bowhead whale, the Cook Inlet beluga whale, and the Puget Sound resident orca populations—are critically endangered. If they were to go extinct, we risk losing not only the animals themselves, but the behaviours which make them so unique and irreplaceable. Behaviours which have been innovated, developed, learned and upheld for generations. Behaviours which made these groups ideally suited to their local environment, before we began to destroy it. On the other hand, many dolphin cultural traditions are closely intertwined with human ones, such as the dolphin-human fishing co-operatives found in the Ayeyarwady River. Human contact is therefore not entirely destructive. These interactions have proven mutually beneficial—but the key is respect for other animals and their environment.

The loss of cultural diversity is not often mentioned in *most* mainstream media discussions of conservation, where a round number for a species' remaining

size is usually cited. This reduces a species to a uniform block and does not consider the value of each and every behaviourally unique population, some of which are more at risk than others. Yet it is these behaviours—the orca fashions, the chimpanzee handshakes, the orangutan umbrellas, the capuchin eye-poking, the whale songs, the bird songs—which make the animal world all the more fascinating and diverse. To lose this diversity (and losing it would be irreversible) would truly be a tragedy.

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Top left: Plastic debris washed up on the coast of Scotland at Camus Daraich. Credit: Andy Waddington, licenced under CC BY-SA 2.0.

Far left: Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins. Credit: Serguei S. Dukachev. Licenced under CC BY-SA-3.0.

Left: A bowhead whale spyhops off the coast of western Sea of Okhotsk. Credit: Olga Shpak. Licenced under CC BY-SA 3.0.

Piłsudski's Poland: Revolutionary Romanticism

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The Winged Hussars of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, an elite unit which became a common motif for the Polish Romantics.

Revolution is a strange word; simultaneously understood, yet strangely fluid in meaning. Revolutions are at the centre of some of our most exciting national and historical narratives, from France 1789, to Russia 1917. In line with how revolution has gripped our historical narrative, it too grips our imaginations: violence, renewal, heroism, terror; these connotations and many more are conjured up when revolution is invoked. However, this normalisation of the revolutionary project is wroth problematising, specifically to open up new understanding of how radical political or social change can take place. Here we will consider a revolution often overlooked in the 'canon': Józef Piłsudski and the foundation of The Second Polish Republic. Indeed, Poland between 1918–1939 was a deeply revolutionary project (Dabrowski, 2011), specifically through creating national unity by ultimately producing a link between an old historical Polish state and its modern incarnation. This revolution—often spoken of in terms of reconstitution (Davis, 2005b)—was further underpinned not by violent upheaval, but by romanticism.

To best understand the Second Republic, let us first look briefly at Poland's history leading up to 1918. Though concepts of a 'Poland' date back to the tenth century, the current conceptions of Polish statehood are firmly rooted in

the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a union between Poland and Lithuania lasting from 1569 to 1795 (Davis, 2005a). Though once a formidable land power in Europe, it suffered a long decline, until eventually partitioned by her neighbours: Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Despite attempted uprisings in the interim, Poland was not re-established as an independent territory until 1918, when Józef Piłsudski outmanoeuvred the victorious Entente and the broken Central Powers, so as by the time the Treaty of Versailles was signed, a Polish nation was simply a *fait accompli* (Davis, 2005b).

Despite previous attempts at uprisings, Piłsudski's actions were far from universally accepted within Poland, with debates raging about how to define Polishness, how to organise the nation, and in some cases whether independence was desirable at all. Internationally, the Second Republic received harsh criticism: being called a 'monstrous bastard' by Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov, 'an economic impossibility' by famous economist John Maynard Keynes, and a 'historical farce' by previous British prime minister David Lloyd George (Davis 2005b: 291). Piłsudski found the solution to the nation's struggles not in a unifying vision of the future, but rather in the past. The son of revolutionary nobles, the great Polish romantics had

been a staple of his education, and it was from these works he would derive the framework for Poland reconstituted (Dabrowski, 2011): Specifically idealised imaginations of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the romanticised golden age of the Polish peoples. For peoples there would be—Poles, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Jews, among others. Just as the Commonwealth had been multi-ethnic, so too would the Second Republic. Language, religion, culture, or ethnicity, Piłsudski decreed, would be irrelevant. Poland was to



Photograph of Józef Piłsudski, leader of Poland from 1918 to 1935.

become a 'home of nations' and all those who supported its existence would be welcome. The peoples of Poland would be those who acted accordingly: who built, supported, or protected the nation. In other words, Piłsudski's radical stance was that belonging is grounded in behaviour, not blood (Swida, 2012).

In 1919–1921, Piłsudski and Poland further gained an opportunity to cement both national unity, and gain international credibility. The Polish-Soviet war broke out (Davis 2005b), inadvertently giving Piłsudski and the fledgling Republic a new means through which to cement their connection with a past Commonwealth. A recurring motif among the Polish romantics was that of *antemurale christianitatis*, the Bulwark of Christianity (Davis, 2005b). This title was formally bestowed upon the Commonwealth after lifting the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683, and later came to dominate peoples' imaginations as the *raison d'être* of the Commonwealth—their role in the wider world. While Piłsudski did not quite face the same threat to Christendom that the Ottoman Empire was said to have posed, the invading Red Army, said to be exporting revolution to the rest of Europe, functioned as an excellent stand-in for the historical threats that the Commonwealth had faced from the East. The ultimate victory—later named *The miracle at the Vistula*—was more than an adequate stand-in for the Siege of Vienna, where the Polish army under Piłsudski's leadership broke the backs of numerically superior foe, and once again saved 'Civilised' (Christian) Europe from a godless horde from the East. Piłsudski had fulfilled the role of the hero-kings of old (Dabrowski, 2011; Swida, 2012).

Having reconstituted Poland, and once again given her a unifying purpose, Piłsudski launched perhaps his most revolutionary policy: *Sanacja*. Though he had retired in 1925, he returned through a *coup d'état* in 1926, after experiencing the political upheaval that followed (Davis, 2005). Piłsudski posited that the Polish peoples had, after 123 years of oppression, developed an inherent revolutionary spirit; useful in the past, but detrimental now that they had their nation back (Dabrowski, 2011). The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had typically been represented as a proto-



The Polish borders after the Peace of Riga which formally ended the Polish-Soviet War, 1922. 'Rzeczpospolita 1920' by Halibutt used under CC BY-SA 3.0

republic—the first Polish 'republic'—which had failed because the Poles were seen to have been ahead of their time (Davis, 2005a/b). As such, the last phase of Piłsudski's revolution was set in motion: to reconstitute the Polish spirit. *Sanacja*, translating roughly to cleansing or sanitation, was a political movement aimed at carrying out a spiritual cleansing of the Polish nation (Swida, 2012). The movement mixed democratic and authoritarian elements, and included large propaganda pushes. It was, for example, during this period that the Polish national anthem was introduced (Davis, 2005b). *Sanacja* initially proved popular among the people, however it largely failed to fulfil its goals—despite early popularity, it galvanized political dissenters against the evermore dictatorial government. However, most people still supported the *Sanacja* in concept, as most agreed as some national and spiritual cleansing was necessary. However, there was no real agreement on what such a cleansing should look like, and what the results should be (Dabrowski, 2011). Piłsudski's ideas were, of course, made clear, but artists and the Polish intelligentsia saw the campaign as an opportunity to reach for new creative heights. In the end, there was no unifying vision. Its greatest legacy, perhaps, was to produce a highly motivated, yet splintered, population (Swida, 2012).

Piłsudski's revolution does not typically conform to the usual view of revolution. The clearest *leitmotif* is perhaps not his views of a future, but rather his harkening to a past. However, the uniqueness is more firmly rooted in his wish to 'reset' what had happened over the previous 123 years; the intent not being to return Poland to a past gold age, but rather to return Poland to a past time so as to allow it to develop 'as it should have'. This reconstitution, thus, can be said to have fundamentally been aimed to restore not only Poland but also the Polish, and

further to allow them to develop and become what they should have become, without external meddling. It was, indeed, not only a reconstitution of a nation, but a reconstitution of a people, and their spirit. Nonetheless, the Second Polish Republic failed, and its legacy became one of unreadiness, destruction, and the murder of millions (Davis, 2005b). However, despite being at the centre of this seminal tragedy, Piłsudski's Poland ought not to be dismissed outright as a failure. In 1918, the Second Polish Republic was splintered, barely holding together, perceived as nothing more than a farce, opportunistically cobbled together out of the ruins of Old Europe. By 1940, Polish independence was a primary war-aim for the Allied powers, and the Poles themselves fought tenaciously both at home and under Allied flags, for their independence (Davis, 2005b). Even post-1945, Poland could not be incorporated into the USSR, but rather survived as a nominally independent state. The 1918 Republic had thus gone from a farce to a permanent feature upon the European landscape. The seminal success of Piłsudski's revolution was, perhaps ironically, staying-power. Though the nation had fallen yet again, Poland did not disappear: '*jeszcze Polska nie zginęła*' as the anthem goes—'Poland is not yet lost'.

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THE CURIOUS CASE OF A NEST

Hanine Miriam Habig
MA Material and Visual Culture 2017

When I started researching objects in UCL's Ethnography Collection as a volunteer assistant curator in fall 2016, I was happy to accept the challenge of a 'difficult' object. In the database, the mysterious object is described as a 'collection of grass fibres in the shape of a nest, hollow centre. It is possibly a bird's nest. Original classification: "S. Miscellaneous & unclassified objects".' On the index card, all details are followed by question marks: weaver bird's nest? Swart Valley N. Guinea? Rawlings?

Starting with not even knowing what it is, the object was in a fluid, intermediate state between man-made and animal-made. A not so classic 'whodunit'.

The object makes for a great case study, showing the different directions and depths research can take us to. It also shows how not all research leads to satisfying final results, despite bringing many new things to light. While I had many immediate ideas about what the object *could* mean, my detective work lead me away from obvious cues.

New Guinea?

During my studies, I had read about the Dani tribes living in New Guinea and watched Robert Gardner's 1963 documentary about them, which is called *Dead Birds*. The Dani hunt birds, are skilled weavers and have a mythical fable about birds. It was easy to want to connect those dots, but there was no reliable source about Dani practices of collecting bird's nests or imitating their weaving. And without any clear reference, this track was a potential dead end.

This is where a connection to Tim Ingold's writing on string bags and bird's nests

became most striking. 'How do human skills differ from those of an animal?', he asks (Ingold 2000: 361). What kind of skilful technique are we presented with in the grass bundle? Something species-innate or acquired, or maybe even some kind of biomimicry?

But back to the start without skipping of steps! Is this hollow grass-bundle even a nest?

We needed an ornithologist!

Dr Douglas Russell, the nest and egg specialist at the Natural History Museum, provided us with his insight and knowledge. He was also so kind to visit the Collection which lead to interesting conversations not only about the nest in question, but also about feather thieves in institutions, rare ostrich eggs, and how one needs 'egg hands' to touch a broken egg.

What we learned is that our hollow grass bundle is indeed the nest of a bird, namely the Baya weaver bird (*Ploceus philippinus*). It was produced at the helmet stage, meaning it is not fully finished. The male bird will make several nests like this to attract the female. She will inspect them and, if he is lucky, decide on one and thus on him. They will then finish the chosen nest together.

But, as Dr Douglas Russell told Delphine Mercier and me, the weaver bird does not inhabit the Island of New Guinea. So we could cross out this part of the original index card.

The actual physical index card proved an interesting piece of the puzzle. There appeared to be two different types of handwriting on all the cards of the objects



Baya Weaver (*Ploceus philippinus*) nesting by Dr Raju Kasambe used under CC BY-SA 4.0

in the Rawlings collection. This hints that at least two people organised the objects into the paper inventory. Could there have been a mix-up?

Also, I had first looked at the nest as a stand-alone object instead of considering it in relation to the other objects it is connected to. Alfred Gell teaches us in *Art and Agency* that objects should also be viewed as being part of a corpus, which



Biomimicry: human nest by Artem Beliaikin

in itself is made up of many connected parts (Gell 1998: 167). The nest is one of 18 objects collected by G. S. Rawlings. It is part of that corpus and yet it stands out, because only on its index card do his name and the provenance have a question mark. Possibly, the nest was allocated the Rawlings collection for the lack of a clearer allocation. In fact, it does not correspond with any of the other objects from this collection. There are axes, ritual stones, belts, woven nets, penis sheaths, spears, arrows. These kinds of objects fit with the New Guinea context—the nest does not.

The nest, as we already found out in our meeting with Douglas Russell, must have originated elsewhere. Where could that be?



Discussing the nest with Walter Rawlings. A big thank you to him and the Rawlings family for supporting this research!

And who is G. S. Rawlings?

Researching the collector of an object can be an important cue, and sometimes, the only possible one. Objects have their own biography (Kopytoff 1988), and this biography is often tightly bound to that of a person or family. If establishing a connection between an object and a person is not possible, it stays a lot more 'unsocial', anonymous and puzzling.

Looking into the person that was George Shirley Rawlings (1939–1963) proved to be fascinating, but revealed a nothing but normal life. An Englishman born in Japan into a missionary family, he spent most of his life in Asia, speaking four Asian languages, living in China, India, Malaysia, and what was then Formosa. In the early 1960s, he was a Divisional Commissioner for the UN on the Island of Biak, north of New Guinea. But he also spent some time on the main island, where he befriended a local Dani chief from whom he was gifted several of the objects (Rawlings, W.: during visit 2017). He could have obtained the nest in Malaysia or India, where the Baya weaver is native.

It took some patience, but after several attempts Delphine Mercier and I were able to get into contact with Walter Rawlings, one of George Rawlings' sons. And in May 2017, six months after the first glance at the nest, we met with him. As it turned out, it was him who had donated the objects to UCL Ethnography Collection, after his father passed away in 1963. He was able to identify most of

them and tell us fascinating stories of how they came into his father's possession. But he did not remember the nest being part of his father's collection.

So in the end, we stand with fairly little added information about the nest. By process of elimination, we confirmed that our object is indeed a nest and that it is not from New Guinea. It might or might not have been collected by G. S. Rawlings. How it made it to the collection, remains unknown. But one thing is clear: it made it into an ethnographic collection and not a life science collection. While this could be just accidental, I like to believe it has meaning. Humans and birds have long-standing relations, whether that may be African honey-hunters that communicate with local birds to find honey, or the Chinese culinary practice of bird's nest soup. According to Dr Douglas Russell, weaver bird's nests are sometimes used as makeshift baskets by locals in some areas. With the male bird producing more than one nest, this means there is always a surplus.

Beyond that, there are also compelling analogies between human weaving and bird weaving—'nest building' has found its way into human vocabulary and life, a synonym for an integral need to build, link, nurture, and dwell.

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Through the Looking-Glass: Primatology in a Multicultural and Interdisciplinary Perspective

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Looking into the primate mirror

What do animists, Christian theologians, and evolutionary scientists have in common? Surprising as it sounds, it is their interest in primates. And not a passing one, but one entailing cosmological stories, moral considerations, political agendas, and the fundamental ontological categories of their society. That is, they all thought of primates in order to understand their world.

In one case, monkeys appear in the *Popol Vuh*, the sacred narrative of Quiché Maya, as an early divine creation attempt; seeing how monkeys would not worship them, the gods resolved to create humans. In another, Christian theologians chastised primates for being too similar to humans, an arrogant act that in their eyes echoed Satan's pride in considering himself like God. In yet another, primates are researched by evolutionary scientists, aiming to shed light on our origins and behavioural profile. They captivated the curiosity of every society aware of their existence, which observed and told stories about them.

