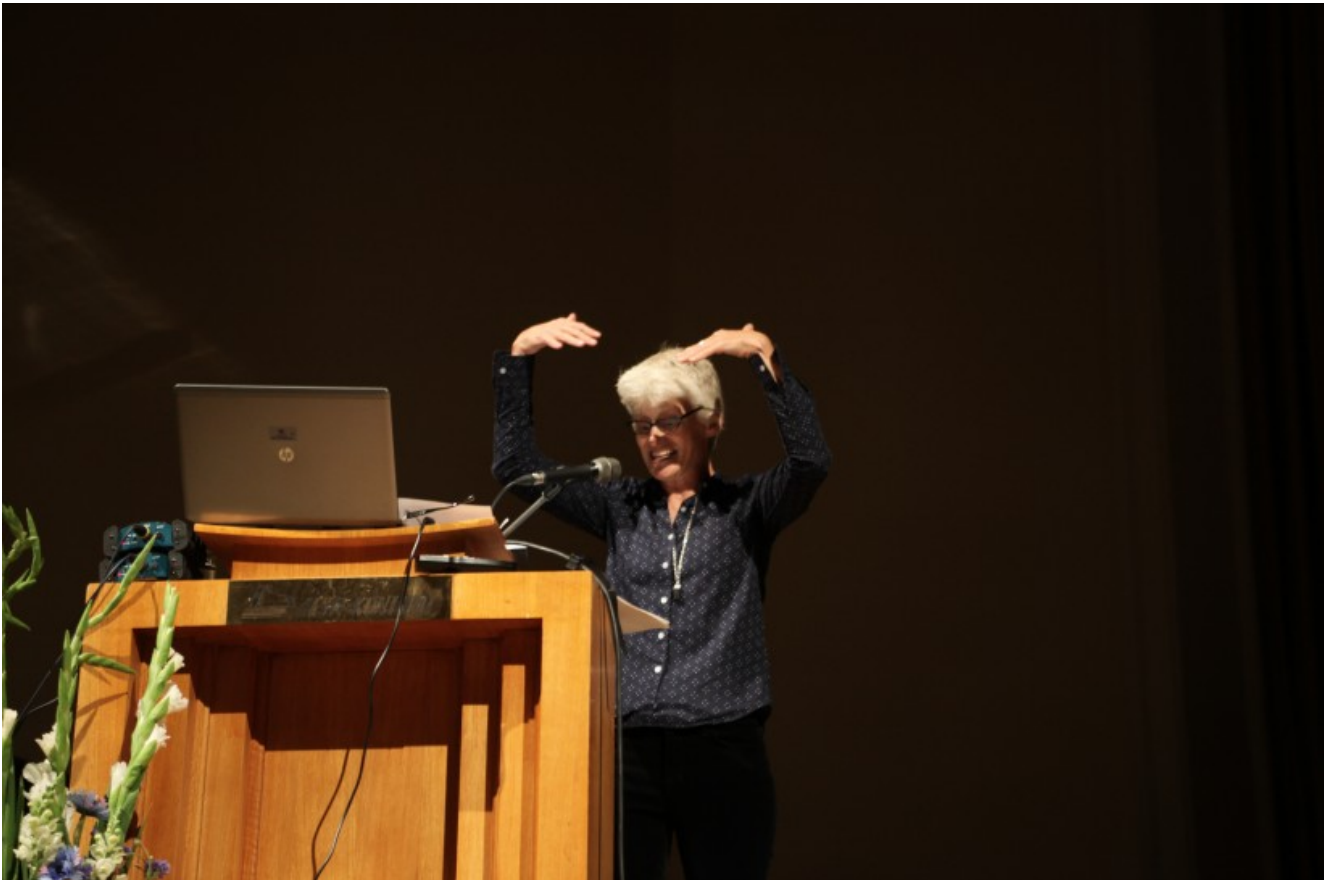




Persistent Point of First Contact - Povinelli & EASA2014

Miia Halme-Tuomisaari
August, 2014



Earlier this week, Allegra published a [critique of Elizabeth Povinelli's keynote](#) at the EASA 2014 in Tallinn written by [Sylvain Piron](#). It did not take long for the controversy to flair up in the social media as 'pro-Povinellians' flew to the rescue of the academic star, denouncing the unfairness of Piron's harsh judgement. Some elements of Piron's arguments were certainly 'raw' and lacked subtlety. Yet his post also addressed points that need further dissecting - and it certainly can be acclaimed for triggering discussion.



As the moderators of an academic blog, we feel that one of our primary responsibilities is to facilitate debates. To us this duty becomes particularly grave when the future of our discipline is concerned. This angle concretizes the wider context for Povinelli's talk - a context that we feel has so far remained largely unarticulated. Subsequently we want to offer some critical reflections of our own.

One recurring theme in the critique toward Piron's analysis has become his focus on Povinelli's gesturing and body language, with some commentators even suggesting that similar observations would never be written - let alone published - in case of male scholars. Yes, Piron's observations were detailed, intrusive - certainly intimate, to echo one of the slogan's for the Tallinn Conference - but we do not want to dismiss of them that easily.

For Povinelli's persona embodied, or more accurately perhaps, *should have embodied*, a sense of invigoration, inspiration - *the future* - of the discipline that we are jointly so passionate about. This was, at least, our reading of the collective mood that characterized this first joint gathering of all the anthropologists who had travelled far and wide - after an interval of two years since the last



Conference of the most important professional association of European anthropologists - to eventually find themselves in the magnificent Tallinn Concert Hall.

Expectations ran high - not just toward Povinelli's speech but for the Conference in general. We all know that times are dark, and let's not even get started on the absurdity of ongoing university managerial reforms! Perhaps with this Conference we were *finally* on our way toward collective exhilaration and (renewed?) societal relevance for our arduous professional endeavours.

Against this background Povinelli simply got off on the wrong foot. Even if intended as humorous or ironic, the audience never seemed to forgive her for her opening comment of 'not really wanting to be there'. And yes, we wonder too: if she didn't want to come, why did she - or why did she share her hesitation?

Add to this remark issues of European inferiority / American superiority complexes that [we briefed at in our preliminary remarks](#) of the talk, and one grasps far better why from thereon her talk sort of fell on a 'hostile crowd'.

This context explains, perhaps, part of the intensity that her talk awakened. Here we need to be truthful. As much as it pains us to dwell on such collective dismay, we would not be accurate if we did not repeat, again: people *really* did not like her talk. We could continue here with varying degrees of upset and bodily expression of dissatisfaction that we encountered, but we feel that this message has become sufficiently clear even in their absence.



However, this dislike was ultimately not caused by her body language or symbolic embodiments of 'hope', but because of the talk's content.

What was the fundamental problem? To us, quite bluntly, instead of helping our beloved discipline to break free from a European/North-American legacy that has tended to exoticize the 'other' and make him/her become the silent object of the anthropological gaze and Western knowledge consumption, it resonated, even strengthened this troubling legacy.

First there were Povinelli's persistent reminders of her close intimacy with the natives - the use of the pronoun 'we' as if wanting to secure her legitimate position for representing the world of the indigenous groups she studied. "We eat together. We raise kids together. We make films together". Was she emphasizing that it is extraordinary for an anthropologist to share the everyday activities of her informants?



This question grew more intense as her talk continued, and the ‘other’ made her appearance via her disappearance, sort of. For – even if her projects entertain a more nuanced reality – in her talk the ‘native’s point of view’ never really became a part of the equation.

Instead, we were bombarded by Deleuze’s and Guattari’s abstract notions of intersection and assemblages alongside anthropological buzzwords with virtually no ethnographic grounding. As her talk continued, the geontologies she initially intended to make visible vanished into the ‘black boxes’ of NTIC and mediated communication.

Once again, perhaps because of the ‘wrong foot’ with which things got started, we along with so many of our colleagues left the Concert Hall with a bitter sense of



déjà-vu. Further, we found ourselves having nagging doubts toward the EASA Scientific Committee: they could not have invited Povinelli as the keynote speaker *precisely* because of how her work resonates with colonial superiority complexes...

We all know the following, but in the spirit of doing things properly, let's go back to the basics. Since Malinowski, the core method of our discipline has been participant observation, a method that (ideally) offers us access to the moral universes and cosmologies of those whom we observe via participating. We are all familiar with conceptualizations of 'the exotic other' as well as problems thereof.

Yet, we feel that we need to ask once again: just what is 'the exotic' that we study collectively as anthropologists? Something identifiable visibly - marked by colourful 'tribal' attire or at minimum, differing racial identifiers - or something less conspicuous and evident, yet simultaneously far more profound? What precisely does 'the exotic' mean in our analytical equation? It is to this question that we feel that Povinelli's choice as a keynote offered a disappointingly familiar, even mundane response.

For us this is the fundamental issue at stake that should become also the focal point in regards to Povinelli's talk and the EASA's advisory board in inviting her as the keynote speaker. This discussion resonates with the hordes of anthropologists who have concretely moved away from the remote and the exotic, conducting fieldwork instead 'at home', in settings where 'radical difference' cannot be found but rather 'radical sameness' often prevails.



To us, it is as much on the discovery of radical sameness as it is in difference where the truly 'exotic' lies.

In addition, globalisation has blurred the divide between 'us' and 'them', forcing us to think anew the methodological foundations of our discipline and to devise new forms of collaboration. A radical critical anthropology, in our view, implies developing new forms of research collaborations where lateral reason can be stimulated.

As Ghassan Hage argues, anthropology remains 'a permanent point of first contact' where it becomes possible to see the 'weird' both at our doorstep and further afield.

All of these realizations were, in our view, absent from Povinelli's account of the Karabing. Despite of the presence of visual 'exotism', absent was a sense of the 'weird' or new as everything felt familiar. Perhaps unexpectedly, this sentiment was strengthened rather than alleviated by the element of her talk that, undoubtedly, *did* address something factually new: the technologies that were cardinal in her project.

To us her talk conveyed a notion of collaboration that was marked by an absence of critical engagement with the unintended effects of new technologies in mediating representations of indigenous people's life world. As one of our colleagues pointed out as we discussed the talk on the same evening:



“Instead of learning from indigenous people how geography and biography are weaved together to produce their unique social imagination, she seemed to blindly trust the new media technologies’ capacity to embed without altering traditional, historical and contemporary knowledge back into the landscape from which it came ».

That indigenous knowledge became a sort of virtual artefact to be displayed in an online museum directly available for consumption did not seem to represent a major ethical problem, since the indigenous people themselves were eager to take part of the experiment. The alteration Povinelli advocated for turned out to apply not to the anthropologist but rather to the already disempowered people she purported to assist in their claims for the recognition of their land.

This brings us back to the main reason of our discomfort we briefly mentioned earlier: namely, the fact that Europe has a long enough history of plunder of other



cultures' material and immaterial heritage to awaken suspicion when similar projects are being reactivated under the disguise of new technologies and post-structuralist justifications.

We want to conclude our discussion - and simultaneously this entire chapter of our EASA 2014 project - by sharing our hesitation in writing this post. Yes, Elizabeth Povinelli's achievements are vast and her career is so impressive that she likely has the kind of 'scholarly armour' to take the critique. This is further likely not the first or worst time that she hears zinging remarks on her work.

But there is still something about the might of the written word, alongside with the immediacy of the online world, which makes us hesitant. There simply is an 'iffy' feeling about spilling all this virtual ink over the talk of one single scholar.

What about the perspective of us, the authors of this post? Would we be wiser if we continued to ponder over these views for a bit longer before sharing them in public - certainly it would feel safer to hide behind layers of peer review and the watering-down effect of time.

But are we not addressing here precisely the collective sentiment that contributes to a certain stagnation of our beloved discipline - hence also stripping us of the more general possibility to participate in ongoing societal discussions happening right now?

Is it thus not better that we take a leap of faith and risk something (our



reputation?) by actually saying something? Yes, gossip and innuendo have always been inseparable elements of scholarly work, as a wise mentor reminded us as we balanced the best course of action in the case at hand. Would it be better if all of the above was *left* as just that, or is the possibility to share them with our scholarly community to the benefit of us all?

We know not for certain, but we are persuaded of this: it is both urgent and rewarding to keep addressing these questions & navigating this border to the unknown.

It is in this spirit that we conclude our coverage of this chapter of EASA 2014 and warmly invite you all to join us next week as we celebrate Allie turning 1!





A conversation with Gerhard Anders

Allegra
August, 2014



Gerhard Anders is a lecturer in African Studies and International Development in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. This year, during the annual meeting of the EASA in Tallinn, he volunteered to take over the direction of the [European Network for the Anthropology of Law and Rights](#). Allegra congratulates him for this new appointment and takes this opportunity to introduce his work and the legacy of the network so far.



Allegra : As a new coordinator of the EASA Network on the anthropology of law and rights, can you explain to us the main purposes of the network and tell us a little bit more about its history? Who were the network's founding members ? When was it created ?

Gerhard Anders : I am thrilled to serve as the new convenor of the EASA network on the anthropology of law and rights.

I think John Comaroff was spot on a few years back when he observed that legal anthropology has been experiencing a 'welcome, exciting renaissance'.

Mainly because of the rise of human rights discourse and the expansion of anthropology into new fields the anthropological study of law has broken out of the confines of a 'sub-discipline' and returned to the centre of the discipline, a place it occupied at the time when social and cultural anthropology became established as academic disciplines at the beginning of the 20th century.

The network was established at the EASA conference in Ljubljana in 2008. Among the founding members were Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, Bertram Turner, Reeta Toivanen and Susanne Brandstetter.

The main purpose of the network is to serve as platform for the exchange of



ideas and information between EASA members who are interested in legal anthropology and rights discourses.

It covers a wide range of subjects including human rights discourse, indigenous rights in the context of international law, asylum and refugee law as well as contemporary technologies of government and management. The EASA network entertains close ties with the Commission of Legal Pluralism, a section of the [International Union for Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences](#) (IUAES).