The reason why is self-evident: with their familiar faces, five digits, complex societies, and imitative abilities, it is indisputable that they resemble us more than any other animal. Indeed, observing primates is often parsed as 'looking into the mirror'. This metaphor has some analytical value, as mirrors return our reflection. However, what we see in them may also be biased by what we already assume about ourselves, a phenomenon well-known to anthropologists: everybody carries assumptions from their

background.

The peculiar human-primate relationship should give us reason for thought. Firstly, the very similarities encouraging us to study them may also be an obstacle. As noted by Philippe Descola, 'where the observer and the observed share common properties, description is never simple' (2005: 68). Second, scientists place themselves in their taxonomic group, the order *Primates*, which effectively makes primatology the study of primates by primates. This reflexive characteristic of primatology cuts across the categories of researcher and researched and destabilises the scientific ideal of a detached observer.

Unsurprisingly, human politics and self-perception entwine with primatology. In 1912, an amateur palaeontologist unearthed fossils with apelike characteristics but a relatively large brain in Piltown, Sussex. The specimen did not fit well into the timeline suggested by other findings and contradicted analyses indicating our recent ancestors were African.

Why were then so many scientists ready to accept the controversial fossils as authentic? Firstly, it insinuated Africa did not have exclusive rights over human evolution. A multi-regional theory of human origins tallied with the racist agenda of some intellectuals of the time. Furthermore, as the (self-proclaimed) smartest species, humans may be predisposed to assume the driving factor in evolution is brain enlargement.

Looking for their evolutionary origins, humans projected their biased self-

perception onto primates and saw a distorted version of the fossil record. The Piltown bones were in fact forgeries but the hoax was only exposed in 1953 and continued to allure scientists for four decades. Ironically our true ancestor, *Australopithecus*, is a mirror image of Piltown man, sporting an apelike brain and a relatively modern locomotor apparatus—and is indeed African.

Through the looking-glass

If primates have proven to be a thorny subject for scientists, the other half of the human-primate dichotomy is no less exempt from tough questions, starting with what makes us different from other primates and the very definition of 'human'.

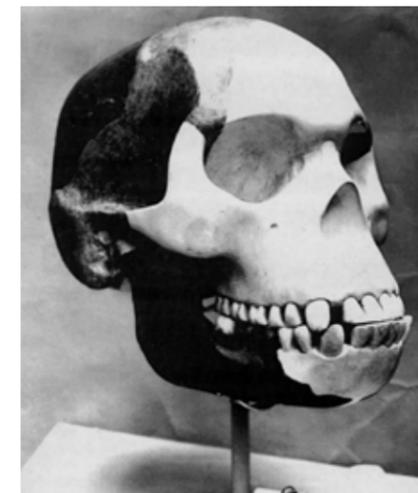
For early naturalists, the matter was straightforward: primates are animals, humans are not. Since Darwin showed that speciation occurs through gradual inheritable changes, deciding where the animal ends and the human starts became challenging. Considering human only those born from human parents simply moves the problem back one generation until we go back so many fossilised generations as to wonder whether a specimen's parents still qualify as human.

Indeed, it is not clear which fossil should be considered the first human, whether it be *Homo habilis*, fashioner of tools, *Homo erectus*, upright but simple-minded, anatomically modern *Homo sapiens*, or, with increasing selectivity, only those *sapiens* displaying complex symbolic behaviour.

The use of the word 'should' is telling here.

As a human artefact, taxonomy is bound to be arbitrary, notwithstanding how much we strive for making it descriptive and meaningful. Concepts like 'human' and 'animal' do not reflect natural facts but are actually folk-taxonomy, stemming from subjective and cultural assumptions.

Notwithstanding, today much scientific research is still framed within the human-animal paradigm. Some believe that other primates can at best emulate, that is, try to achieve the same result of a behaviour seen in others, whereas humans imitate, that is, faithful step-by-step replication, and teach, which implies deliberate intent. If the formulation of these categories may be informative in itself, in reality evidence



suggests that cultural skills evolved gradually. In experiments chimpanzees have been observed imitating and, in natural settings, even teaching others.

Within anthropology, others dispute whether animal behavioural patterns should be compared to ours, rejecting species-inclusive definitions of culture—e.g. 'socially transmitted behaviour' (Sommer and Parish 2010)—in favour of one based on 'ideational' content, in which animals are thought lacking.

According to philosopher of science Daniel Dennet (2017), the source of the western dualist outlook traces back to the 'Cartesian wound' that separated humans from animals and mind from body. Descartes, the influential sixteenth century philosopher and scientist, postulated that human minds were capable of such incredible feats that no physical mechanism could explain their workings nor could they be made of animal substance.

This dualist paradigm produces a set of correlated dichotomies, body/animal/nature on one side and mind/human/culture on the other. Anthropologist Viveiros de Castro (1998), however, notes how this pattern is not found in animist ontologies. Animism holds that all living beings possess the same mental nature, enabling them to experience the world in a socio-cultural way. From the perspective of animals, prey and dens appear as food and houses appear to us and animal society is structurally identically to ours—constituted by kin, friends, lovers, and so on.

The element animists employ to distinguish between species is their exterior form, usually described as being a 'cloak' or 'cloth'. Contrarily to western discourse, the difference between humans and animals is not based on the presumed unicity of human cognition and culture but on the evident observation that all species differ in their bodies.

Left top: A selfie that recently went viral on account of the gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) standing 'like humans' ([Virunga National Park Instagram](#)).
Left middle: A cast of the 'Piltown Man' skull, shown in London in 1961 ([Washington Post](#)).
Left bottom: Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) using tools ([Marcel Langthim via Sci News](#))

These considerations speak to the classic scientific debate 'anthropomorphism vs. zoomorphism'—humanising vs. animalising—which completely misses the point that there are no such things as scientific definitions of 'human' and 'animal'. Science is supposed to have a monist ontology (Dennet 2017), the idea that all phenomena, including humankind, mind, and culture, belong to the same universe and evolutionary continuum. Nobody has ever explained how mind and body interact, if they were separated substances, or when the animal evolved into a human.

The lingering of these dualisms can only be due to an anthropocentric and ethnocentric bias. As animist ontologies use the devices of 'cloth' or 'cloak' to explain the diversity of beings, the scientific and anthropological postulates of 'mind' and 'culture' may have the same function. In either case, they express culturally-specific constructs rather than referring to a cross-cultural reality.

Science, however, does not aim to be culturally-specific but seeks universality. Similarly, multiculturalism is one of the main tenets of socio-cultural anthropology. Evidently, the dichotomies animality/humanity, body/mind, and nature/culture need to be collapsed to attain a perspective that is both coherent and multicultural.

The consequences of this perspective shift directly involve primatology, the study of the species closest to us and in-between our ideas of 'animal' and 'human'. Back to the idea of 'primatology as a looking into the mirror'. Clearly this metaphor just partly captures the relational phenomenon instantiated by humans observing primates, still positing a dichotomy between the researcher and the researched notwithstanding that humans themselves are primates. The shift in perspective suggests we now have to regard ourselves as gone 'through the looking-glass', to borrow the title of Lewis Carroll's famous novel.

Now we are in the paradoxical situation of recognising that human-primate primatologists study primates with humanlike cognitive and cultural abilities. Navigating this complex research field surely requires an integration of biological

and social anthropology methods and a re-evaluation of concepts such as human, animal, mind, body, culture, and nature. Indeed various researchers have called for a new paradigm for studying species, anthrozoology, a word containing both 'animal' and 'human', thus stressing their continuity (cf. Hurn 2010). Anthrozoology is species-inclusive, multicultural, and interdisciplinary, a true middle ground for anthropological research.

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A chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) named Toto with a human (*Homo sapiens*) named Cherry Kearton (Wikimedia).

HOW FORESTS SING

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The artist James Bridle has revived John Berger's 1972 television series *Ways of Seeing* in his radio series entitled *New Ways of Seeing*. There is, perhaps, something of a missed opportunity in the movement from television to radio. Whilst Bridle's series proposes to update Berger's work, sight remains as the sense which is to be understood anew. The visible, and its attendant sense, sight, hold prime place in European traditions of art and philosophy. However, the value placed upon sight over the other senses in accessing and producing reality is as dependent upon cultural habit and convention as our ways of seeing. As sound is produced both by human and non-human sources, attending to it and our ways of hearing can open our understanding of our place in the world in ways beyond seeing's reach.

The critique of the senses is also, implicitly, a critique of the society from which those senses arise. The ethnobiologist Darrell Posey claimed that the norm today is 'a world of sensory deprivation and blandness' (1976: 147). Against the deprivation of the senses, paying them due attention figures the world in other ways, revealing fresh dimensions. Berger critiqued seeing through traditions of European painting; here I consider the habits and conventions of listening in the sonic representation of rainforests. My focus will be on the role of iconism in producing a cultural understanding of the physical environment.

Bruce Albert uses the term 'biophony' to describe the sounds of our non-human neighbours (2016). It is crucial for his analysis because it approximates the Yanomami *heã*, 'acoustic clues', to what is happening out of sight (Albert 2016: 320). Alfred Gell goes so far as to argue that 'the primary forest environment imposes a reorganization of sensibility, such that the world is perceived in a manner which gives pride of place to the auditory sense' above

the visual, and that this 'tends to promote phonological iconicity in language' (2006: 235).

Icons are signs which represent their referent by imitating them—a classic example is the portrait which is iconic of its sitter. Icons interact with symbols, signs which relate to their referent conceptually through generally-held ideas. Soundscapes, just as much as landscapes, are semiotic constructions of the world, and as with any semiotic system, they exist only insofar as they are held in someone's mind, something which must have a cultural dimension.

Yanomami *heã* can be referenced again. It refers not to the significance of one sound on its own, but rather to a 'system of sound associations, the cooing of a fascinated antshrike [...] perceived as indicating the presence of a tapir' (Albert 2016: 320). Semiotically, *heã* can be seen as emphasising signs' relations by their differences. This provides a benchmark for considering the works discussed here; they make forest soundscapes iconically, in ways that reflect the perceiving mind's own cultural relation with the soundscape it perceives. It is because perception is cultural that one 'find[s] it difficult [...] to imagine any reason for other persons to be aware of or concerned with' environments in a manner which differs from one's own (Posey 1976: 147). By concerning ourselves with the many registers of perception which are available, we can go some way towards remedying this indifference.

An example of a so-called Peruvian Whistling Jar (G.0061) features a bird figurine, and this is what it sounds like too. Filled with water, it can be tipped over—forcing the air from one of the compartments to the other—to produce a whistling sound reminiscent of a bird's call.

The significance of the vessels is not,



'Peruvian Whistling Jar'—held in the UCL Ethnographic Collection.

however, limited to the iconic; they also have a symbolic dimension. Daniel Statkenov, who brought the objects to new attention in the 1970s and 1980s, claims that for the Chimú, the hummingbird in particular was represented—visually and sonically—by the vessels, and that this bird was itself symbolic of 'a special importance ascribed to hearing or listening' (1990, online). Thinking again of *heã*, the Whistling Jar can be understood as picking out aspects of the forest soundscape whilst keeping them situated in their context, emphasising the importance of close listening.

The interplay of different significations can also be seen in David Tudor's work *Rainforest* (1968), which is described as an 'ecologically balanced sound system' (Mode Records). The piece is performed by hanging sculptural objects in a manner intended as visually iconic of a forest space. As the electronic musical instruments which produce the sound, the objects are also sonically iconic, producing tones resembling animal sounds. The machine-like work invites a close listening of another kind, as the audience try to come to terms with the way in which the sounds are being produced and how this might relate to the rainforest which is evoked.

The interaction between the iconic and symbolic can be compared between the Whistling Jar and *Rainforest*. Where the Whistling Jar picks out one part of the general biophony for iconic representation, *Rainforest* is iconic of the biophony as an individual whole. Here, the approach to iconic representation can be seen to reveal a different symbolic

understanding of what the forest environment might mean.

Representing an idea of rainforests on the whole, rather than a specific feature such as the hummingbird's call, Tudor's work is dense, inhuman, and somewhat foreboding. If this is an 'ecologically balanced sound system', it is not one that is readily accessible to humans, as the exact sources of the sounds are obscured and almost impossible to differentiate. The Whistling Jar, on the other hand, gives heightened focus to a singular instance of sound, with a singular point of origin. Whereas the audience of *Rainforest* stands amongst the work but is not responsible for its production, the person who hears the Jar's sound is, to a greater extent, also the one who produces it. Furthermore, the referent is precisely known. Here the forest is a legible environment, and one in which humans and other living things can not only understand one another but may be able to assume one another's qualities and abilities. The focus being at the level of parts rather than the whole, the whole may be understood in a different way to *Rainforest*. The point isn't to claim that either work is more successful in representing the world, but simply to observe that representation is not settled.

Listening to and representing the environment is a skilful affair. By examining the modes in which such things are done, we can gain a greater appreciation for these skills, and perhaps extend our own repertoire as well. When the degradation of our environment is often understood visually, by the scars that industry has cut into the landscape and the endangered animals which may never be seen again,

it is important not to forget how much more is available to our senses, that these things may also be lost. A world without bird calls or the gurgling of a familiar stream lost to drought would certainly be one of 'sensory deprivation and blandness'. Turning to examples of close listening such as have been offered here can help in cultivating it as a skill, that we may 'be aware [and] concerned'.

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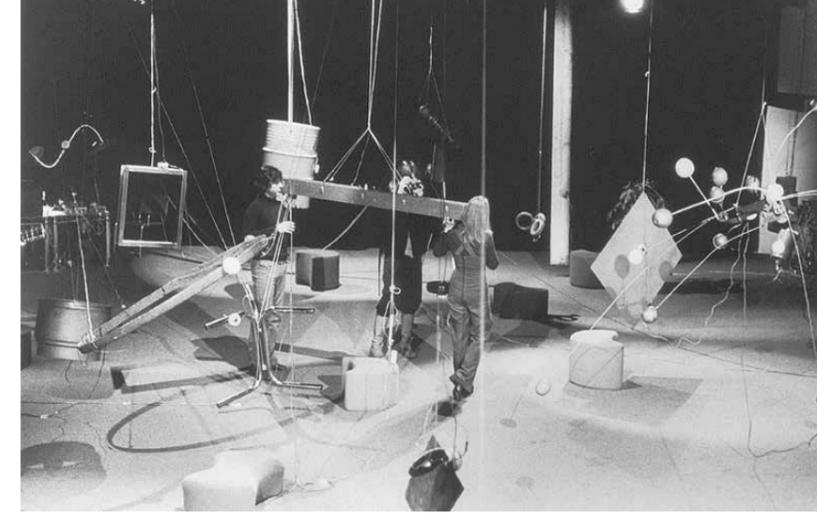
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www.getty.edu/research/tools/guides/bibliographies/david_tudor/zoom/zoom_grl_tudor40l.html Documentation still of a 1973 installation of *Rainforest* at L'Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris

Visions of New India

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Salt deserts in Kutch

Sankalp se Siddhi is a mega campaign implemented by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to create a 'New India' from 2017–2022 (*The Hindu* 2017). A government website was even launched where users can type up a cause and pledge as an individual to achieve it—perhaps an inspiring notion, but one which obfuscates the massive structural power dynamics underlying social problems. When India's nation-wide elections for the Lok Sabha happened this spring of 2019, narratives of nationalism took a new fervour from when I originally wrote this piece. Envisioning a 'new' India is a recurring piece of elections and party politicking—one that again worked to win the BJP a landslide majority. The Prime Minister claims *Sankalp se Siddhi* is a movement against corruption, poverty, and filth. But what of racism, sexism, and extremism? Is there a vision for the country without the BJP's politically orange-tinted glasses? The danger in arbitrarily declared campaigns such as *Sankalp se Siddhi* is that they risk normalising a state-sanctioned homogeneous idea of what does, or doesn't, belong in a nation like 'New India'. A 'New India' isn't an objective entity or symbol of success. A 'new' nation necessarily begs the question, whose 'New India'?