In the future, we could discuss cross-listed workshops and other events, bringing together anthropologists, lawyers, academics, policymakers and activists of various stripes.



Allegra : You have worked on legal issues in Africa for a long time. Your first monograph published with Brill in 2010 and entitled « In the Shadow of Good Governance » investigated public service reform in Malawi. How did you become interested in legal anthropology?



Gerhard Anders: My book 'In the Shadow of Good Governace' is an anthropological study of the implementation of civil service reform and the everyday experiences of civil servants in Malawi, who were caught between economic crisis, new public management, and pressure from kith and kin. It draws on my PhD-thesis and more than one year of fieldwork in Lilongwe and Zomba between 2000 and 2002.

My monograph and the other publications stemming from that project explore the interstices between legal anthropology, the anthropology of development and the anthropology of the state. They draw on insights from legal anthropology to interrogate the regime of international aid in action.

My book presents ethnographic evidence of what government employees who constitute the state in their official capacity actually do in their daily lives both at the workplace and outside; for instance, in neighbourhoods, churches and the home village.

In Malawi, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, the state apparatus is shaped by development policies and their implementation, driven by the international financial institutions and foreign development agencies but supposedly 'owned' by the government of Malawi. That was the reason why I took a vertical cut if you like tracking civil service reform and good governance from the loan documents signed by representatives of the World Bank, the IMF and the government of Malawi to the everyday practices of managers, clerks, nurses, teachers and other civil servants.

From this summary you might think that my PhD is in anthropology or African Studies but actually I am a doctor of law. I received my PhD from the school of law at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. I don't think I would have received a PhD at a German law school with this study. Legal studies in the Netherlands were much more open than in Germany where I had studied law before moving to the University of Amsterdam with the ERASMUS exchange programme. There I was able to further pursue my interest in philosophy of law, legal history and the



social sciences to a degree that would not have been possible in Germany where the study of legal doctrine and positive law eclipsed everything else.



In the Netherlands, I became interested in social and cultural anthropology, a discipline that allowed me to ask all the questions about law I thought were most fascinating. I should point out though that the thorough and systematic legal knowledge I acquired while studying law in Germany is definitely an asset for the social-scientific study of law. By now, I feel very much at ease moving between the law and social-cultural anthropology, addressing audiences in both



disciplines.

We also should take the imaginary divide between The Law and Anthropology with a pinch of salt as both disciplines are far from being monolithic entities and one 'tribe' within in one field might find it more stimulating to converse with a 'tribe' in the other field rather than with another 'tribe' in the same discipline.

My various projects might seem different but they are all connected by my interest in the movement of people and ideas about development, good governance, the rule of law and justice, tracking how these ideas pass through different sites. At the moment I am working on a book manuscript on the trials heard at the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the debates about transitional justice in Liberia and Sierra Leone where I conducted more than 12 months of fieldwork between 2007 and 2010. I am also in the process of further developing a research agenda on security sector reform and law enforcement in West Africa.

Allegra: Thank you Gerhard Anders! We are looking forward to a long collaboration between Allegra and the EASA Network! Network members are very much encouraged to use our platform to discuss their ongoing researches. Send your proposals to stuff@allegralaboratory.net. And for further information on the EASA Network on the Anthropology of Law and Rights, please contact [Gerhard](#), at the University of Edinburgh.





Why Povinelli's Talk at #EASA2014 was a Failure

Sylvain Piron
August, 2014



A week after the EASA conference in Tallinn, the impact of Elisabeth Povinelli's keynote lecture may seem less urgent to debate, after so many panels, plenary sessions, parties, lively discussions in various settings and more massacres in Gaza. Having been a guest of Allegra at Tallinn, I would like to continue the discussion started by [this post](#), from my semi exterior view point of a sympathetic observer of the field.

Seen from the balcony, it is clear that the lecture, as a performance, was a failure. Prof. Povinelli failed to capture the attention of the audience that massively left the room at question time. To a large extent, this is could be due to the setting of the lecture: it is immensely difficult to create and convey a sense of intimacy,



while performing alone on the stage of a national concert hall in front of about 900 colleagues. What might have functioned in a smaller room, clearly did not in such a wide space.



Her excessive use of body language may indicate that she was herself aware of the need to occupy the stage, by stretching her arms towards the center to emphasize some notions (often not the most complicated ones) and frequently touching her hair to reassert her own importance as the invited lecturer – although my impression here could be the effect of a transatlantic cultural misunderstanding.



The final technical failure was certainly the most embarrassing of them all. By showing the soundless images, and commenting on the aborigines she had directed in her film, she literally appeared to have suppressed their voices while manipulating their actions - certainly the last thing on earth she would have wanted to do.

So what went wrong? Since I probably missed some crucial articulations of her speech, I shall not pronounce myself too strongly on the contents of her performance. I can only say that I was uneasy with many of the concepts she developed - for instance, the notion that her interactions with the aborigines she studies could be described as a "collaboration", while she admittedly "wrote the script" of a movie that she was proud to be the "director" of. These two positions are not easily reconcilable. This might be what she attempted to do by using the notion of an "alteration", that could be symmetrically applied to her own self, and to the community she observed. Yet, alteration is the lowest degree of transformation; it affects any partner of any interaction, and may transform them in whatever direction - hence, her use of this concept might as well be rendered by speaking of a process of "whateverification" (transformation in whatever direction).

I suspect that the audience expected some more critical awareness of the very



different “alterations” that took place in her fieldwork.

In my understanding, the conference went wrong from the moment she decided that “intimacy”, being one of the conference’s main themes, could be applied to her own research experience, and that her “collaboration” with those distant locals could be fascinating enough to be the subject matter of her lecture - in a word, that she was important enough to be herself the subject matter of her lecture. As I was told, she has written some amazingly sophisticated books. Yet, in Tallinn, we were appalled by her lack of critical reflexivity on either the use of new technologies, or on the position of the anthropologist vis-à-vis her fieldwork.

What might have functioned in a class room at Columbia was just out of place at the Estonian national concert hall. This was just not the proper setting to expose her intimacy.

The conversation continues [here](#).

**Play it again SAM - More
#EASA2014**

Allegra
August, 2014



Does anyone still remember that a few weeks ago there was a rather large anthropology conference in the Northern part of Europe called EASA 2014? We ask this both 'dead seriously' - we understand that many of our American colleagues really do not know this event at all, or worse yet, know it but pay it next to no attention - and 'tongue in cheek' - anyone who has been following Allegra at ALL over the past months should by now be well aware of our vast attention toward this event.

But why are we returning to this event now? Was not everything worth doing in the social media already done and over with by the time the event ended?! Not so, we believe. For we are determined to follow this experiment from start to finish, and find creative ways to fill the 'DEAD SPACE' that conventionally exists in between ongoing scholarly debates today and eventual scholarly publications appearing in a few years.

The EASA meeting in Tallinn this year was attended by 1200 anthropologists and was, without any doubt, THE most important event on the academic calendar. Of course, Allegra was there to cover the chatter! We even had the pleasure to meet some of our readers and contributors at the booth we shared in the publishers'



section with our partner in arms, [Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory](#). With a team of 8 Allies to take pictures, video record, and tweet panels, we hope some soundbites reached your ears. But if you missed the train, have a look at our previous installments.



[Get to know Noel Salazar](#), the president of the EASA, [Carlo Cubero](#), member of the scientific and local EASA committees and professor of visual anthropology in Tallinn University, [EASA founding members Sydel Silverman, Andre Gingrich, Rolf Hussman](#) and [Patrick Laviolette](#), director of the Anthropology department in Tallinn University. Special thanks to [Felix Girke, Allie's MC #EASA2014](#), for getting the story across!

Once acquainted with the EASA family, you can dig into the event itself by surfing the tweets that flew around during the conference under the hashtag [#EASA2014](#). One of the highlights was certainly Samuli Schielke's keynote at the plenary entitled "EASA beyond crises: continuities and innovations in European anthropology", during which he said aloud a blatant but rarely openly voiced truth about the transformations of the Academia:



Antropologija RSU
@antropologija



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S Schielke: PhD students do most intellectual work, people trained for intellectual work turn into managers and fundraisers #EASA2014

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3:18 PM - 1 Aug 2014

Allegra was far less impressed by Povinelli's lecture in the beautiful Tallinn concert hall. [Sylvain Piron](#) will develop further on the reasons for which he thought Povinelli's talk was a failure tomorrow, but for now, [here are a few thoughts](#).

Last week, Theodoros Kyriakydes, a PhD student from Manchester University and social media volunteer for Hau, [published a short report in Savage Minds](#). We share with him the view that the EASA 2014 will be remembered for its genuine attempt at triggering new forms of collaborations between and across disciplines, revisiting notions of alterity and intimacy, and challenging anthropology's pre-determined formats for knowledge production. We loved the [labs](#) and wish we had had more time to see all the [films](#).



What else? To get an overall impression of the conference, have a look at Juho Reinikainen's [photo essay](#) and [video](#).

This week, we'll share a summary of Allegra's own panel on 'boredom'. And since we went through all the trouble of arranging a Shadow-Event in Helsinki 'after



the fact' we want to bring you also some of the highlights of that [discussion on 'Gates'](#) & limits of the international regulatory scheme around migration. We'll also take some time to introduce the [EASA network on the anthropology of law and rights](#), now headed by [Gerhard Anders](#), and with which Allegra is about to start a new, and hopefully long and fruitful collaboration!

All this and much more on its ways - and let after this week NO ONE ask: 'SO what exactly is the #EASA?'



Bombings, Censorship and Legos - Allegra's week in LA NEWSLETTER!

Allegra
August, 2014



Every once in a while we remind everyone - including ourselves - that oh right, there continually exists the thing called our [NEWSLETTER](#)! Yes, we agree that many things could be done to improve it; the layout is quite basic, and what is it with all the commercials that end up with our carefully selected content! But despite of its flaws, we feel that its existence serves certain purposes.

For one thing, in addition to summarising the content of our beloved [website](#) over the past week, it summarises all the social media content that Allegra's collective eyes have encountered via our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. Simultaneously, it functions as an archive of sorts for what the mood of each moment has been like.



This week has been a polarised one, to say the least: much darkness via the ongoing massacres of Gaza - with commentators emphasising that the current situation is [far worse than ever before](#).



There was also ample talk of censorship, as Naomi Klein pointed out how she had been receiving [warnings for her Facebook content](#) from its administrators. There was also the [infamous case of Steven Salaita](#) and the decision by the University of Illinois to reverse its job offer due to Salaita's 'uncivil' Twitter content criticising Israel.

Yet there is much to rejoice too, including the [vast protests the University of Illinois](#) faced from an expansive community of colleagues - and then there was of course [Lego Academics!](#)



Are we witnessing the birth of new [Dinovenor](#) - the fantastic whim (or so they claim) of two parents to 'bring dinosaurs alive' every night during the month of November which by now has over 250 000 Facebook fans? Or even [#HAPPY](#), we wonder?! Whatever the case, this Twitter account was DEFINITELY ['the' social media thing of past week](#), accumulating a staggering 16 000 followers in ONE WEEK! And what does this turn us? That times remain dark in the academia, and that a bit of comic relief is always in order. We shall consider this lesson learned!

Next week Allegra returns to Tallinn & EASA2014 for some reflections - and then it is time to celebrate ALLIE TURNING 1!

Feature image: "The [@LegoAcademics](#) are miffed that they spent the whole day on admin and got no research done at all." Allegra sympathises! Click [here](#) to follow @LegoAcademics



Culture and Dignity: Dialogues between the Middle East and the West

Julie Billaud
August, 2014



Written in the aftermath of 9/11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, this collection of essays by anthropologist Laura Nader is an attempt to write against the grain of current discourses that reify difference between the Middle East and the West. It is a plea to acknowledge the long history of interaction between these two regions and, in the process, to recognize our common humanity by placing dignity, mutual respect and humility at the centre of our relationship with those often portrayed as 'barbarian others'.

Focusing on connections, similarities and cross-cultural fertilization processes, this ambitious book challenges common ideas that present differences in terms of civilizational threat.



In addition to documenting 'dialogues between the Middle East and the West', it advocates research endeavours that remain aware of the knowledge/power nexus in scholarship in order to avoid the pitfalls of a not-dead-yet Orientalism. It offers eclecticism and explicit comparisons as research methods most apt to capture the continuous social transformations that occur as a result of encounters and exchanges between and across cultures.

Chapter 2, 'From Rifa ah al-Tahtawi to Said: Lessons in Culture and Dignity,' documents, through the travelogues of 18th century Egyptian scholar Rifa ah al-Tahtawi and the writings of Georges Saliba and Edward Said, the ways in which power differentials in the experience of difference have been instrumental in producing specific representations of both the Middle East and the West. Discourses that portray the other in monolithic terms are never neutral attempts at capturing particular cultural patterns. Rather, like mirrors that reflect and frame reality, they mostly reveal something about 'us', about the implicit assumptions that guide our gaze and, perhaps more importantly, something about our unavoidable connectedness.

Chapter 3 unpacks the unstated consensus on which the discipline of anthropology has for long relied: namely, that cultures are bounded and can be placed on an evolutionary scale. That such ethnocentric narratives have supported colonial domination is a well-known fact: science is never politically neutral and one should remain wary of current appropriations of ethnographic research methods for market research or for military operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere. But as much as 'ethnographic research can be devoid of anthropology' (p. 72), ethnographic practices nevertheless remain deeply heterodox. By revisiting categories and showing the contemporaneity of the people they study, ethnographers offer a powerful contribution to theory and produce a form of knowledge with the potential to 'connect humans rather than divide them' (p. 76).