When Modi announced *Sankalp se Siddhi*, he urged citizens to use any means to undertake the campaign,

even online mediums (*Indian Express* 2017). Apparently, journalistic integrity did not count as an acceptable medium. The morning of September 6th, 2017, is heavily imprinted in my memory from when I was working in India. I flipped through the newspapers with my steaming chai, shocked to see the assassination of Gauri Lankesh plastered over every cover page. A journalist and activist from Karnataka, Lankesh lived her life passionately fighting caste-based discrimination and the violent form of modern Hindu nationalism, officially adopted by the BJP, known as *Hindutva*. Lankesh fearlessly criticised human rights abuses in her increasingly autocratic country (*India Today* 2017). Lankesh's assassin is unknown, but the BJP's failure to condemn the murder remains a suffocating silence. The degree of violence which the Indian public authorities employ in constructing a uniform nation is striking.

Lankesh was a voice which boldly spoke for those with tenuous belonging—tribal people whose homes are flooded by the Sarovar Dam, and villagers whose farmland will be handed over to authorities in the name of development. In 2017 Modi approved the final stage of the Sadar Sarovar Dam—one of the largest mega dams in the world which has been under construction since the 1980s. With the BJP in power in the three participating states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh, big 'D' development

bulldozed all opposition after decades of protest. I was barely 16 when I read about civil disobedience and the social activism championed in the Narmada Valley by Medha Patkar, Vandana Shiva, and Arundhati Roy (see *The Greater Common Good*, 1999 and *Water Wars*, 2001). Missing from the front cover of every newspaper today were the voices of roughly 50,000 displaced people, along with the burnt-out activists who have spent a lifetime pushing for legitimate social and environmental impact assessments. Not to mention the fact that the only fully-complete canals are in the economic centre of Gujarat, leaving drought-prone Kutch and Saurashtra with minimal benefit (Thakkar et al. 2017). Even water flows asymmetrically towards the citizens who matter.

The last citizens to be consulted in large-scale development and dams are isolated communities, like pastoralists in the deserts of Kutch, some 400 kilometres from the state capital. This is often called 'tarmac development'—the voices that matter, even when purposefully targeting under-represented communities, are those that are convenient to locate. Still, thousands of Indian NGOs are invested in supporting rural livelihoods. Ironically, I travelled some 5 hours to rural locations for work, while right across from my flat I looked onto Gulbai Tekra slums, colloquially known as 'Hollywood basti'. At Hollywood, migrants sleep, eat, and cook out in the open, often engaging

in craftsmanship such as the making of idols. Despite residing in the capital of one of the richest states in India, as migrants of scheduled castes, very few organisations or government officials are concerned with urban livelihoods of Hollywood *basti* dwellers. I'm fairly certain that, like the Kutchi, these residents are not receiving water or electricity from 'New India's' Sarovar Dam either.

Though the conditionality of belonging in India is inextricably linked to perceptions of caste and poverty, exclusion is not only drawn across these lines. Women in India are subject to some of the most sordid spin-offs of patriarchal society: nauseating violence, rape, harassment, and discrimination are faced by women and girls on a daily basis. Gender-based violence in every form is widely known and reported, and yet remains a thriving business—and this is only the fraction which is glimpsed by the public realm. Watching the acclaimed film *Pink* with a close friend, we couldn't finish the screening without pausing to share traumatising stories of harassment. *Pink* won the National Film Award, and was specially screened at the United Nations headquarters, as well as in Indian parliament. *Pink* uncovers everyday sexism in contemporary India for the popular audience—from micro-aggressions to structural legal bias, showing that the lives of women continue to be policed, challenged, and broken in devastating ways. Women too hold a precarious pass to belonging in 'New India'.

It is likely that this desperate aspiration of a 'New India' will persist under the BJP's continuing rule, especially with

Modi's recent success in crushing all opposition parties. The fundamental point which a state-sanctioned homogeneous idea of 'New India' misses is that India is a country of beautiful, complicated contradictions. These words are not mine, but were uttered by my spirited flatmate over rooftop chai. Whatever one belief or statement exists in India, the exact opposite position also prevails in a legitimate and parallel space within the same geographical borders. Right-wing nationalism alongside socialism, family values alongside individual freedoms, sexism alongside feminism, and violence alongside blissful spirituality. Ultimately, one of the greatest (female) Indian writers of all time encapsulates everything which singular visions miss:

There's no such thing as an Authentic or Real Indian. There is no Divine Committee that has the right to sanction one single, authorized, version of what India is or should be. There is no one religion or language or caste or region or person or story or book that can claim to be its sole representative. There are, and can only be, visions of India, various ways of seeing it—honest, dishonest, wonderful, absurd, modern, traditional, male, female. They can be argued over, criticized, praised, scorned, but not banned or broken. Not hunted down. Railing against the past will not heal us. History has happened. It's over and done with. All we can do is to change its course by encouraging what we love instead of destroying what we don't. There is beauty yet in this brutal, damaged world of ours. Hidden, fierce, immense.

—The End of Imagination (Roy 2016: 123)

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Below left: The streets of old Ahmedabad, where mainly Muslim communities live in low-rise complexes organised in traditional pol neighbourhoods. Old Ahmedabad is physically demarcated from new Ahmedabad by the Sabarmati River.

Below middle: Kutchi women displaying painted handicrafts. The white bangles on their upper arms are distinct to the region, and said to reflect the desert heat to keep them cool.

Below right: Waiting to perform aarti on the banks of the Ganges in Uttarakhand, the headwaters of the famous holy river.



'This baby will never be theirs': Perceptions and politics of LGBTQ families & Assisted Reproductive Technologies

Paraskevi Zotali
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Recently the news reported that a gay couple from Scotland was about to receive an In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF) treatment funded by the NHS, in what is believed to be the first such case in the UK. The news sparked a debate on social media regarding the right of gay couples to public funding for what has been called by some a 'lifestyle choice'. Despite the long-standing efforts of anthropologists to unmask the cultural determination of 'nature', the social significance of the divide between nature and society seems to sustain. In reference to a similar debate on gay couples' surrogacy that occurred last year in the UK (Tom Daley and Dustin Lance Black), several posts on social media were particularly revealing of how strongly rooted is the notion that the right to reproduction must stem from 'nature', despite the wide employment and acceptance of adoption, IVF and other Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) by heterosexual couples:

Tom Daley is not having a baby, he's paying for one! The mother is having the baby.

—Trinity, Twitter 21.02.2018

Tom Daley and his partner are not having a baby, until men are able to have babies this will not change. This baby will never be theirs; it will always be part of someone else that will never be a part of their lives.

—Andy P, Twitter 17.02.2018



'All families equal—Rainbow Families'—Protest over the LGBTQ foster bill in front of the Greek parliament, Athens, May 2018

The UK is just one of many countries facing such social challenges. In the last decades, political focus on issues regarding LGBTQ marriage and family building has substantially increased as ARTs have contributed to the development of new forms of families. On the one hand, long-standing pressures and activist protests from LGBTQ communities demanded attention from politics and society; on the other hand, the increasing number of 'rainbow' families presented itself as a mere reality despite dominant societal norms. While in the past LGBTQ persons assumed that their relationships could not be reproductive (Imaz 2017), or if they sought parenthood, adoption and intercourse were the preferred routes, the younger generations are increasingly turning to ART. This is attributed to social and legal advances, particularly in the 'Western' context, allowing the 'coming-out' of LGBTQ persons at a much younger age as well as improved accessibility to ART.

The first country to establish same-sex civic union was Denmark in 1989, and since then many European countries followed. Nonetheless, same-sex couples have the right of full ARTs access in just 13 countries and a number of US states, while many countries prohibit such use, including France (Eggert and Engeli, 2015). In the level of individual's right to reproduction, legal acts in many European and North American countries provide protection over discrimination based on sexual orientation. Even in these 'progressive' contexts though, the ethical debate of whether ART treatment must be made available to LGBTQ couples still prevails, on the grounds of concern for the welfare of intended offspring, despite ample opposing evidence.

The case of Greece sheds light on the multilevel complexities of ARTs and LGBTQ persons. In 2015, the Greek Parliament voted for civil partnership between same sex individuals. In May 2018, same-sex couples were granted the right to child fostering, albeit not

adoption. These legal acts in coexistence resulted in the paradox that while a single gay man or woman is allowed to adopt or have IVF treatment regardless of their sexuality, the same person in a legally recognized civil union with his/her partner is not. During the discussion in Parliament on the foster bill, Stella Belia, Chairwoman of 'Oikogeneies Ouranio Tokso' (Rainbow Families Greece) argued for second parent adoption:

If I should die, I have no idea where my children would go, to whom, be it some orphanage or some blood relative. [...] our children come from previous relationships, heterosexual marriages etc., yet the most common way is through artificial insemination, surrogacy etc. and all this is not covered by this bill. Likewise, lesbian couples in a civil union can no longer proceed with artificial insemination, and this is a legal paradox. [...] until today, the law allowed single persons to become parents and sexual orientation was not a criterion.

The unmet calls of the Greek LGBTQ community are interlaced with the wider sociopolitical context. In Greece, there is a 20-year-old public discourse on the declining birth rate present in the demographics, giving often rise to Cassandra predictions in the media and political arena that the 'Greeks will become extinct'. Athanasiou (2006) recognises in these performatives a biopolitical narrative that seeks to restore the disputed sovereignty of the nation-state by connecting a 'national body' to the bodies of the social actors, albeit not all bodies: 'Driven by a naturally anticipated desire, straight married couples implement nature's perennial design; driven by an abnormal eccentricity, however, gay couples insert a

teratological graft into the body of natural procreation' (Athanasiou 2006:242). In the context of Greek biopolitics, the sexual orientation of those who use ARTs elevates or demonises the reproductive act itself.

Further, the biological sex constitutes another cultural trope of ART valorization, closely linked to dominant ideas on gender. Hence, lesbian couples being IVF treated are more tolerable than gay couples, because of the rooted belief that the natural destiny of women is to give birth and raise children.

There is a huge paradox that gay men cannot/should not have children, whereas we should let women become moms, if they want to. But men, no, by no means.

Rainbow Families Greece, 2018

Returning to the UK context, IVF is available to same-sex couples on the same basis as heterosexual couples, but in many areas, the NHS does not fund fertility treatment involving a surrogate, therefore gay men are effectively excluded. Quoting from the NHS guidelines: 'Surrogacy is legal in the UK, but it's illegal to advertise for surrogates and no financial benefit other than "reasonable expenses" can be paid to the surrogate'. Perhaps the NHS opts out of dealing with the political, economic and ethical complexities of surrogacy, however the result is not an elimination but simply an exportation of the associated 'externalities' in other countries such as India, as Singh (2014) has reported in her research linking inequalities and transnational surrogacy.

Gay couples living in Spain face similar inequalities, although the country was

the first state to grant same-sex couples the right to adopt and is considered among the most tolerant countries for non-heteronormative families. The sex asymmetry between lesbian and gay couples in ART parenthood is produced by the total ban of surrogacy and increased barriers to adoption faced by gay men due to perceptions on motherhood vs fatherhood (Imaz 2017).

Within this context of existing and emerging inequalities, anthropology has a critical role to play. The state as major determinant of LGBTQ legal rights and accessibility to ARTs has been considerably investigated (Eggert and Engeli, 2015), yet little research has focused on the other end of this two-way process: how are ARTs embedded at the LGBTQ micro-level? How do LGBTQ persons experience and signify the ARTs processes, in what modes they appropriate and connect meaningfully with these technologies? Aporias looking for answers—by anthropologists.

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Stella Belia (middle), Chairwoman of Rainbow Families Greece and Antonis Perpatidis (right), member of the organization.

An Interview with Allen Abramson



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

Becoming an anthropologist was a bit of an accident. I graduated from amateur explosions in (somebody else's) back garden shed to a Life Sciences degree at Liverpool University. I did enjoy biochemistry, ecology and genetics, but momentous stuff was happening on campuses—I was part of the student occupation of the admin block in Liverpool—and I felt a bit side-lined in biology. I ended up spending as much time studying politics, society and history as Hardy-Weinberg and the structure of DNA and became especially interested in Marxism and the history and philosophy of science. Influenced by Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (which is still one of my all-time favourite texts), I applied for Masters courses in the History and Philosophy of Science at the LSE and UCL, was accepted in both places, but then frustratingly found there was no funding.

Fortunately, I'd gotten to reading Levi-Strauss on structural models and 'a science of the concrete', and though I didn't understand completely what he was saying, I savvied enough to know that Social Anthropology was what I probably ought to be doing. I hurriedly applied to UCL, was interviewed by Mary Douglas and M.G. Smith in the Darwin building (where the department was then), and was offered funding for an intensive two-year transfer diploma, followed by a PhD place.

My initial PhD project—a study Palestinian class structure on the West Bank of the Jordan—was scuppered late in the day by the outbreak of war. Admiring *Stone-Age Economics*, I wrote to Marshall Sahlins in Chicago indicating that I was interested in aristocracy and economy and where would I go if I went to the Pacific? Fiji, he replied. So, supervised initially by Phyllis Kaberry and then Phil Burnham, off I went to the mountainous, very green eastern interior of Fiji to study the early development of capitalism. Influenced by French structural Marxism and Polly Hill's studies of rural capitalism in West Africa, I was especially interested in how chiefly power over commoners was both reproduced but transformed in the transition to urban markets, where small-time finance and occasional wage-labour had surfaced.

Overall, I spent 2 years doing fieldwork in a large village-chieftaincy, taught a course at the University of the South Pacific, played cricket for the university, hung out with urban radicals, and became intimately acquainted with a large Pacific Island town. Returning home, I spent 3 years or so lecturing in Scotland, before returning eventually to UCL.

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

That Fiji project was both problematic and productive: Problematic because no matter which way I tried to conceptualise Marxist base/superstructure relations, I couldn't figure out how different elements of the village superstructure (origin myths, rituals, hierarchy, forms

of kinship and marriage) fitted together. Nor could I understand why, having discovered significant transformations at the socio-economic level, traditional forms seemed to largely endure rather than correspondingly alter. Productive because, as I subsequently crashed out of Marxism for the structural analysis of cultural practices and cosmologies (losing several good friends in the process), some Marxist concepts sort of stuck, and that turned out to be analytically beneficial. My PhD thesis was called 'Structure, Transformation and Contradiction in the Life-World of an Eastern Interior Fiji Chieftaincy'. And whilst, looking back, this seems to me to be about as pompous as academic titles get, actually it was modelled on a Jonathan Friedman model of a Maurice Godelier model of a Levi-Strauss model: and that was one of the places you could be theoretically at the time.

Several papers and a couple of edited books emerged from those Fiji years as well as a short trip to South Pentecost in Vanua Aatu. One of the studies to emerge focused on the loan-led mutation of classic ritualised pig economy into a market-oriented dairy cream 'development'. Deemed a failure by the local Ministry of Agriculture because so many cows were being killed for feasts (weddings, elopements, funerals), local people thought it was a great success because they could simultaneously sell and sacrifice, commodify and ritualise (also making me the fortuitous recipient of milky tea in the field)! Another paper and edited book explored the tensions between overlapping land rites and land

rights in the context of 'development' which meant zooming in on the differences between ancestral land defined by sacred centres and legally-subsumed land defined by measurable boundaries. My final engagement with this Fijian material (including a paper written for a collection co-edited by Ludo Coupaye) has involved exploring a strong symbolic correspondence between the village-chieftaincy of humans and the legendary first society of anthropomorphic tree ancestors and animal gods. Chieftaincies seemed to be organised as 'paradise machines' rather than life-giving systems, a finding that, if true, makes it much easier to explain the periodic emergence of cargo cults and other millenarian rites in the area.

My next fieldwork was far less remote but still exotic and cosmological. I'd become a facilitator on a new outdoor skills course for PhD students at UCL. This involved taking groups of students around courses containing a sequence of symbolically extreme tests like Toxic Time-Bomb, Poison Worms and Travellator. The pedagogic emphasis was on performing and auditing team skills, leadership and critical thinking: actual solutions to the tests (like saving the world or rescuing Teddy Bear from disaster) weren't deemed important. The fieldwork showed though that, 'on the ground', most of the students were really into saving Teddy and the world, converting tasks for critical review into epic missions rather than experiential learnings. I topped up this research with annual visits to a giant Outdoor Management Course jamboree at Olympia in Earl's Court, and became increasingly fascinated by the contrasting convergence of skills training and extreme predicaments, epic dispositions and knowledge-horizons within the university. Similar attractions seems to link latter-day charity with epic ordeal, notably moneys collected for medical research to urban marathon, triathlon and skydives.

What is next?

Next is an ethnographic study of climbing walls which I think is interesting because, like many other artificial environments, climbing walls begin life as a simulation of 'the real thing' and then become 'the real thing' themselves. Interesting, too, because again 'the real thing' is an epic

passage towards an extreme where people become obsessed with performing and producing 'at the limit'. Strip away the misleading 'leisure' label, and you're left with a democratic cult of bodily instability and difficult technique ('anthropotechnics' according to Slotterdijk) that, dangerously inflected and testily serious, become less an escape from reality than a playful traversing of what might be newly 'real'.

Generally, I'm wondering whether it's too mad to hypothesise that activities that have been neutered by being labelled 'sport', 'leisure', 'recreation', in their own liminally telescoped space-times and ludic worlds, have actually acquired a profound type of seriousness and power to complement the mobilisatory power of politics. Mad or not mad and perhaps, I'm due to try these ideas out in Aaron Parkhurst's new Sport and Body option this autumn.

What current projects are your students working on?

I've been primary supervisor or co-supervisor to about 15 students and secondary supervisor to many more. In the beginning, our projects were linked to Oceania (Fiji, Tonga, Micronesia) but, for some time now, most of the research I've supervised has been in areas of edgework or cosmology.

Projects in edgework have included amateur gliding and perceived risk (focusing on a year where 10% of Italian gliders died gliding); Oceanic skin-diving and masculinity; British fox-hunting and politics; Brazilian capoeira and authority; Australian hurricane risks and normality; Turkish masculinity and transgression; Israeli enculturation of air-raid shelters, sirens and borders; Irish surfing and affect; and, most recently, 'super-bodily' subjectivity in skate-boarding.

'Cosmological' students have looked at Chinese ancestral shrines and overseas monies, contemporary Chinese divination, and Pentecostal conversion in Brazil and South Sudan. Currently, Raffaella Fryer-Moreira is researching significant shifts in the worldview of Guarani-Kaiowá people in Amazonia as more and more of their forest environment is taken and capitalised.

Are you only an anthropologist?

To the extent that anthropology tends to follow you home, I'm tempted to answer, yes. But, of course, that would only be part of the story. Family (including two demanding cats) justly make equal claims, as do climbing and white-water kayaking which, to improve and stay alive, also demand some attention. Over the years, I've climbed in Britain, the Alps, Andes, Rockies and Himalayas and paddled (often under water) on a host of rivers. In fact, come to think of it, life outside of Anthropology has been equally dense, intense and defining. Edges and limits anywhere seem to have kept me reasonably happy.

Music (Renaissance and modern 'classical') has been a constant, as has fiction (digested just before I drop off at night) and theatre (not as much as I'd like these days). I'm a fan of the opera or, to be more precise, of squawky modern ones like Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth*, Strauss's *Elektra*, Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Berg's *Wozzek*, Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle*. I'm also a well-known fan of Man U which, after a year of false dawns and outright jealousy, has been a little difficult.





Hermione Spriggs presented a multi-screen video piece *Uurga Shig* featuring a lasso called the 'uurga', which is used by herdsman to reign in wild horses on the Mongolian Steppe and to communicate with the horses they are riding. This two-channel video, captured from the point of view of both the rider and the horse at once, invites the viewer to step into the space of the lasso, negotiating between the perspectives of human and animal.



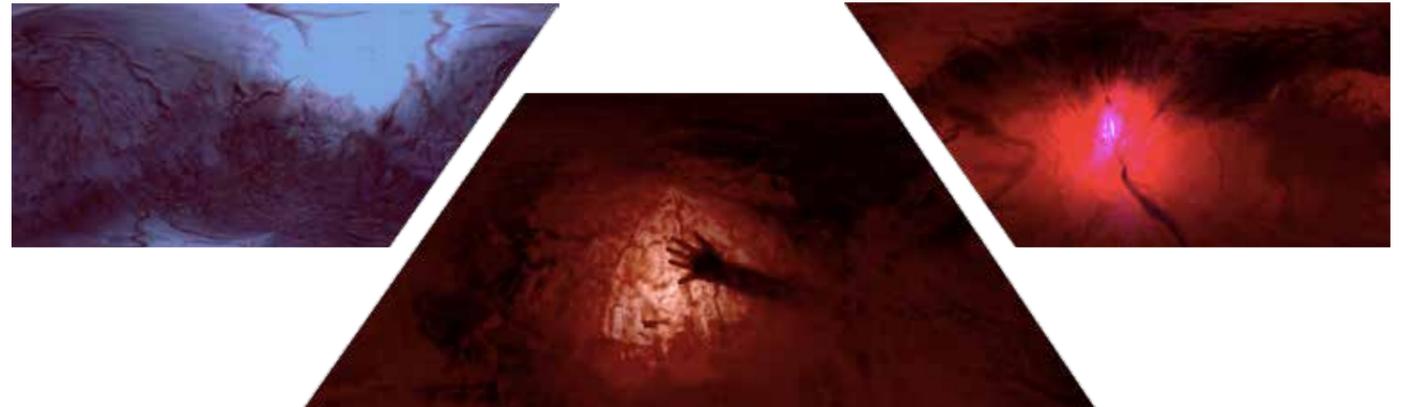
Joseph Cook's photo essay of the London Metal Exchange show some of the physical aspects of the deal, that many of the traders claimed digital technologies could not yet replace. Being able to see the whites of the eyes of the dealer you are bartering with; the gossip in the downtime that allows trust to be built and speculation to be spread. These stills capture moments in which the social relations of exchange take place.



Raffaella Fryer-Moreira's work *Favela Transmission* documented an installation in the *Morro da Babilônia* favela in Rio de Janeiro. Videos of community elders were projection-mapped onto their houses, so the personal biographies of the elders was juxtaposed with the architecture. By drawing on oral forms of knowledge transmission, the local community was able to engage with the research, in a way that text would have rendered impossible.



Directed by Carolina Marconi and produced by Maya Hope Chaldecott, *Nowhere* is an immersive 360 video experience of a womb, which allows the audience to enter a liminal uterine space, and offers a visceral, yet impossible experience.



These works illustrate the diverse ways in which entrants engaged with the theme, and point to creative ways in which our call—for a multimedia anthropology of our times—can be interpreted.

Cemil Hamzaoglu's sound piece *Permeate* explores feedback loops between a changing environment and a reactive performer, probing the conceptual and experiential shifts across the physical and felt-body. Through an investigation into the improvisational spaces created within sonic performances, Hamzaoglu questions established anthropological perspectives on intentionality and agency.



Multimedia Anthropology Lab

Raffaella Fryer-Moreira and Charles Beach
MAL Co-founders
PhD Anthropology



Anthropology has long been in the business of questioning things previously taken as given. Ethnographic encounters with others have led to the systematic reconceptualisation of every aspect of social life, from kinship, ritual and exchange, to culture, knowledge, and concepts themselves. Recent theoretical movements in the discipline have called for an intensified effort towards reflexivity, conceptualisation, and experimentation, that leaves open both the object of anthropological enquiry and the analytical tools with which we approach our fields. Yet amidst this experimental fervor, the material form of ethnographic description itself, and the textual medium in which research is largely presented, has not received quite as much scrutiny.

As PhD students beginning our journey into doctoral research, we wondered whether the experimental spirit of the ontological turn could be applied to the textual format in which our research would be presented, and pondered what other mediums our research could explore. In developing our respective projects, it seemed a pity that the immersive, visceral and multi-sensory experience of ethnographic fieldwork we were meticulously planning would be reduced to a thesis, where only the words (really) count. As products of a department that has left us especially attuned to the agency of material things, we wondered what the agency of our thesis—as an artefact—could be, and if experiments with other materials could offer new conceptual affordances.

This is the question that led three PhD students in 2017 to found a small research and reading group called the

UCL Multimedia Anthropology Lab (UCL MAL). Inspired by the Sensory Ethnography Lab at Harvard, and the Forensic Architecture group at Goldsmiths, we sought to create a space where other postgraduate students—especially those who were beginning to plan their research methodologies—could explore innovative methods for documenting their field sites and presenting their work. While both visual and sonic anthropology provide us with an extensive body of literature engaging with audiovisual media critically and ethnographically, much of this research remains textual in form, where audiovisual media are merely the object of research. Our aim is different—we seek to address research topics that are anthropological areas of enquiry *stricto sensu*, while incorporating multimedia components—sound, video, 360/VR, drawing, graphics, interactive digital platforms, projection-mapped environments, and sculpture.

Currently, both authors of this article are engaged in an experimental 360 video project, where we are using a 360 camera to record immersive footage of our respective field sites, namely ecological crises among indigenous communities in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil (Raffaella Fryer-Moreira) & the clandestine petrol trade across the Colombian-Venezuelan border (Charles Beach). While our research will also be presented as text, we hope to use the 360 footage in public lectures and creative installations to bring an immersive and visceral component to the dissemination of our work. In this way, we seek to develop creative forms of anthropological practice which can dialogue with more diverse audiences, collaborate with colleagues across

disciplines, and explore new methods for presenting and producing anthropological concepts.

We began with a regular reading group, film screenings, workshops, and invited multimedia practitioners to come in and speak. We arranged a visit to the Immersive Virtual Environments Lab at UCL Computer Science, which showed us the technologies of immersion that are being developed within our own institution, and have been building links with UCL's Immersive Factual Storytelling MA. In 2018 we held an autumn seminar series over six-weeks, hosting distinguished digital artists/practitioners to talk in the anthropology department, and we were pleased to find that the increasingly large and diverse audiences we were drawing began to create space for genuine interdisciplinary dialogue. In February 2019 we launched our first online exhibition, and held an inaugural event in the anthropology department with a panel discussion and an installation of selected multimedia works.

We were overwhelmed by the size and scope of the crowd that attended our exhibition launch, including staff and postgraduate students from across several UCL departments as well as Goldsmiths, LSE, SOAS, Oxford and others. The panel discussion, formed of six anthropologists and artists from across academic institutions, offered an engaging discussion on the research value of multimedia methods in terms of both data collection and presentation, and highlighted the importance of spaces for interdisciplinary collaboration. Downstairs, the common rooms were transformed into an exhibition space for the evening,

and a number of multimedia works were installed.

Today, MAL has grown into a thriving research network with a growing and diversifying audience. We now have sixteen affiliated members including anthropologists (PhD, masters, and undergrad), artists (from UCL and beyond), and staff from the ethnographic film department, and as an interdisciplinary team our next steps are

to experiment with more radical forms of sensory immersion. We hope that these multimedia experiments will permit us to develop alternative languages for communicating research, and contribute towards the three main aims of our lab: to encourage greater interdisciplinary dialogue, fostering collaborative platforms to address the urgent questions of our times; to facilitate new methods of public engagement, ensuring that anthropological research can bring benefit

to wider and more diverse audiences; and finally, by broadening the legitimate language of academic discourse beyond text, we widen the scope of those able to participate, and the ideas that can be expressed, leaving room for 'other anthropologies' to co-produce the conceptual diversity needed for an anthropology of tomorrow.

Peace and Cohesion through Identity: Applications for Real-World Practice. A Two-day Practitioner-Academic Workshop

Dr Tess Altman
Research and Workshop Coordinator

Red and black markers glide across butcher's paper, connecting the words 'us' and 'them' to phrases such as 'way of life,' 'protect from attack,' 'banish enemies,' 'divine calling.' Clustered workshop participants are analysing examples of far right speech, with samples ranging from English Defence League in the present to Germany under the Nazis. Whilst the maps the workshop participants draw vary visually, from curly snails to parent/child type diagrams, there is a striking kinship: far right speeches throughout history have drawn on similar tropes and techniques to foster feelings of belonging and moral superiority within the 'us' or the in-group, and to incite fear and a sense of crisis or threat from 'them', the out-group.

The above observation may seem simplistic, but continues to be incredibly effective: identity wields great power in inciting conflict and division in the world. These participants were taking part in a two-day workshop I recently coordinated

on May 2nd and 3rd at UCL Anthropology, organised by Ruth Mandel (UCL Anthropology), Bruce White (Organisation for Identity and Cultural Development) and Stephen Lyon (Aga-Khan Institute). The workshop brought together over 30 participants from over the UK and Europe—practitioners, academics and artists working in the field of peace and conflict studies, to discuss how to apply what we know about identity in a conceptual sense to real-world conflict situations. In other words: how can we translate our knowledge and understanding of identity to harness its potential to create cohesion and peace rather than division?

Setting the agenda, organiser Bruce White noted that a key barrier to applying theories of identity has been the vastness of the concept across disciplines. Early in the workshop, presenter Adrienne Lemon from the NGO Search for Common Ground provided us with some useful features of identity to think with. She

outlined a frequently-made dichotomy—some say identity is sticky, and it gets stickier as one gets older, i.e. it becomes resistant to change. Others say it is constructed, and therefore dynamic and



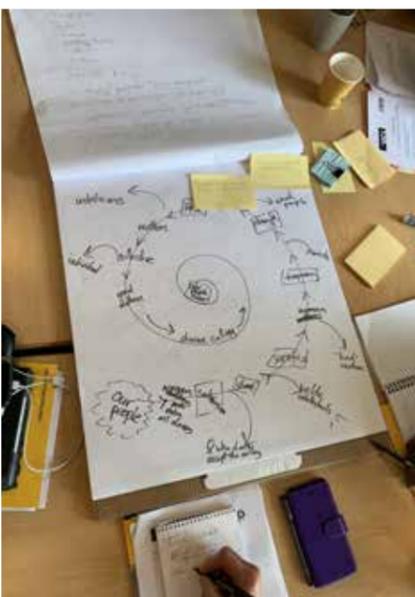
adaptable. The first group exercise in the workshop was designed to mull over exactly such heterogeneous features through presenting participants with multi-coloured cards espousing different features of identity, with which they made a 'hand of cards' that spoke to how they used identity in their work. Presenting their 'hand' to the wider group, some key features did emerge: identity is multiple, involves an interplay between self and society, evokes our emotions, and can be mobilised for different ends.