Chapter 4, 'Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Control of Women', argues that prejudices concerning the treatment of women of another society rule out asking



questions about the situation of women in one's own society. The adoption of such a 'positional superiority' (a central feature of 'Orientalism' according to Said) is a powerful means to manufacture consensus around the idea of a continuous and linear 'progress' in the area of gender equality in the West (compared to the Middle East where the situation of women is presented as 'worse') and, therefore, is a strategy that serves to control women everywhere.

Chapter 5 draws a refreshing comparison between American religious fundamentalism and corporate fundamentalism and its impact on parental loss of control in child rearing and the construction of childhood in general. While the notion of 'fundamentalism' is usually associated with religious developments taking place in the Middle East, more rarely is this category of analysis used to qualify the ways in which American corporate culture, with its 'missionary-like zeal' - a feature which may well have roots in the Judeo-Christian ethics - not only manufactures lifestyles, tastes and desires but also fractures families by commercializing childhood. 'In this sense fundamentalism is as intimately connected to a type of economic system as it is to religious belief' (p. 147).

Chapter 6 explores the 'seeds of nonviolence' in the Middle East such as the primary place of law in Islam, the importance of consensus, self-discipline, patience ('sabr') and mediation ('wasta'), the central role of the family unit and notions of 'honour and shame': mechanisms of social control that have often functioned as coping strategies in contexts of colonial domination, imperialist interventions and dictatorial regimes.

Chapter 7 underscores the normative blindness and double standards that accompany certain human rights discourses, especially those manipulated by Western states eager to position themselves as yardsticks upon which achievements in this field should be measured. Chapter 8 is a call for anthropologists to break the silence on the multi-layered forms of hegemony endured in the Middle East and to offer a critique of the propaganda deployed to assert imperialist domination and corporate colonialism.



The lessons to learn from this outstanding book will be useful not only to anthropologists searching for means to revitalise the critical tradition of their discipline, but also to a broader audience eager to hear the untold story of East-West relations. In order to reverse the strategies of subordination devised by Euro-American powers, Nader invites us to take our inspiration from the early Middle-Eastern travellers who came to the West and wrote from within 'a tradition of explicit and forthright comparison' (p. 213), offering descriptions of 'others' in which possibilities of co-existence were explored.

Drawing from an eclectic sample of literature dealing with the global connections between the Middle East and the West, the author achieves a much needed - and very timely - intellectual 'check-up' and warns us against cultural framings that serve to sideline serious explorations of the roots and nature of human suffering. It is crucial for all those of us who are genuinely concerned with peace to liberate our imaginations from the myths and stereotypes that work to divide us.



Laura Nader, [Culture and Dignity: Dialogues between the Middle East and the West](#), (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, 240 pp.)

Perfect Commodity: #HAPPY(-Meal) - Allie turns 1!

Miia Halme-Tuomisaari
August, 2014



As global news feeds are increasingly dominated by gruesome imagery of Gaza bombings and more recently, ISIS violence in Iraq, it seems difficult to grasp that a mere global nano-second earlier we were all - or so it seemed - sharing videos of being #HAPPY. Indeed, that [one of these videos](#), also discussed in Allegra, was about 'Happy Gaza' seems almost too painful to recall.

However, perhaps this is PRECISELY the moment to recall these videos - and simultaneously, hopefully, gain some greater understanding of what they were/are all about. You may wonder why we obsess at this point, having returned to it time after time, in post after post. At the present moment we are drawn to memory lane because Allegra's very first BIRTHDAY is fast approaching, and we find ourselves looking back at everything that this exciting year has brought with it. Even if we seem collectively to have grown tired of #HAPPY by now, it was undoubtedly 'the' social media thing of Spring 2014, and thus for us it remains one of the first phenomenon of this sort that we ended up covering via our joyous social media experiment.

Perhaps our infatuation can also, at least partially, be explained by our insistent



infatuation with the global human rights phenomenon, an equally cryptic source of inexplicable 'pull' no matter how futile new UN human rights resolutions and the like are proven to be.

But if not 'reality' in any literal meaning, what then could be identified as the source responsible for generating this 'pull'? And is the existence of this 'something' fundamentally, after everything, a thing to rejoice in the world? Do these videos simply remind us of the positive that, despite everything, exists in all of us? Is their 'pull factor' their capacity to offer reassurance and inspiration in dark times - to confirm our belief that despite it all, we do possess the capacity to one day live together in peace and harmony?



I find myself asking, sincerely: could it be that instead of endless international Conventions, Committees, Resolutions and new Tribunals, at the end of the day the world would simply be improved more with such sincere (seeming?) performances of solidarity, intimacy and - happiness?

I just cannot make up my mind. For there remains always the other side too, a particularly potent one in the case of #HAPPY. By now I have persuasive proof that the innocent-sounding little tune penned by Will Pherrel and his back-up



team may, in fact, embody THE perfect commodity!

(Somehow here it feels relevant to mention that Pherrel himself, soon after [tearing up at Oprah while watching global #HAPPY](#), allegedly performed the song in a private concert for Walmart executives - a corporation so tarnished by reports on its abusive employment policies as to make it resistant to the most potent low-budget stain remover)!



The evidence for my conclusion? It arrives via the following tale: Two young children in a Nordic country - let's call it Finland - who speak no English and have no regular access to popular music hear the #HAPPY tune for the very first time as the song is played on the background of a play that their friends participate in.

The kids - being totally oblivious to the song's enormous popularity and having NO idea of the existence of any such thing as #HAPPY-videos - take an instant liking to the tune, from thereon insisting that it be played at all outings involving the family car. Consequently the #HAPPY song is elevated into the semi-official theme song for Summer 2015 for the family in question.

However, as the kids request for the song - not knowing its full title but (regrettably) being familiar with another 'perfect commodity' - they confuse its name. Thus they without failure always ask, in Finnish: Can we listen to the HAPPY-MEAL song!



I rest my case.



Miia Halme-Tuomisaari has written [two](#) previous [#HAPPY](#) posts , and is by now relatively convinced that the #HAPPY song is out to get her. How else could you explain the fact that she was exposed to a Cello variation of the tune at the inaugural celebrations of #EASA2014! That this event was participated in by 1200 of her closest colleagues in no way diminishes her conviction. She continually quite likes the song, though, having [this one](#) as her favourite variation of all (just trust me)!

Allegra's other #HAPPY posts are ['To Be Happy Muslim or Not'](#) by Raana Bokhari and ['Rhetoric, Resistance and the public Sphere'](#) by Chris Dimning



Gaza, Einstein, and the UN

Lori Allen

August, 2014

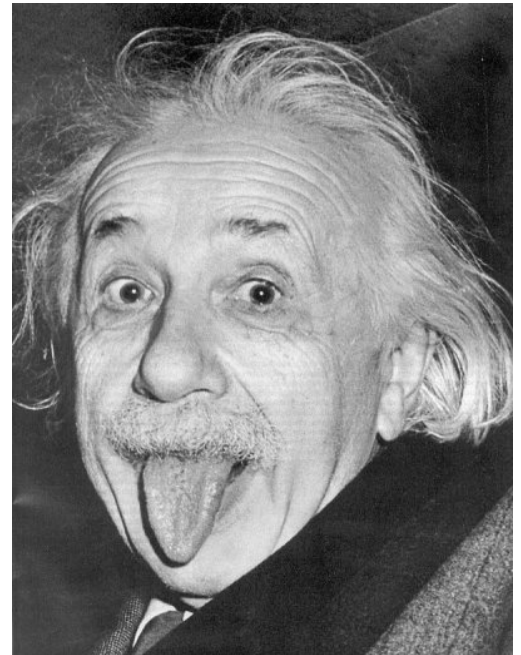


Today we continue our discussion on Gaza with a guest post by [Lori Allen](#), previously published at [Jadaliyya](#), and reposted here with her kind permission. In her text Allen discusses the recent resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Council to found a commission to examine violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Yes, we've been here before, as she notes - are we thus looking the bureaucratic equivalent of Albert Einstein's definition of insanity? And what kind of 'impact' and 'outcome' could or should we expect from (yet) another new UN commission?

By [Lori Allen](#)



Many believe that Albert Einstein offered the [witty definition](#) of insanity as “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” Apparently this is a misattribution, but it doesn’t make Einstein any less smart, or the quote any less insightful. I was reminded of it when I read the news that the United Nations Human Rights Council passed a resolution establishing an investigative commission to look into violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, spurred by Israel’s latest attacks on Gaza. [The resolution](#) says that the purpose of the investigation is to “end impunity, ensure those responsible are held accountable and to assist in the protection of civilians.”



We have been here before. In 2009, the UN launched The Goldstone Commission to investigate Israel’s 23-day assault on Hamas in Gaza (Israel’s so-called “Operation Cast Lead”). This UN Commission concluded that both Israel and Hamas had possibly committed war crimes during the conflict. It was one in a long line of international fact-finding commissions that have explored, reported upon, and recommended solutions for this conflict.

Investigations sent by the American government at the end of WWI, by the British government when Palestine was under its mandatory control in the League of Nations, and tens of United Nations commissions since then have all condemned the state of play between Israel and the Palestinians. And we see the results today. As of 6 August, more than 1,875 Palestinians have been killed, the vast majority civilians, and 67 in Israel are dead, the vast majority soldiers.

The Goldstone Report, which recorded details of Israel’s destruction of parts of



Gaza and more than 1,300 Gazans four years ago, confirmed that Israel used disproportionate force, and much of this damage occurred without any conceivable military necessity.



Instead of ending impunity, instead of denting the occupation, that report just spawned further UN activity.

In November 2009, there was yet another resolution (A/64/L.11), this one calling upon the Government of Israel and the Palestinian side to undertake independent, credible investigations “into the serious violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law reported by the Fact-Finding Mission, towards ensuring accountability and justice.” A delegate from Bangladesh cautioned that [“serious follow-up”](#) was needed. The calling and urging were undertaken with the goal of ensuring accountability and justice. The “serious follow-up” came in 2010 after Resolution A/HRC/RES/13/9, when [the Human Rights Council established another committee](#) to evaluate Israeli and Palestinian investigations into



violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in response to the Goldstone Report. Similar to the reception of the Goldstone Commission, [the follow-up committee](#) was met with extensive cooperation from Palestinian officials, and “never received any official responses to its efforts to reach out to the Government of Israel.” Just as the Goldstone Report roused tsunamis of debate about its findings, about the impartiality and expertise of its investigators, so did the follow-up committee spark small bonfires, producing similar smoke and mirrors, parallel kinds of arguments. It gave the Zionist propaganda organization, UN Watch, plenty of work, and let the Hamas-led government in Gaza engage in diplo-speak that welcomed the Goldstone Commission’s report and expressed hope in seeing results from the investigation’s recommendations on the ground. Since the Goldstone Report issued its findings and recommendations, the Israeli government has continued its military occupation and continued to commit all the human rights violations that go along with it (torture, detention of Palestinians without trial, child abuse, home demolitions, settlement building, etc.). Israel [rampaged through Gaza](#), while [the United States offers](#) the occupying army its stock of grenades and mortar rounds to pursue its bombardment. Probably some of the £7.9 billion (\$12.1 billion) in [British military exports to Israel](#) are also being deployed to commit further war crimes.



And here we are again with [A/HRC/S-21/1](#). Another resolution, responding to the same kind of horrific slaughter of innocents in Gaza, same fact-finding purpose, different UN document code.

This resolution promises to “establish the facts and circumstances of such violations [of international humanitarian law and international human rights law]



and of crimes perpetrated and to identify those responsible, to make recommendations, in particular on accountability measures, all with a view to avoiding and ending impunity.” It, too, seeks to ensure “that those responsible are held accountable, and on ways and means to protect civilians against any further assaults.” [Amnesty International](#) welcomed this great proposal, but reminded us that “In order to be effective the commission of inquiry must be thorough, independent and impartial, and look into violations by any party to the conflict.” Effective at what, exactly? Producing another report that will give NGO Watch something to gripe about? Making work for the [Government of Israel’s legal team](#)?



Although under the principle of universal jurisdiction, the results of such a UN investigative commission could be used as a spur to prosecuting crimes under international law in national courts, we all know how likely that is. The last time this was attempted, when survivors of the 1982 massacre in Sabra and Shatila



sought justice, Belgium’s highest court dismissed the war crimes complaints in the end, bowing to pressure from the United States. The ongoing unwillingness of the UN Security Council to respond meaningfully to violations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories or hold perpetrators accountable, is largely due to opposition from the United States. But the United States can’t keep the UN from dispatching yet another investigation.

Like clicking the “Like” button on Facebook, these commissions represent impotent expressions of agreement and solidarity. Einstein got it right in 1947, responding to the [Anglo-American Commission](#) that reported on the Palestine situation after WWII: “I think commissions like this are like a smoke-screen to show good will.”



He also got it right when he said to the jury of venerable investigators, six Americans and six British: “The most important thing for international relations is confidence in international rule.” With the Israeli firestorm raining down on Gaza while the protesting world looks on, shouting but ineffectual, there can be little



such confidence. International law has offered no protection to defenseless Palestinians. Most people, whether American politicians or people of good conscience, do not seem to know that the [UN has recognized](#) that the occupied have the [right to resist](#). International rule has not enforced its rules in Israel.

Israel has already organized a [“diplomatic and public relations offensive”](#) to defend itself in front of the Human Rights Council investigation. A sane person would be excused for thinking that [200 murdered children](#) would be impossible to defend. If only this world was sane.



Lori Allen: *Gaza, Einstein, and the UN* was first published by [Jadaliyya](#) on August 7th, 2014.



END Culture of Silence! Motion at #EASA2014

Allegra
August, 2014

Map of Occupation Palestinian Lands



In our last post [discussing the ongoing Gaza massacres](#) we insinuated that this issue was something existing outside the ivory tower of the academia, namely the [#EASA2014](#). This statement is, nevertheless, not accurate as the Gaza situation was also importantly present at the Conference itself. This was particularly so via the motion proposed by [Samuli Schielke](#), [Erdem Evren](#), Martin Fotta, [Aymon Kreil](#) and Allegra's moderator Julie Billaud at the Members' Forum to condemn Israel's war and blockade against Gaza.