The remainder of the workshop saw participants undertaking collaborative group exercises in discourse analysis, identity mapping, and effective strategising, interspersed with diverse presentations. Fuelled by delicious Ethiopian food from the catering company Woin's Vegan World (which originated through the NGO Migrateful), we heard from NGO practitioners such as Daniel Tucker from Conciliation Resources, speaking about Boko Haram and Nigerian youth identities; Pierre Sané (formerly Secretary-General of Amnesty International) from Imagine Africa, discussing the complex history of Senegal pre- and post-colonisation, relating this to his own personal identity; art educator John Johnston sharing his mural project in Northern Ireland bringing together Protestant and Catholic youth; photographer Tiffany Fairey highlighting the importance of images in self-representations of identity; and some theoretical tools to think through identity



with political psychologist Tereza Capelos' Cognitive Affective Mapping (CAMs) method for mapping political emotions (using the example of the Turkish election), Sandra Obradović's explorations of Serbian's embodied and lived experiences of identity in relation to accession to the EU, and Siân Herbert's conflict mapping in Nigeria and Colombia.

A take-home message from the workshop was strengthening alternative narratives and frames to combat division and build upon new cohesive collective identities. The concluding roundtable with Raj Bhari (Peaceful Change Initiative), Gwenn Laine (ARK Group), Norunn Grande (Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue) and Nino Kemoklidze (University of Birmingham) provided a sense of momentum to build upon the diverse perspectives heard over the two days and to collaborate moving forward. A key point was who was not in the room: the importance of involving policymakers, educators and employers. Another question was how to develop real-world tools: a practitioner toolkit was discussed as an effective way to translate conceptual insights into practical situations, and partnerships with NGOs so that evaluations and feedback from conflict situations on the ground could continue to be fed back to academics working on topics of identity.



Nigeria-Cameroon chimpanzee, the rarest subspecies (photo: Y. Pohlner)

Researching a West African Wilderness

'So, what did you find out this time round?' I often endure this question when returning to Europe from a trip to Gashaka Gumti National Park—a remote and rugged wilderness in Nigeria's mountainous Northeast, straddling the Cameroonian border.

However, the image of a lone researcher venturing to a little-known place to soon emerge with exciting scientific results is a misconception. Firstly, the success of field projects is positively correlated with how long they are running for—as much of what we want to know about habitat ecology can only be addressed by collecting long-term data, about, for example, how climatic cycles influence the reproduction of plants or animals. Mind you, with 'long-term' I don't refer to weeks or months. I mean years—or even decades. Secondly, much of today's cutting-edge field research is combined with subsequent analyses of data and biological samples in off-

Towards the 'Complete Chimpanzee'

Volker Sommer
Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology

The Gashaka Primate Project in Nigeria keeps embattled wildlife in the news—whether uplifting or gloomy. Founded 20 years ago by Volker Sommer, the project's field research is particularly important to better understand our closest living relatives.



Collection of stick tools previously used by chimpanzees (photo: V. Sommer)

site facilities that specialise in, you name it: virology, genetics, nutrition, geology, endocrinology or remote sensing.

A helpful way to understand the philosophy embodied by permanent field stations is to view them as outdoor laboratories. As scientific director of such a 'wild lab', I need to ensure the uninterrupted collection of baseline records—which entails the rather mundane tasks of maintaining essential buildings, equipment as well as training local field assistants. I also need to assess and facilitate requests from short-term investigators aiming to pursue a specific agenda during a limited stay in the field. These hopefuls include undergraduate, master and PhD students, postdocs and established academics as well as volunteers who yearn to gain open-air experience in research and conservation-related programmes.

Temporary visitors pay a modest 'bench fee' to the project, thus subsidising accommodation and kitchen amenities, supplies of cooking gas, water and power as well as field assistant expertise.

These fees also contribute to a linked scholarship scheme that fosters tertiary education of Nigerians in technical training institutes, community colleges and universities. Our project also enables direct knowledge transfer. For this, Nigerian fieldworkers and those from developed countries work alongside each other, which introduces Africans to state-of-the-art methods not yet available to them and Westerners to indigenous concepts and ways of life.

So far, field workers hailed from two dozen nations (Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, The Netherlands, UK, USA). They were affiliated with 24 universities, 5 research institutes, 3 zoological societies and 4 conservation NGOs. Over 20 years, this flurry resulted in 220 tangible outputs—that's one per month! Overall, students produced 4 undergraduate and 39 master's dissertations as well as almost 20 PhD theses. The harvest also encompasses 22 reports ('grey'

publications), 14 pieces of popular writing, 4 artist residencies with subsequent exhibitions, 4 documentaries, 45 research abstracts, 2 books and—major currency of scientific credibility—68 articles in edited volumes and journals. With this, the scientific yield of the Gashaka Primate Project ranks amongst the most successful of any permanent field stations on the globe.

Amidst widespread Anthropocene take-overs, the mosaic of rain forest and savannah in the Gashaka area is still a relatively safe haven for a dreamlike assemblage of flora and fauna. Our publications have covered creatures such as fungi, flies, springtails, driver ants, termites, honey bees, frogs, birds, wild pigs and antelopes, plus our 'staple order', primates, with species such as black-and-white colobus, olive baboons, mona, putty-nosed and tantalus monkeys. We have published on a wide array of topics ranging from vocal communication, ontogenesis, biased hand use, play behaviour, predation, seed dispersal, stress and parasites to phylogeography, vegetation mapping, and ethno-botany.

Sadly, we may well be the last generation than can scientifically capitalize on such a symphony of biodiversity.

The Panafrican Chimpanzee

Anthropocentric as we happen to be, most headlines about our research output are grabbed by chimpanzees—given that Gashaka harbours the largest surviving population of the rarest and genetically most distinct type of this ape, the Nigeria-Cameroon subspecies (*Pan troglodytes ellioti*). Our own observations are systematically combined with those from other ape study sites across Africa. As project director, I have been lucky to be a contributing co-author to many of the resulting outputs—often in high-impact journals such as *Science* and *Current Biology*. For this, we cooperate across large international teams that may include up to 80 other experts in primatology, genetics, microbiology, statistics or conservation biology.

Of particular importance is the ‘Pan African Project’ conceived at the Max-Planck-Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology at Leipzig/Germany (panafrican.eva.mpg.de). ‘PanAf’ alludes not only to the genus name for chimpanzees and bonobos—*Pan*—, but also to the pan-African collection of standardized records across 30–40 ape populations, which include camera traps and gathering of biological samples. The findings—which at times also cover the other African apes, gorillas

and bonobos—are unparalleled in their breadth, as evidenced by summaries of some recent and current findings.

Chimpanzee Culturecide. Humans, depending on where they live, develop different traditions, abilities and customs. Chimpanzees exhibit a similar degree of ‘cultural variation’, with respect to, for example, tool use, communication or feeding habits. Comparing 31 chimpanzee behaviours across 144 social units comprising their entire geographic species range revealed the sad fact that in areas of high human impact, behavioural diversity was reduced by 88%. Thus, the dominant mammal commits culturecide of its iconic relatives. (Kühl, Kalan et al. 2019. Human impact erodes chimpanzee behavioural diversity. *Science* 363(6434):1453–1455 DOI: 10.1126/science.aau4532)

Candid Camera. When confronted with video-trap devices installed around research sites, wild apes may react to them either alarmed or curious—with interesting species differences. Compared to chimpanzees and gorillas, who exhibit a stronger looking impulse towards the lenses, bonobos were neophobic, i.e., reacted more fearful and cautious. This may be because bonobo societies are female-centred and rather egalitarian compared to other apes where a dominant male may default as the leader. However, the three species also showed similarities in novelty responses, as the apes looked at cameras longer when

they were young, were associating with fewer individuals, and did not live near a long-term research site—which would have increased familiarity with human activity. (Kalan et al. 2019. Novelty response of wild African apes to camera-traps. *Current Biology* DOI: 10.1016/j.cub.2019.02.024)

Rock-and-Rowling. Despite decades of often close-up observations, chimpanzees can still surprise—as we realised when sifting through thousands of video-trap records. Thus, in four locations in West Africa, the apes exhibit the rather bizarre habit of banging and throwing rocks against trees or tossing them into trunk cavities. Over the course of time, heaps of stones may form. The accumulations are similar to cairns—human-made stone mounds found in many parts of the world. While the reviewers of the paper cut out the suggestion that chimpanzee rock throwing is a precursor of human rituals, archaeologists will surely have to revisit the idea that every heap of stone has been produced by thoughtful humans. (Kühl et al. 2016. Chimpanzee accumulative stone throwing. *Scientific Reports* 6: 22219)

Sleepless Nights. ‘In the jungle, the mighty jungle/The lion sleeps tonight’. While the king of the jungle dreams, chimpanzees might move through the dark—as evidenced by camera-traps planted at 22 sites across Africa. At 18 locations, the apes were at least

occasionally up to something, most frequently during twilight. They are leaving their night nests with greater probability when it is hotter and when surrounded by dense jungle. Still, night-walking is rare—which places chimpanzees into the human-like pattern of adhering to a ‘consolidated sleep’. (Tagg et al. 2018. Nocturnal activity in wild chimpanzees: evidence for flexible sleeping patterns and insights into human evolution. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 166: 510–529)

Not Just Gut Feelings. Faecal samples were collected to extract symbiotic single-celled protists that populate the large intestines and aid the digestion of fibre. Named after the hair-like vibrating structures that allow for their movements, such ciliate organisms have different genetic markers, reflecting the geographical distribution of chimpanzees. Ciliate genetics can not only shed light on how chimpanzee subspecies might have evolved from a common ancestor. It also suggests that the elimination of these particular organisms in the guts of modern humans might be connected to changes in diet once fire was used to prepare food. (Vallo et al. 2012. Molecular diversity of entodiniomorphid ciliate *Troglodytella abgrassarti* and its coevolution with chimpanzees. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 148: 525–533)

Intestines are Eco-Systems, Too. The intestinal microbiome is essential for health, contributing to digestion of foods,

immune development and inhibition of pathogen colonization. However, the principles of how animal-associated communities of different bacterial strands are structured is largely unknown. To make progress, the study looked at genetic data of bacterial lineages found in 64 species of bilaterally symmetrical animals—from flies to whales and including chimpanzees. This investigation was the first to document the expected correlation that larger animals harbour a greater number of bacterial lineages per gut sample. It suggests that species richness and thus niche complexity increases with gut size. The analytic methods may be useful in assessing colonization mechanisms in human disease states and in evaluating the invasion of human-associated bacteria into global ecosystems. (Sherrill-Mix et al. 2018. Allometry and ecology of the bilaterian gut microbiome. *mBio* 9: e00319–18)

Sustaining the Future. Human activities are sadly known to threaten biodiversity, even within allegedly protected zones. Based on data for almost 100 tropical forests in 15 African countries, the analyses lead by Anthropology PhD student Sandra Tranquilli assessed which specific human activities influence the survival prospects of these areas. Agriculture and logging were found to be particularly destructive. Protective efforts such as law enforcement, tourism and research can make a difference, but only if tied to a long-term strategy.

This corroborates experience from the Gashaka Primate Project that impact on conservation will be greater once the necessary infrastructure is built up and sustained. The finding quantifies the obvious: Short-term activism is not going to make a difference—only a structured approach will. (Tranquilli et al. 2014. Protected areas in tropical Africa: Assessing threats and the impact of conservation activities. *PLoS ONE* 9: e114154)

The last featured publication highlights why research into wildlife is not purely academic. Instead, even blue sky investigations can have a tangible impact of deterring illegal activities in core study areas and those surveyed for biodiversity. Research also informs conservation management strategies. Moreover, many students who work at a field site later choose a career in nature conservation. Thus, the physical and emotional challenges as well as the intellectual outcomes of research are a powerful motivator to work towards the preservation of increasingly fragile wildernesses—whether at Gashaka or elsewhere.

Volker Sommer is Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology at UCL and conducts field studies of monkeys and apes in Africa and Asia. He advises the International Union for Conservation of Nature as an expert on small and great apes.

Expedition into the heart of chimp-land (photo: C. Varwig)



Botanical collection (photo: GPP)



One of the research teams at Kwano field station (photo: GPP)



Sex Work Matters

Chloe Dominique
PhD Anthropology

Sex, sex work, sex worker. Words often existing in narratives that scream vacuously at one another until hoarse. *Objects of Desire* disrupts, slamming its very materiality into the archival world by way of a dildo in an umbrella bag, a jar of jam, and latex-clad legs cycling around Berlin's streets.

Sex is entangled in a web of meanings, metaphors and imaginings. Despite being increasingly framed through scientific research, public opinions and attitudes towards sex and sexuality remain morally and politically loaded. Practices and behaviours of the promiscuous are conceptually black-boxed, 'tainted' into moral categories. Anthropologist Gayle Rubin has drawn attention to the sorts of ideological formations and hierarchical valuations of sex. Sexual practices outside of what she calls the 'charmed circle'—those considered socially normative—are considered dangerous, deviant and inherently moralised. Christian notions of the good and the bad, sort and order the moral and immoral in wider western cultures. Sex has long been associated with sin and, she claims, can only be redeemed from its immoral nature if it takes the form of monogamous, heterosexual, procreation. Crucially the pleasurable, corporeal aspects of sexual activity are de-emphasised and denied. This configuration of sexual practices has led to a social environment in which everything, including individuals signified by sex, is considered a special case.

The criminalisation of sex workers in Britain began with the rise of evangelical missionary projects at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Attitudes towards prostitution in Britain shifted from acceptance to condemnation. The Vagrancy Act 1824 was the first law

used to control sex work and workers. Introducing the term 'common prostitute' into English language, the Act criminalised prostitutes, punishing them with up to one month hard labour; a cruel irony, demonstrating how sex workers were not considered productive workers, and thus were punished, 'corrected' through unpaid, punitive work.