Regrettably - due to constraints of time to discuss it - the motion was not adopted. We want to believe that this was only a temporary set-back and that given some time to reconsider, the European anthropological community, alike our professional community worldwide, will be fully prepared to get much more vocal.

And indeed, this is something that we NEED to do collectively! Otherwise there is the danger that those who boldly fulfill this crucial societal task will be persecuted individually.

We recently learned of an alarming tale from the US of just this: allegedly the renown scholar [Steven Salaita](#) was [fired for his 'uncivil' tweets on Israel](#) - a scary warning that we might see the resurrection of 'the blacklist'.

Much is uncertain, but this much is for sure: if & SINCE we are serious in making an impact on the world, we need to get & stay unified! Below is the summary of the proposed #EASA2014 motion, shared here with the courtesy of [Samuli Schielke](#) and Alice Elliot:

Dear All,

At the recent 13th EASA Biennial Conference in Tallinn, a motion was proposed to the Members' Forum to unequivocally condemn the on-going violence in Gaza. As the preparation, discussion, and vote on this motion happened very quickly, we, the motion's presenters, write to provide some information on the motion itself, as well as on the context in which it was proposed.

Over dinner on the evening preceding the Members' Forum, a group of anthropologists expressed a shared concern about proceeding with conference business as usual while a violent conflict was raging in Gaza, with the death toll of civilians dramatically rising during the days of the conference. As an immediate reaction to these fast-unfolding events, a motion was drafted for the Members' Forum, which was scheduled for the following day.



The principal aim of the motion was to trigger discussion amongst EASA members on what stance, if any, the Association should take on the harrowing situation in Gaza as it unfolded. The specific focus on Gaza was owed to the urgency of the crisis, as well as the fact that Israel's actions have been largely immune from official criticism and pressure by European governments, resulting in a worrying normalisation of a devastating situation.

At the Forum, held on 2 August 2014, the following motion was proposed by Julie Billaud, [Erdem Evren](#), Martin Fotta, [Aymon Kreil](#), and [Samuli Schielke](#). The motion was presented by [Samuli Schielke](#) and Alice Elliot:

“We propose that a motion is passed: With our long European history of turning a blind eye to massacres happening either amongst us or at our doorstep, we feel that as anthropologists we must refuse to participate in this history of silence, and today denounce the massacre that is currently being perpetuated by the state of Israel in Gaza. The European Association of Social Anthropologists condemns the on-going war and blockade against the inhabitants of the Gaza strip.”

In addition to this motion, and as a separate point, it was formally proposed that EASA open a discussion about the global campaign for [Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction](#) against Israel, including the possibility of supporting the Palestinian Campaign for the [Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel](#). Similar discussions are underway in other professional associations within the discipline.

The proposals were made at the end of the Members' Forum, under agenda point 6 “any other business/requests by members,” at which point the meeting was coming to a close. In view of the time pressure, the motion was put to vote as it stood following only a brief discussion.

The result was 50 votes in favour, 28 against, and 28 abstentions. The motion therefore was not carried, since an absolute majority is required according to



EASA rules.

While the aim of this message is only to set out the content of the motion and the circumstances in which it was developed, we hope that there will be space within EASA's structures to discuss Gaza and other events of this significance and scale with the nuance, sophistication, and heart that they require of us.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Elliot a.elliott@ucl.ac.uk
Schielke samuli.schielke@zmo.de

Samuli

MASSACRES IN GAZA: NEVER AGAIN! Full Stop!

Allegra
August, 2014



While operating in the Ivory tower of the Academia - in this instance referring to the extensive attention we have been bestowing on the [#EASA2014](#) over the past little while - it becomes occasionally too easy to overlook urgent things unfolding in the world around us. With this statement we make reference to the massacre by the State of Israel on Palestine.

Let's not kid ourselves: collectively we have been slow, even lazy in getting vocal on this situation. Yes, the situation may appear tricky, as one embedded in nuances and undertones that an uninformed observer may miss. After all, the situation has remained largely unchanged, with only the degrees of violence alternating as decades go by. Somehow it simply seems impossible to grasp that if the contours of right and wrong are self-evident in the situation, how can its foundation simply be and remain tacitly approved by the international community no matter how awful the actions at hand.

We want to remind everyone that, in fact, there is nothing blurry in the



situation at all. There are violent attacks by one group of people, operating with the international legitimacy of state machinery, against another group lacking similar legitimacy.



So we get involved and start today with these thought by [Ghassan Hage](#) whose intellect and warmth we are extraordinarily privileged to know via our recent workshops and panels on [Boredom](#) & [Gates](#). He has shared these views originally via his Facebook account, and agreed kindly that we can re-distribute them via Allegra. This is also the first post - in what we hope to become a very long series of posts - of Hage'Baa - thoughts of 'Enough is Enough' by this awesome thinker.



MASSACRES IN GAZA: NEVER AGAIN! Full stop!

Hage'Baa by [Ghassan Hage](#)

“Every anti-racist struggle comprises universalist and particularist tendencies. People who are anti-racist because they think racism is bad, full stop, and people who think racism directed towards them in particular is bad.

The way Zionism has risen and developed can be seen as one of the biggest defeats of universalist anti-racism. Those Jews and non-Jews who looked at the Holocaust and said ‘never again’ full-stop were basically defeated by those who looked at it and said ‘never again shall this happen to the Jews’.

It is clear that the dominant logic of colonialism, nationalism and capital accumulation all militate in favour of particularistic anti-racism which often ends up producing a racism of its own. As [Achille Mbembe](#)’s post on Ahmed Kathrada shows, the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa seems to be heading in the same direction: the forces that see anti-Apartheid as ‘never again for South Africans’ seem to be taking the upper hand over those who say ‘Apartheid, never again, anywhere’.”

Both Hage and Mbembe refer to a post by Ahmed Kathrada’s published on [August 3rd in the Sunday Independent](#) linking the current Gaza attacks on the apartheid of South Africa. The quote goes as follows:

“Katharda, who spent 26 years in prison, 18 of which were in Robben Island, under the Apartheid government and currently 85 years old, writes: “I have been prompted to write after viewing the nightly television images of the horrendous, ongoing atrocities committed by Israë! in Gaza. Utilizing highly destructive weapons, the main victims have been defenceless civilians, women, children and



men. Israel's aggression has been violent, merciless and uncivilized. Based on its actions, it will not solve its problem with the Palestinian people, and it certainly will not bring peace to its citizens.

... What worries me is the sheer impunity with which Israël acts. It reminds me of the many years that Apartheid was allowed to flourish in South Africa with little constructive action on the part of the major powers such as the US, France, Germany and the UK, including some of the leading Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

...While we welcome the string statements from our own government and the ANC against Israeli aggression, we must ask: Has the time not come for South Africa to take a firmer stand against the pariah Israeli Apartheid state?