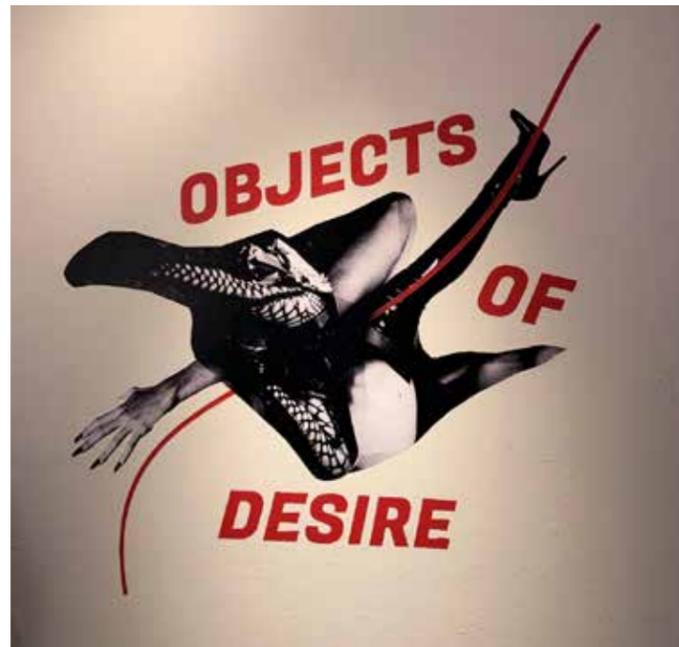
In the public imaginary, the Prostitute had become synonymous with a 'public woman', one who had 'fallen' from the realm of respectability and virtue desired by the middle-classes. This Victorian legacy has persisted, with the current legislation around sex work echoing the very same political aims. Sex workers are frequently portrayed and treated as immoral agents. The laws and social norms that surround sex work are premised on the belief that sexual behaviour is at the root of moral virtue. Sex exists within a tension of that which is desired and that which is to be controlled. The material culture of sex, of objects, of bodies, of fluids, demands attention and must be dealt with, positioned within a moral order, and controlled.

Sex work disturbs this moral order. Like those that do not practice 'good' sex for personal reasons are reduced into a moralised subjectivity of the promiscuous, the labour of those that exchange sexual services for economic reasons is moralised, and tainted. Sex, desire,

pleasure are considered in opposition to forms of legitimised labour. How can something that is so private, be considered work? We must interrogate both what the good 'woman' is, and what the good 'worker' is: what forms of labour are considered acceptable, appropriate? Sex work remains a form of labour, one available to marginalised people; it acts as a safety net during times of economic precarity. Sex and sex work cannot be detached from the rest of our material experiences, from our economic needs, and the experiences of structures of power and cultural norms that situate us within networks of materialities, all of which afford or refuse us certain experiences.

Object collections: what does material culture do?

Objects have been collected by humans for centuries, but the first major ethnographic museums and collections appeared in Europe and America in the middle of the 1800's. The Smithsonian Institute was founded in Washington DC in 1846. In 1851, the first of the predominantly European-based 'world expositions' opened in the Crystal Palace of London. These spaces brought objects from around the world together for comparison and show. The objects were said to represent the cultural traits of particular nations, societies or peoples. More recently, museums and archives



have undergone a sustained period of critical reflection in terms of their ability to frame representations of people. Clifford James, borrowing from Mary L Pratt has called such spaces 'contact zones'; that is, 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today'. Such critical reflection has raised questions around 'translation' of meaning. This includes issues of how to present objects as representations of culture, when they are removed from the context of the social relations within which they are meant to work. Who owns these objects? Who curates their presentation? Who tells their story?

Objects of Desire is continually evolving an online archive of both objects



and their stories. The project uses an anthropology of material culture, deploying the ethnographic technique of drawing attention to the daily, the banal, the narrative, in order to highlight the experiences of the people who work in the sex industry. The archive enables the discourses and narratives around sex work as work to emerge. A focus on the material culture reframes our question; not what does an object mean, but what does an object do? How does it position the subject? How does the subject position it? What—or who—is being objectified here? What does it tell us about managing social relationships, the practicalities of working, and the experience of working in the sex industry?

The politics of sex work can be found in the practices of sex work. Stories found in the objects speak of managing relations, fun, danger, boredom and the apathy a worker may experience whilst at work. The diversity of objects in this archive attends to the rich variety of sex workers' experiences in tangible ways. These objects confront expectations of stories from the sex industry. Rather than being titillated by tales of debauchery, danger and violence, or polar narratives of the exploited or empowered worker, *Objects of Desire* asks, what of the worker? The bored, the banal, worker? The 'had a shit day at work' worker? 'Got to cycle across the city' worker? To reclaim the nuances of sex work is a powerful thing; a reclamation of skills, practices, and knowledges—things vital for sex workers to claim their right to exist beyond the moral projections of the nature of their labour. Not only is the archive an essential

one for documenting the history of sex workers through the individuals' own material realities, but *Objects of Desire* essentially brings us back to the very nature of all human relationships. The beauty and power of this archive is its capacity to illustrate the eclectic, messy world of relationships, facilitated through material culture.

The social figure of the sex worker has been a marker of the abject. The sex workers' body has been a vessel of loaded morality, carrying social stigmas brewed in the Enlightenment period of Europe. *Objects of Desire* contests lazy descriptions of the sex worker, through asserting stories that are commonly ignored, stories that say that the sex worker exists, and as more than the receptor of the others gaze.

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Anthropology and Terror

Victoria Abi Saab
MSc Politics, Violence and Crime

Original essay written for the Anthropology of War course

In order to fight the beast, you have to know it first, and know it well.

(Sluka 2000: 34)

An anthropology of state terror has become increasingly relevant and necessary, as the discipline presents an engaged tool of analysis to understand, deconstruct and oppose murderous states still operating today. Using Bashar al-Assad systematic regime of torture as main case study, this piece reflects on the analytical power of anthropology.

At the beginning, there is a bloodthirsty dictator, his death squads and merciless secret services, but in March 2011, there is a peaceful revolt, protests, slogans, a glimpse of hope, brutally turned into suffering, tortured minds and tormented bodies, victims and death. This is the story of Syria; in a couple of words, a story of suffering and above all, a story of terror. A state-sponsored terror that had rarely been so publicly exposed, diagnosed and anatomised by various experts and commentators, yet that remains unpunished. According to Amnesty International, an estimate number of 17,723 people were killed in custody between March 2011 and December 2015, among these more than 13,000 have been killed under torture (Amnesty International 2016). Starvation to death, torture, rape, sexual violence and assaults on personal dignity, are all qualifying for war crimes under international law. The dire number of victims, the gruesome mutilations and killings, as well as the systematic nature of torture in Assad's Syria cannot be solely analysed and understood through political and historical lenses. An anthropological approach is necessary to read the unreadable and approach violence not as exceptional event, but as part of a well-established culture.

Since the uprising of 2011, Assad's regime is one of the most significant and mediatised example of a 'torture state'. This institutionalised culture of violence is producing a violent state apparatus, relying on extreme methods, in order to control dissidents as well as the population at large. This goes beyond politics, and is about entrenching power within people's mind and bodies. Drawing on Michel Foucault's biopolitics, and Giorgio Agamben's 'bare life' especially, allows us to focus on the physicality of the body as the battlefield for power. It enables a frame of analysis for torture centred around the body, alive or dead, as a symbolic and powerful cultural element in the construction of state-sponsored cultures of terror.

Michael Taussig defines a culture of terror

as a physiological state, social fact and cultural construction (1987: 468). Terror is a determinant in the construction of a new social reality, and establishment of a new order. In the context of colonisation, the new reality was aimed at maintaining the labour's discipline and acted in favour of large imperial economic strategies. Torture had ritualistic features. This level of violence was not solely explained by the rationality of business, but by the colonizers' will to construct a greater evil aimed at fully disciplining the natives. Torture is understood as a process of cultural construction. In Syria, torture does not only derive from political dissent, such as the failed revolution of 2011, but from the cultural construction of a greater evil—President Bashar el-Assad and his state apparatus.



In her ethnography of state-sponsored terror in democratic Spain, Aretxaga extends Taussig's notion of culture of terror, by opening a discussion about the role of fantasy in terror. The almost mythical construction of terror materialises through various technologies of terror, public or secret, and is 'deeply wrapped in fictional plots and phantasmatic images' (Aretxaga 2000:46). This is a fantasy space within which torture states operates. These spaces grant the state extraordinary powers, such as the power of unmaking lives, and ultimately unmaking worlds. It is in the analysis of this specific space that anthropology as a discipline becomes essential.

Fantasy space is the ultimate space where terror is imagined and realised. Torture is an essential and inherent element in the construction of such a realm. The mutilations of the body are part of powerful, meaningful images making this space realistically terrifying. Body-centred terror is often perceived and explained as senseless, a manifestation of pure cruelty. Torture is redoubtably rational. It is a well-thought-out and organised technique to unmake the body of the subject, and ultimately unmake a life, both as dissident and as human being. Nada, a Syrian woman who took part in the early protests, was jailed and tortured during 8 months and 3 days in 2012. Her chilling description of months of incarceration, sets out the beginning of her captivity as the inevitable sinking into a 'dark place' (Di Giovanni

2017: 26). A dark place she couldn't escape neither with her body nor with her mind, trapped in the regime's jail too.

One of the main tactics used by the regime's agents is for prisoners to keep their heads down and never to look at the guards (Ismail 2018: 46). Such practice contribute to the fantasy that prisoners cannot see their torturers, they can only imagine him. Nada calls them 'wolves' because she cannot be sure of their human nature. The repetitive use of the term wolves to describe her torturers, as well as this idea of 'dark space', are linked to the construction of a space of fantasy. It reveals experiences 'out of this world', out of time, out of sanity and, conclusively, out of reality. Here torture becomes a crucial element in the construction of a culture of terror. Ismail states 'acts involving intimately carried-out body destruction elicit a disorienting fear and a sentient horror in which the visual and intimate articulate' (2018: 12). The practices of torture become fantasy. Victims who comes back from jail rarely dare to speak about it, and if they do so, it is in almost mythical terms—such as Nada. The victims who will never come back, lie forever in this imagined space of terror.

Anthropology is vital for our understanding of terror because it allows us to conceptualise this terror not only as a social fact, but as a cultural construction. Going beyond Foucault's biopolitics, we approach torture as a mean to

separate the body from its political status and reduce it to the bare minimum. An anthropology of terror transcends the analytical framework of studies of political violence, and looks at the power of culture. Often flirting with the darkest fringes of the human mind, such an anthropology attempts to understand the incomprehensible and to speak the unspoken.

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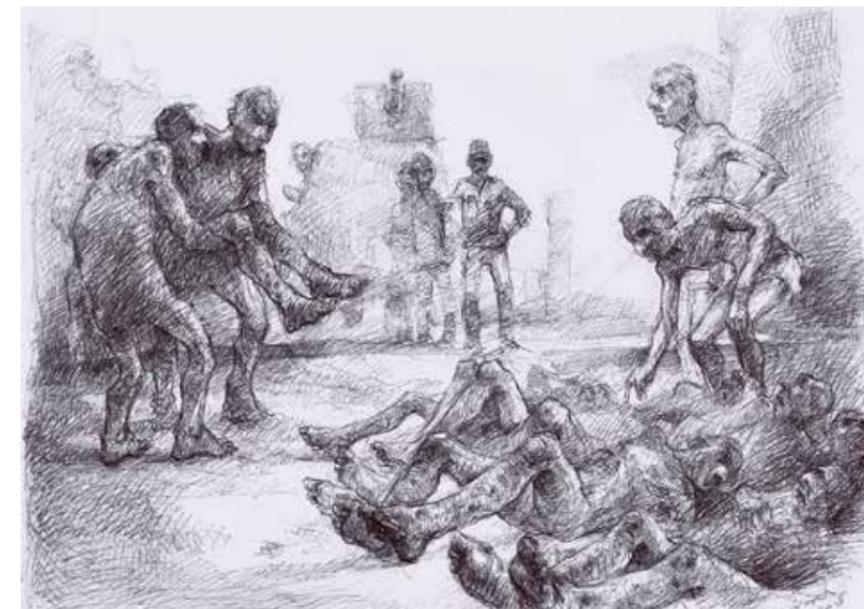
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Left and far left: Drawings by Najah Albukai, Syrian artist, who spent 1 year in Assad's jail between 2012 and 2014, where he was tortured.



CARING FOR TIGERS, CARING FOR LIVESTOCK IN CENTRAL INDIA

Adam Runacres
PhD Anthropology

On a warm May day in Baror, a village encompassed on three sides by Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, I sat with the former *Sarpanch* (Elected head of the village council) in his house, the fan blowing hot air around the room as we awaited lunch. Raghav Singh Yadav is a soft-spoken man with kind features and a warm smile and carries an air of authority that endears him to his neighbours and friends. He had told me numerous times about the problems caused by the founding of Panna National Park in 1981, how the bans on traditional forest-dependent livelihoods such as livestock grazing, gathering minor forest produce or mining sandstone or diamonds, for which was the region is famous, had severely damaged the lives of villagers, forcing out-migration to cities and the repeated halting of ‘development’ in favour of minimal disturbance to ‘the forest’. After a few weeks of visiting Baror, I was still wary to ask local people about what had happened to Panna’s tigers.

Panna lost all of its tigers to poaching, with the local population declared extinct in early 2009. Inevitably, focus turned to local communities like Baror, which were easy targets for blame that should have been directed at organised crime rings and incompetent and corrupt forest officers. Raghavji described how he was called to a meeting following the local extinction, in which he was asked whether he had any information about the poaching. He explained then, as he did to me a few years later, that, in his words, ‘We aren’t those kind of people. We don’t have courage to hunt.’ In his room in Baror, Raghavji explained that the authorities sent him on his way and there had never been any connection established between his village and the poaching of Panna’s tigers. It was exactly this type of accusation, made by the Forest Department and common amongst wildlife enthusiasts everywhere, that local people aided or were poachers, which I tried to avoid. Still, I wanted to

ask his perspective on why the tigers had disappeared at all.

Raghav Singh took a long pause and started to describe the early days of the park, when wildlife researchers from Dehradun began to arrive in Panna to study the tigers. They placed radio collars on the tigers in order to track their movements, in a park considered an unusual place to study the big cats (Chundawat 2018). The collars were not GPS traceable, but instead were simply followed by the researchers who would travel through the rugged terrain in jeeps and on elephant back to note the location of the tigers. Raghu Chundawat (2018), the principal researcher on the first project, writes in his book that the tracking locations were also used by the forest department for ‘tiger shows’ in which guests of the department would be taken on elephant back into the jungle to see the elusive big cats, taking advantage of the precision research. Thus, the

collars’ enabling role in wildlife tourism was established in the park’s early days.

For Raghav Singh though, the collars were key to the tigers’ disappearance. He said, ‘The *researchwale* put the collars and then left them. They don’t check the collar on the tiger. They don’t look for cuts or infections. They aren’t there every day. It’s not possible.’ I agreed with him and began to ask something else, but he interrupted.

You see, we are Yadavs, we have livestock, buffaloes and cows. We also put collars on our animals, made of rope with a bell attached, so we can hear them when they come home. Every day we look at our animals and check the rope is correct. We can see if it is too tight or too loose, whether there are any cuts or infections. And if there are, we treat them with medicine. They don’t do that. They don’t take care of the tigers.

For Raghav Singh, the tigers’ disappearance is intimately tied to the notion of care for them—or lack thereof, in the case of the Forest Department—and that lack of care was in contrast to their care for their domesticated livestock. The Forest Department failed to care ‘from a distance’ having intervened on the body of the animal, something he considered contradictory and to blame for the disappearance and death of Panna’s original tigers.

This raises a number of questions. At what point does caring for a wild tiger transform from either a distant love of its wildness to an active intervention in its health and well-being, involving collars and detailed tracking of its movements? Does that change the quality of its ‘wildness’ and what effects does that have on its reception by tourists, photographers, safari guides, foresters and local villagers? How might we compare and contrast, as Raghav Singh did, the care of tigers and the care of livestock in a context fraught by the fear of losing those animals (again) to hunting by people or hunting by other animals?

Govindarajan (2018) describes how notions of wildness and domesticity are blurred by the behaviour of certain animals and people, who are often tied through bonds of intimacy and kinship, as they move between villages and jungles in India, particularly those governed as National Parks or Wildlife Sanctuaries. The conception of an animal being either *jungli* (wild) or *paltu* (domestic, tame) depends on a series of markers beyond its location or ‘ownership’. In Panna, the tension around jungle animals and their ‘jungliness’ was refracted through local idioms of care for livestock, intervention into animal lives and the *svabhav* (nature, character, essence) of those particular animals.

Whenever I asked about the old Panna tigers, the original population, most would describe enormous beasts, whose roars could be heard from kilometres away and would shake the foundations of village homes, who were so strong that they could throw buffaloes into the trees after killing them, where villagers would find them the next day, but these old tigers were also afraid of people, they would run away into the jungle if ever confronted.

‘But these tigers nowadays,’ people would say, ‘they are nothing, like little cats or jackals. But they aren’t afraid of people. They are half-domestic. They will come if they hear you speaking.’ I would ask why. ‘They [the Forest Department] rear them, take care of them, follow them day and night, treat their illnesses, feed them.’ Turning to tourists on safari, when confronted with a tiger wearing a radio-collar, many would exclaim and ask, ‘Arey yaar, it has a collar. Is it actually wild?’

The question of the reintroduced population’s wildness turns on the intervention and interference of the Forest Department and echoes broader concerns in the wildlife tourism community about not disturbing animals, changing their ‘wild nature’ to something tame, despite the overwhelming desire to have a brilliant sighting and get ‘the perfect shot’. How both local villagers and tourists relate to jungle animals in a conservation landscape like Panna as potential predators of their livestock, the obsession of the Forest Department or the celebrities of their next photographic endeavour is refracted through these unstable conceptions of their wildness or ‘unwildness’ and relates to local tiger and human histories as well as tales carried by India’s jungles, the people and animals who live there and now their out-of-town visitors (cf. Jalais 2010; Mathur 2015).

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THE NEW FIELDWORK CURRICULUM



Writing Retreat

Ben Epstein
PhD Anthropology

In November 2018, writing-up research students gathered to participate in a what is hoped to become the annual Post-Fieldwork Writing Retreat. The magnificent YHA in Swanage, Dorset, a recently refurbished, sea-facing Victorian villa situated five minutes' walk from the beach of Swanage, was the perfect location for a quiet escape from London, and an opportunity for solidarity and cohort building, and forging new friendships.

This second Retreat, part of UCL Anthropology's new Fieldwork Curriculum, (including Bootcamp, ResDesPres, and a Fieldwork Preparation Workshop) was to build on the excellent UCL ChangeMakers initiative started in 2016 by Rosalie Allain, Tess Altman & Pauline Destrée (see *Anthropolitan* Summer 2018).

The initiative was started to support innovative pedagogic projects and promote and strengthen the anthropology PhD cohort as a key tool for addressing challenges specific to the anthropological research process, including dealing with the potentially detrimental effects of long-term ethnographic fieldwork, such as isolation, uncertainty and mental health concerns. It was conceived to create long-lasting institutional change in the department for improving research student experience by providing intra-

and inter-cohort support both before and after fieldwork.

The retreat, attended by around a dozen students recently returned from locations near and far, gave students an opportunity to reflect on—and contextualise—very diverse but ultimately commensurable fieldwork experiences, as well as time to focus on writing at a spectacular location with panoramic views of Swanage town and bay. Being at a historic British seaside resort and the perfect gateway to the world heritage Jurassic coast gave ample opportunities for walks along a magnificent coastline as well as visits to seaside pubs.

As a cohort, we can recommend future students returning from fieldwork organise retreats in Swanage. The entire venue is available for hire on an exclusive basis. With two well equipped large classrooms there is ample space to write peacefully without distraction (bar the occasional visits from the local fauna)! Our travel was also generously covered by the department and the journey from London gave scholars a chance to meet for the first time, and others reacquainted. After our arrival, we chose our rooms, (there is the option to share between two or four individuals) and set-out to explore the surrounding area and find provisions for the week.

Initially, we planned to break-up writing each day into blocks with group discussions, but in the end, we decided to concentrate on our individual work. Many of us being under the pressure of

looming deadlines, we set aside time for debriefing at the end of the day, listing the goals we'd met. However, it was important there could be moments during the week away from work for walks along the coast or in the town, as well as visits to the local museums and attractions. During these moments, frank conversations could be had about our anthropological fieldwork, often represented as a necessary, much mythologised disciplinary rite of initiation. Discovering the cross-overs and similarities about our experiences of fieldwork marked this as an invaluable step towards completion of our doctoral research, and combined with the subsequent Workshop, the perfect way to book-end our fieldwork.



The Fieldwork Seminar

Andrea Lathrop
PhD Anthropology

A few months into the second term of 2019, our same retreat group met once again to deliver the second annual pre-fieldwork seminar for first-year PhD students, *Let's Talk Fieldwork. Safety, Positionality and Wellbeing*. Rather than going 'by the book', the aim of this seminar was to give an honest account about what it means to go on fieldwork, demystifying the usual accounts that depict the experience through a romanticised lens. In contrast, the 50+ attendants that gathered in the Daryll Forde Seminar room got the chance to engage with post fieldwork student's first-hand experiences, challenges, and anxieties.

Through five panels—*Anthropology at Home Risk and Positionality, Safe and Sane, Access: in and out of the field, and an Expert Panel*—the seminar offered a range of topics of concern to students prior to fieldwork. In the first panel, students Johanna Pérez and Toyin Agbetu talked us through doing anthropology 'at home'—although, through Johanna's eyes, it became clear that 'home' is not always a straightforward category: you might be an alien in your home. Alternatively, Toyin, given his embeddedness as a long-time resident of his 'community', needed to develop tools (and sometimes props, such as his faithful camera) to be able to step in and out.

The second panel consisted in an intimate conversation between Sabine de Graaf and Lucy Irvine regarding

their experiences in the field as female researchers. By recalling certain fieldwork encounters—for example, being harassed or asked for money—they both emphasised the need to constantly legitimate and prove their researcher position, and delimit boundaries. In the third panel, Andrea Bravo and I described our experiences concerning wellbeing and isolation in the field. Though our sites were diametrically different—London and the Amazon—we both expressed the importance of taking care of mental health by looking for activities or places where we could feel secure. Andrea finds it extremely useful to 'get away' from the field by visiting other villages, while also making sure she was aware of her own emotional state throughout that time. Alternatively, I tried my best to create a distinction between my 'life' and work in London by engaging in different activities, but more importantly by developing a research structure.

The fourth panel entailed two accounts regarding accessibility in the field, with Francisco Vergara and Jennifer Cearns recounting their difficulties of gaining access to their respective communities. They discussed the need to make oneself credible and accessible to communities, which might not be open to having researchers amongst them. Finally, Ben Epstein referred to what happens when relationships with the community fall out, and the implications this might have for one's research data. He advised students to sign agreements with important gatekeepers prior to the beginning of fieldwork, so as to avoid difficulties.

The final panel of the day involved academics Rafael Schacter and Allen



Abramson discussing ethics and risks while entering fieldwork. Through his personal experience with art patrons, Rafael presented some tricky questions that surround research projects: Who are you working with? Who is sponsoring you? And how can you keep a safe distance from certain patrons and institutions and their vested interests? Alternatively, Allen problematised the risks of fieldwork, acknowledging the difficulties of foreseeing the risks one might encounter. The answer for him lay in embedding oneself in the community, to be protected and cared for by one's belonging in local social and cultural networks.

The day-long seminar ended with a unique showcase of our own personal fieldnotes, a new feature we devised this year. By presenting images of our actual fieldnotes in all their creativity, messiness and diversity, we sought to crack open the 'black box' that surrounds this key research method. This was followed by an open Q&A, where participants were encouraged to address their concerns regarding their own fieldwork. From how to take fieldnotes and organise them, to more complex scenarios of sexual harassment, students were able to open up about their deep anxieties while preparing for their departure to the field.

As the 'next generation' cohort of UCL Anthropology PhD students championing this new fieldwork curriculum model, we hope to see these collaborative and open instances of sharing within and between cohorts become more institutionalised in the UCL PhD programme, and other anthropology departments. We not only offer practical advice that might be hard to obtain from your supervisors or find in a book, but we propose collective ways of grappling with the difficulties one might encounter when entering new modes of fieldwork.

Organising the retreat and this workshop was a collective effort led by us students, and I feel very proud to have been part of it. We sincerely hope this will become a new tradition for the department to be taken on by successive cohorts and participants of the event.



In the department, from right to left: Amina Omar, Margot Dahinden, Chloe Curtis, Antonia Lee, Denisa Botescu, Alex Pillen, Liz Fox, Aeron O'Connor, Carol Kidron, Julian Browning (photo by Jill Reese).

BBC Radio 4 Reith Lecture 2018: War and Humanity

Antonia Lee
BSc Anthropology with a Year Abroad 2018

On a sweaty June afternoon, a collection of anthropologists, undergraduate and PhD students huddled to think about war. We were invited to join a live recording of Professor Margaret MacMillan's Reith lecture on 'War and Humanity'. Being in the BBC studios was a novel experience, but certainly not an unanticipated opportunity whilst orbiting our lecturer Alex Pillen. The annual Reith lecture series 'The Mark of Cain', began its first leg of a worldwide tour in London, before heading to York, Beirut, Belfast, and Ottawa. This was a radio recording on a grander scale than the tiny Rare FM studio I used for recordings at UCL (<https://soundcloud.com/antonia-lee-2/sets/a-disastrous-list>). Putting curiosity for the BBC building aside, the lecture provided a space to listen to a certain history of war, and the narratives incubated in our given social context. Once past the excitement of free drinks and snacks, and after perusing the patriotic gift shop, we swapped our postcards cards of the queen and various London landmarks for our seats. Seated,

we assumed a critical space, deliberating war, violence, and history.

After a playful exchange between historian Margaret MacMillan and journalist Anita Anand, we finally became a part of the audio construction of the lecture. The uncanny and slightly uncomfortable instructions for applause and laughter, were directions to give editors the peace of a cleaner audio recording and sensible composition. But through this, I sensed a certain tension between being an active or passive participant. What is far more negotiable and effervescent, like being live in the room during the lecture, became circumvented by fixed and reproducible simulacra—a serial approach for the final audio recording used online and on air. Analogous, perhaps, to the relationship between the field experience of an anthropologist and fixed ethnography which later circulates in the academy. There is an aspect of materiality which shapes and affects the power of a

narrative.

Sylvia Wynter, a Jamaican essayist and novelist, made a case for multimodal approaches in social science. She states that our various sociogenic modes of being human are inscribed in the terms of each culture's descriptive statement, adhering to its respective modality of adaptive truth or episteme (2003: 269). Approaching history with a sociogenic principle can allow for a fluid and shifting way to document our social phenomena. Wynter brings us closer to a place to assess how a fixed radio broadcast can act as a respective modality which gives rise to the epistemes prevalent within The Reith Lecture.

As the esteemed historian MacMillan, publicly engaged with topics that we largely encounter through paywalled articles, or book shelves with exclusive access, it feels important to acknowledge how being in that space was reflective of an intellectual tradition of power.

Our access was indeed a privilege and contribution to that tradition, perpetuated and fermented in British universities. MacMillan skilfully used history to outline how memories of war both linger and waver in the institutions which regulate many nations and cultures. Living within our social phenomena often creates blind spots, and humans forget valuable lessons. The hope MacMillan expressed for moving towards 'peace' was indeed congruent with my own hopes for some 'peace', even though the context of peace is shaped by powers forged in accepted knowledge.

Macmillan was given the task to address war as an essential part of humanity. She gave a lecture which grappled with this question. We were offered rich and interesting historiography, but Margaret's fundamental position—where she fits within her own 'peaceful Canada'—became lost in the spirit of the lecture (MacMillan being Canadian). Although MacMillan herself, and her personal worldview were not placed under scrutiny, queries about power bases and epistemology came to the forefront. Such as, 'for whom is Canada peaceful?'. The ongoing battle resisting the incremental violence and murder faced by indigenous women, may indeed feel like war, when understood in terms of colonialism and systematic disparity (MMIWG, 2017). But is this feeling war felt immediately by MacMillan herself?

In his writing on the Holocaust and modernity, Zygmunt Bauman outlined how the modernist push towards



essentialization, allowed Nazis to crystallize German immutability in a biological paradigm (1989). The engineered difference between Aryans and those deemed impure, became a natural and indisputable physiological problem. The legacies of modernity are frequently grounded in essential categorisation, which creates opposition in groups. An unpacking of any essentialist question such as 'Is war an essential part of humanity?' is a huge task, but it is valuable to note the kind of impact historical claims can have. It was the nameless 'hunter-gatherers' of MacMillan's lecture who are not 'tightly organised', the hunter-gatherers with a propensity for violence, who embody modernity's essence of nature. Drawing on the theory of the enlightenment philosopher Thomas Hobbes, MacMillan introduces his ideas which championed the civilizing project of undivided government to control the 'nasty, brutish and short' stuff of nature (MacMillan, 2018). Hunter-gatherers are then firmly distinguished from what she called 'organized societies'. This categorisation became demonstrative of an aching obliviousness to the relevance of our notions of warfare, and violence for such imagined hunter-gathering groups. As MacMillan chose not to give a real historical or geographical context to the hunter-gatherers she mentioned, the term served as a coded device for demarcating modern subjects from natured objects.

Drawing again on Wynter, I wish to conclude by considering our own culturally specific descriptive statements. Many of us at the lecture were left frustrated for being unable to engage much deeper with MacMillan on the topic of war, and the pitfalls of conceptualising violence on behalf of the people we don't really know. However, Anita Anand had informed us that questions which weren't succinct or reasonably direct create logistical nightmares, incompatible with consumable radio shows. As a participant you were left to fidget in your seat, hoping to ask a question at all. At the end of the lecture, we were lucky enough to have some time to speak directly with

Myself with Professor Margaret MacMillan, jotting down suggestions



Outside the BBC Studio

MacMillan, a context in which her views appeared more malleable and open to consideration.

To listen to the Reith Lectures, tune into Radio 4 at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b7f390, with the following timestamps for the questions by myself and Margot Dahinden (33:46 and 39:26). Previous podcasts since the 1948 Reith Lecture by Bertrand Russell on 'Authority and the Individual', are available via the BBC's Archive www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00729d9/episodes/guide?page=1.

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One, Two or Many More States? Libyan 'Stateness' as a Bourdieuian Field

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Original essay for the Critical Issues in Anthropology course

The recent escalations between the two rival governments in Libya headlined international news platforms over the last weeks. This confrontation happens amidst the growing tensions between the UN-recognised Tripoli government on the Western side of the country, and the Eastern Benghazi-based government led by Khalifa Haftar. Haftar is a powerful military commander, who enjoys some regional and international support as Libya's new 'strongman'.

These recent events evoked my memories of being in Libya some years ago. I was in the country twice between 2001 and 2003 to visit family members in Benghazi and Darna. What struck me back then was the omnipresence of the state. Upon arriving, clear instructions were given to me: 'Don't talk about politics, don't joke about politics, and never mention the "brother Colonel" (Muammar Gaddafi) in any way. Not over the phone, not in the street and not even to yourself.' Wherever you went in Benghazi, you could see handwritten banners with catchy slogans as 'partners not employees' (shuraka' la 'aujara') and 'the committees are everywhere' (al-

lejan fi kol makan), rhyming sentences from Gaddafi's green book, his famous manifesto. Pictures of Ghaddafi and other symbols of the state were everywhere. It felt as if Gaddafi was the state. To an outsider's eyes, the Libyan state could be anything but divided at the time.