Should my organisation, the ANC, not be doing more, like we did in getting the world to isolate Apartheid South Africa? Should it not be mobilising our people to boycott Israël? Should we not expel the Israeli ambassador and recall our ambassador? Should we continue to eat Israeli fruits?

Should we continue to trade with this rogue country? And has my organisation forgotten Madiba reminding our people that we cannot be free while the people of Palestine are not?"

We at Allegra echo these compelling questions raised by Ahmed Katharda and Ghassan Hage: have we all forgotten atrocities of the past, or not noticed those of the present? WHY are we not being more vocal in being involved?! Let's end this



collective silence now and proclaim: NEVER AGAIN! FULL STOP!



#EASA2014 - IN PICTURES!!

Allegra
August, 2014



The fun & madness continues in Tallinn as Day 3 of #EASA2014 is in full swing. What has happened so far, what is the talk all about - and what did people think of [Allegra's take on the Keynote](#)? Once again, it is needless to say that it is WAY too soon for systematic analysis of any sorts, so let's just say this much: it is FUN!

People are in their summer moods, conversations are lively and enthusiastic, the new experimental format of [laboratories](#) has awakened much excitement - and many of the traditional formats too, namely further plenaries and panels.

And as for the Allie team, of course we also had our panel on ['Boredom'](#) - a combination of experiments meeting with more traditional formats. A delightful experience all around with fantastic commentary by Ghassan Hage - all of which was of course actively covered via [Twitter](#).



 Allegra Lab @allegra_lab · 3h
This is @allegra_lab with Aman Mojadidi!
See our Instagram account
(allegralaboratory) for more #EASA2014
fun!



The Allegra team continues to work on full throttle to remain your ears and eyes particularly via [Twitter](#) & [Instagram](#).

Our [MC Felix](#) & our Allie cameraman Juho are also stopping people to video short interviews, all of which will be online soon too! We're also encouraging others to embrace the Allegra platform and share their panels & projects. Let's see what all this results in! For now, we wanted to share some of the Conference excitement captured by these beautiful images - courtesy once again of Juho Reinikainen.

Thus please enjoy this online photo album also known as [#EASA2014 IN PICTURES!](#) Feature image is from the Lab '[Does the World Draw: A Collission of Approaches](#)'



Keynote, Booths, Tweets & MORE!

#EASA2014

Allegra
August, 2014



So the first day of the #EASA2014 is behind us. What did it leave us with; what was HOT and what was NOT?!

Clearly it is TOO SOON for conclusions of any sort; after all, the event has barely begun. Yet there are things to report too, not least because of the reactions awakened by the keynote delivered yesterday by [Elizabeth Povinelli](#), Franz Boas Professor of [Anthropology at Columbia University](#). In her speech Povinelli spoke of her continuing project among Australian aborigines, highlighting particularly the accompanying [film projects](#), one of which led her also to the [Berlin Biennale in 2012](#).

Allegra already filled you in with some glimpses of the talk yesterday via [Twitter](#) – no easy task given that the talk was held in one of the few Conference venues without high speed internet connection. Consequently we had to also sign out prematurely, and left our observant followers merely with a wish for ‘the speedy arrival of this paper with undoubtedly many more great insights to come’.



Overall this statement communicates that members of the Allegra team found numerous elements of the paper that they enjoyed – the talk of new social media as offering possibilities to overcome theoretical and methodological deadlocks; the idea of aspiring for new forms of collaboration, phrased by Povinelli as ‘alterations’.

But what of the views of the talk in general? Since one of the purposes of all academic work, in our eyes, should be to awaken thoughts, in this register the talk more than delivered. For right after it ended, outside the beautiful Concert Hall that functioned as the site of the talk, emotions were running high.



Now, as we all know, the very purpose of Allegra's existence is to find creative ways to fill 'DEAD SPACE' that customarily would appear in between these heated discussions and the polished - watered down too? - views to be delivered via 'traditional' academic channels. Thus we want to share some of these views while they are still 'raw' and unprocessed.



So it is in this spirit that we are taking a chance here, putting ourselves - and our reputation - on the line and sharing some spontaneous reactions on the talk. Risky - definitely! Wise - the jury can remain out on that! Crucial for the collective vitality of our discipline & professional space? ABSOLUTELY!

To put it moderately, it seems undisputed to say that Povinelli's talk awakened some intense reactions. Some strong views poured in her support, but we would not be truthful to our observations if we did not say that critical views seemed more vocal. The gist of criticism? For many central appeared to grow a certain lack of reflection.

As if: "She was pretending to reflect on the interaction between herself and the people, quoting Deleuze so one cannot say that it was not reflective. But the aim just fell short. She spoke of using new media and digital technologies, but without analyses of how they would interact with prevailing power relations. Thus her talk



of collaboration as alteration remained underdeveloped.”



Ouch - we have a tough crowd here, people!

Many more comments poured in, but given the non-existent time for reflection and elaboration, we won't continue further. Rather, let's think momentarily if Povinelli's talk has a context that should be considered here. For there were also those who took notice of the fact that - once again - it was an American scholar who had been summoned to open a conference of *European* anthropologists.



Sure, this trans-Atlantic exchange may be something of an unofficial tradition - the AAA in Chicago last year was, after all, opened by [Bruno Latour](#) and [Philippe Descola](#), two prominent French anthropologists. So Povinelli's invitation could also be seen as an amicable gesture in such collegiality.

But reading these comments - not entirely insignificant in number or intensity - from a European perspective, perhaps there is also something more: a growing shared frustration over how the American scholarly scene is dominating the debate also within anthropology. And perhaps from this angle the mood was, sort of, somewhat unfavourably disposed toward Povinelli to begin with.

And since it remains FAR too soon, once again, for genuinely sophisticated reflections, we want to end our comments here - while attempting to find also some comic relief to soften the bite of these sharp criticisms. Perhaps things were a bit jinxed for Povinelli from the start. How else to account for the disappearance of wi-fi in the keynote venue in a country where - as the President of the EASA Noel Salazar said just moments before she began her talk - where "Internet access is considered a human right"?

And then the failing of her Power point at a Conference where we know there to be a whole army of people attending to all technical matters! Not to mention the disappearance of the voice track from the video clip that she wanted to share to



culminate her talk.



We don't know nothing for sure, but we just wanna say: in the beautiful Allegra flat in the heart of Old Tallinn, built some circa 650 years ago there is reportedly only one ghost - and that ghost makes very seldom appearances. Perhaps all this

Allegra commotion in the flat awakened the ghost from a millennia long sleep, provoking her to take her irritation out on Povinelli... We don't know for sure, but everything is possible...

Stay tuned for more views - and share your thoughts with us! You know how to reach us - Allegra is increasingly EVERYWHERE! And stay tuned for MUCH MORE as the #EASA2014 continues to unfold through the participation of 1200 anthropologists!



[Enterprise Estonia](#) is Allegra's official sponsor for #EASA2014.