In relation to the situation in Libya, I am interested in examining the understanding of the state, not as hegemonic entity, but rather as one political field amongst many. Individuals would move in and out of this field in their daily lives, reflecting a rather fluid perception of the state. Pierre Bourdieu introduced the concept of field, as a social enclave where social interactions take place without an intentional apparatus or overarching

control—'a game devoid of inventor and much more fluid and complex than any game that one might ever design' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 104). In Bourdieu's view of social environments as fields, a state is a collection of 'administrative' and 'bureaucratic' fields, that allow the monopolisation of the use of 'legitimate symbolic violence' (ibid.: 111–113). Individuals hold different kinds of economic, cultural and social capital. Such capital is specific to the individual and does not exist and function 'except in relation to a field' (ibid.: 101). This model is specifically important in understanding the individual/state relation as a dynamic relation in constant negotiation, rather than a permanent, irrevocable membership.



2006 Billboard in Tripoli showing Gaddafi driving his beetle car, caption says in Arabic 'Lieutenant Muammar al-Gaddafi distributing leaflets from his car in Tripoli, the story of the revolution'. Photo credits: NH53 on flickr. License CC BY 2.0



2011 Demonstrators in Bayda city holding picture of Omar al-Mukhtar (left) and king Idris al-Sanusi (right).

Libya Before and After the Colonel

Evans-Pritchard's ethnography of the tribes in Cyrenaica mentioned their unity under the well-established Sufi order of the Sanusiya in their fight against the Italian administration (Evans-Pritchard 1954: 62–89). Members of the Sanusi order led this resistance movement, most notably Sheikh Omar al-Mukhtar. Evans-Pritchard contrasted the tribal allegiance, which traditionally exceeds any other loyalty, with the sense of national belonging that was invoked by the Sanusiya during the struggle for national liberation. The order fulfilled the need for 'some authority lying outside their segmentary tribal system'. He concluded that 'the Sanusiya brotherhood was founded on a Bedouin brotherhood' (ibid.: 88, 89). In other words, the practices of the Sanusiya order were assimilated by the tribes, and became a platform through which tribal values could be reproduced.

After the removal of the monarch King Idris al-Sanusi in the 1960s and the creation of the Libyan republic, the relationship between the state and the tribes went through different phases. During the first few years, tribalism was discouraged, as it was seen as a hurdle for the new born state to be 'one big tribe' (Cherstich 2014: 408, 409). At a later stage, the state celebrated the tribal component of the nation, in an attempt to instrumentalise it so that tribal traditional authority would multiply state power. After the 2011 revolution in Libya, it became clear that Libyan tribes may 'bypass tribal ethos in the name of broader national or religious

principles', when they choose to side with the revolution against the state, and the intertwined tribal allegiance (ibid.: 415–417).

In both accounts, the Libyan tribes could incorporate a wider, intertribal state-like belonging, which does not mean the suspension of the tribal affiliation. While in the ethnography of Evans-Pritchard, the Libyan tribes assimilated the Sanusiya practices and fought under one banner, in Cherstich's account tribesmen could also opt in and out of tribalism. Often, members of Libyan tribes are also urbanites, and resort to a tribal identity for practical reasons. Moreover, religious affiliation and tribal affiliation are not always mutually exclusive (ibid.: 416–418).

Bourdieu and The Libyan State

By applying Bourdieu's theory of political fields we can interpret Libyan tribal affiliation. State, tribe and religion are separate yet intersecting political fields. Within this framework, individuals would move from one field to the other based on the social, economic or cultural capital that they can attain in each field for each situation. The subscription to a state identity, tribal identity or religious identity is preferential and dependant on external factors. Of course, this fluidity between fields and ideologies would be limited by conflicts among them. For example, a tribe member in Libya cannot openly join an Islamist group that acts against the interests of their state and tribe, and at the same time invoke tribal or state

membership for protection. Transitioning between fields would be limited when conflicts arise.

The concept of 'stateness' can be expanded by the perception of the state as a political field. It renders statehood accessible to communities when the overarching bureaucratic state structure does not function. In the Libyan tribal context, tribesmen may decide to invoke their tribal affiliation depending on the circumstances and tensions between one identity and another (tribe member, urbanite, Muslim, Libyan).

In conclusion, as the state can be one out of multiple options, the segmentary tribal system can recognise a state political platform that exists beyond tribal segments, even without a functional state. The state is created as a conceptual field to allow for intergroup political exchanges. This perception of the state is worth keeping in mind as the situation in Libya unfolds over the next months, when conflicting views of a legitimate Libyan state clash with one another.

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Sunset over the twelve apostles, Victoria, Australia



The Cordillera Blanca (Peru) – Once completely blanketed by snow, now mining activities erode the ice



Playing with Fire at the Anthropocene Campus, Melbourne

On Indigenous peoples and the decolonisation of the Anthropocene: Thoughts from the Anthropocene Campus 2018, Melbourne

Rebecca Irons
PhD Medical Anthropology

As anthropologists, the Anthropocene, or the 'geological age of man', is something that we might feel a call towards addressing. Who to better understand how human beings have changed the very make-up of the world than those academics who dedicate their research to the study of humanity? Of course, the Anthropocene is an issue that is fast becoming one that need concern us all. The Anthropocene is here, and has been since 1964, according to geologists (although this is still up for debate). Yet rather than ice ages or prehistoric events, at the heart of such dramatic changes in the natural environment are human beings themselves, ushering in a new geological age by our apparent disrespect and domination of all that we have deemed 'at our service'. This has not only been directed towards the natural

world however, but other human beings as well. Ghassan Hage (2017) argues that both racism and the ecological crisis have similar roots in colonialism, domination and domestication; those who colonised man use those same attitudes to colonise the environment. We can therefore pose the question; whose responsibility is it to clean up the mess?

Although they are not charged with the blame, it is often indigenous groups that are expected to do so.

At the 2018 Anthropocene Campus in Melbourne, Australia, the contrast between the harmonious and respectful aboriginal treatment of the environment was often starkly compared with the gun- ho abuse of the white colonising settlers.

One afternoon we took a field trip to the Yarra River with an aboriginal Melbourne- man as our guide. Whereas once this wide river flowed tranquilly past bushland, now it hugs the banks of the business district (CBD); the concrete legacy of colonisation. This was the site where the aboriginals would first come into contact with the British, never knowing that this invasion would wipe out all that they knew. Our guide addressed this colonial affront by terming it a 'cultural tsunami', a complete and ravenous devastation of all that had come before. Furthermore, it was not the aboriginal Australians that had violated the landscape, he argued, but those colonisers who had ploughed through the land without conscience.

This situation was not isolated to Australia and can be found in another

far-reaching and vicious colonisation project: the conquest of the Americas. In fact, so written into the earth was this barbarity that a 'drop in carbon dioxide levels can be found in the geological layer that correspond to the genocide of the peoples of the Americas and the subsequent re-growth of forest and other plants' (David 2017: 766), thanks to the drastic population decrease from 61 to 6 million people over a 158 year period (ibid). Thus, David and Todd have argued for a 'decolonisation of the date' at which the Anthropocene officially begins, from 1964 to 1610 and the start of colonisation. The 'Anthropocene', they argue, is far too universalising a term and does not acknowledge that it was at the hands of the white, western colonialists that this entire situation came about (see Moore 2017).

The notion that indigenous groups have acted as harmonious custodians of the earth for millennia, with the ravaging of the environment committed at the hands of greedy colonial and imperialist powers, is widespread. Another example comes from my own field site, Peru, where foreign mining interests have devastated the local landscapes that were peacefully tended by agriculturists for centuries beforehand. One need only glance at the great welt corroded into the land at the central highlands' mining capital of *Cerro de Pasco*, for example, or turn to the rapidly diminishing snow-capped peaks of the *Cordillera Blanca* in the Ancash department, where local people argue that mining interests have summoned a devastating climatic change, to witness man's ravaging of the earth first hand. In the Andean villages where

I resided, people often complained of the rapidly diminishing natural resources and encroachment of their pasture lands, thanks to the (non-environmentally conscious) development of roads and infrastructure, the prerogative of neo-colonial governments whose interests are seldom based within community priorities.

Yet perhaps we should ask: If indigenous people were/are considered as so adept at caring for the land, can they be called upon and/or expected to heal the wounds made by the colonisers? *Should they?*

At the Anthropocene campus there certainly seemed to be a growing impetus to collaborate with and learn from indigenous communities, who were seen as being more in tune with the land and able to lead a change in the way that people relate to it. This may be so. However, it is also arguably important to recognise that indigenous groups are comprised of people whose interests may span so *much more* than environmental care. One could question whether reducing them to nature-custodians may deprive them of other subjectivities, even going so far as to essentialise them (see Redford 1991).

As anthropologist Nell Haynes laments on her blog, 'Indigenous people do more than care about the environment!', arguing that 'in such imbalanced attention to indigenous peoples' environmental concerns, we have recast them as the very one-dimensional characters we are striving to complicate' (2017). It is something to bear in mind. Whether one works with indigenous groups or not, it concerns us all.

Indeed, returning to Melbourne, our Australian aboriginal guide good- humouredly mused that although he was from a lineage of ancient peoples, they were just as much as part of the twenty- first century as everyone else. There he was strolling along Melbourne's south bank in his LA-Lakers baseball cap, rather than lost in the outback blowing on a didgeridoo, he joked. It is therefore vital to consider indigenous groups in the conversation, rather than simply task them with cleaning up the ecological and geological mess left by colonisation and contemporary capitalistic interests.

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ONE YEAR IN THE COLLECTIONS

The UCL Anthropology collections hold 10,000 objects, specimens and photographs, divided across the Ethnography and Biological Anthropology collections. Together, the collections were created for the purpose of studying the discipline of Anthropology, and as such are regularly included in the Department's teaching. However, over the last few years, efforts have been made to not only develop the students' experiences with the collections and research projects but also to widen its uses and audiences.

UCL Biological Anthropology Collection

*Dr Suzy White
Acting Curator and Teaching Fellow in
Biological Anthropology*

Teaching and Outreach

Over the last year, the biological anthropology collection has been used in a lot of teaching, both within UCL Anthropology and in a wider sphere. As in previous years, specimens have been used for tutorials and lab practical sessions for Introduction to Biological Anthropology, Palaeoanthropology, Primate Evolution and Environments, and an Object Lessons module for the Arts and Sciences (BASC) degree. They have been used in open days to engage potential students, loaned out for teaching at other universities, and included in research for postgraduate student projects.

Volunteers

Volunteers have been instrumental to ongoing work within the collection. This year we have had three volunteers from the Palaeoanthropology and Palaeolithic Archaeology MSc course who have been preparing our non-primate skeletal material for accessioning, reviewing the condition of our primate postcranial collection, and collating information from our previous catalogues into our current digital database. These efforts should enable us to make the catalogue available

and searchable on the Departmental website in the near future.

Projects

There are also a number of projects that we have been working on this year. Having acquired a 3D printer and handheld 3D scanner last summer, the Aiello laboratory team are working to create a digital catalogue of fossil and recent primate specimens, with a view to adding some 3D printed specimens to our collection over the summer. We are also currently re-organising the Aiello lab to make room for our non-primate skeletal collection, which has involved the preparation of a number of journals for donation to Books2Africa.

Research

Research has been continuing on the history of some key specimens. Earlier this year we visited the 'London Skull' (a fossilised human cranial fragment) at the Natural History Museum; this specimen was originally donated to UCL Anatomy, then became part of the Biological Anthropology collection before being given to the NHM. In October 2018, we visited the UCL Special Collections to look at John Napier's papers, allowing us to identify the provenance of our 'Yeti' footprint, which has now been incorporated into the BASC0001 teaching. We are currently in the process of arranging a visit from Leslie Aiello, a former curator of the biological anthropology collection and head of department, who will hopefully help us fill in some gaps in the history of the collection.

Along with Dr Cara Hirst, a current volunteer, we have also been working on reassessing our osteological collection and have identified a number of interesting pathological primate specimens. Over the past year, Cara has presented some of these specimens at conferences and has recently published a paper on a macaque from our collection with hypertrophic osteoarthropathy.

UCL Ethnography Collection

*Delphine Mercier
Collection Curator—Collections
Management and Care*

Once again, this year has been marked by working with students following the departmental research in our practice, and opening it up to more diverse experiences. The students are integral to the Collection: it has been created for them and it works in large part thanks to their dedication. All of our first year and affiliate students completed their object analysis in the collection during the first term, and this year up to 50 students dedicated their time to volunteer in the Collection on diverse projects, including object-based research, inventory of the photos collection and exhibition curating. The Collection also produced its own exhibition, 'Look at this!', on the links between anthropology and photography based on the photo collection and students works.

Widening participation is also a major concern for the Collection and during the Summer Term 2018 we ran the second season of our Young Curators Club with students from Harris Invictus Academy, Croydon. At the end of the program, the members of the club curated an exhibition on their experience which has been published on the Material World Blog (www.materialworldblog.com). Last summer, we also started working on the 'Anthropobox' project, designed by Ignacio Echeverria Faccin from UCL Culture, with Dr Alison MacDonald and the support of students. An article in this present issue is dedicated to this project.

Collaborations within UCL Anthropology and other UCL Departments

During the Autumn Term, the Collection and Hermione Springs co-curated the exhibition 'Five Heads' in the foyer gallery of the Department. This exhibition was part of the five-year ERC-funded project Emerging Subjects, led by Professor Rebecca Empson. The

exhibition showcased the processes of an experimental project and collaborations between London-based anthropologists and Mongolia-based artists.

During the Spring Term, the Collection was associated with an exhibition curated by Dr Rafael Schacter: 'Motions of This Kind: Propositions and Problems of Belatedness'. We supported the curation and loaned objects to the archival display curated by Dr Cristina Juan: 'Informal Empire: Philippine British Entanglements until the 19th century'. During the second term of every year, MA in Conservation students from UCL Archaeology come to volunteer in the Collection, studying and making mounts for objects with conservation issues,

with the results being published on the Conversation in Conservation blog (<http://uclconversationsonconservation.blogspot.com/>). The Collection also welcomed BASc students again and, for the first time, students from the Cultural and Historical Geography course. As always, we supported the yearly MA in Museum Studies (UCL Archaeology) exhibition currently shown in the Levantis Gallery: 'An Element of Colour: Shaping Self and Society'. And finally, we also loaned an Australian fish trap to the still ongoing exhibition in the UCL Octagon Gallery: 'Moving Objects: Stories of Displacement'.

Collaborations outside of UCL

During the Spring Term 2018, the Collection and Dr Ludovic Coupaye welcomed our yearly cohort of students from the Ecole du Louvre, Paris, specialising in History and Anthropology of the Arts of Oceania. We also recently took part in the 8th annual Igbo conference and at the end of November 2018, we opened our exhibition 'Phyllis Kaberry (1910–1977), a woman in the field', co-curated with Dr Diane Lorsche from the University of Sydney. A detailed article on this project and on others can be found on the blog of the collection (<https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ethnography-collections/>). You can also follow us on instagram @uclanthropologycollection.





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www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology