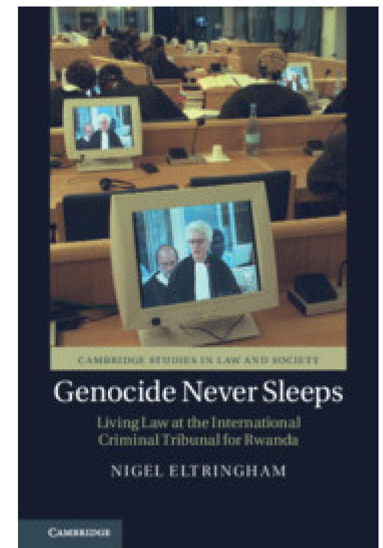
Genocide Never Sleeps

Deniz Yonucu
July, 2020



Genocide Never Sleeps is an in-depth analysis of the inner workings of the contested terrain of international criminal law from an anthropological perspective. Targeting a broad audience that includes legal scholars, practitioners, and NGO workers, and drawing on extensive ethnographic research conducted at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), the book offers an excellent example of how anthropologists can contribute to international justice.

Nigel Eltringham, who previously had conducted research on the Rwandan genocide among Rwandan living in Rwanda and Europe, shifts his focus on the "powerful". Demystifying "the Trial" and the international criminal court, he shows us how international criminal law operates on the ground and is created, re-created, negotiated, and modified by individual legal actors and extra-legal forces. Going beyond speech and discourse-centered courtroom ethnography, *Genocide Never Sleeps* brilliantly demonstrates how processes of law-making cannot be thought independently of the non-verbal, non-textual, hidden scripts and unwritten laws. Offering flesh-and-blood accounts of diverse legal practitioners, the book argues that the law and legal institutions are not firmly established, and the legal practitioners— not even those who serve in a trial against a horrific crime like genocide— don't share the same set of values, aspirations, and motivations while practicing international criminal law.

As Eltringham rightly points out, five decades after the anthropologist Laura Nader's call for "studying up" (1969), ethnographic studies of the ruling elites and institutions are still limited in number, especially those of the Global North. Although much of Eltringham's research took place at the ICTR in Arusha, Tanzania, *Genocide Never Sleeps* provides us hard to reach ethnographic insight into cosmopolitan legal elites in an international environment. Such insight is of enormous importance not only to the socio-legal scholars and legal

anthropologists who seek to understand the operations and effects of international criminal law but also to civil society actors and human rights activists who want to mobilize the international criminal court. In other words, the rich ethnographic accounts of the sometimes conflictual, yet at other times congenial and transformative encounters among diverse actors in the courtroom— the persecutors, lawyers, witnesses, and simultaneous interpreters—shed not only analytical light into how the international criminal court works in practice but also provide significant food for thought for activists interested in supporting the cause of the persecuted and in aiding them by utilizing international criminal law.

> *Eltringham's monograph successfully demystifies international law by showing its human made-ness and demonstrates how processes of law-making cannot be thought independently of the non-verbal, non-textual, hidden scripts and unwritten laws*

The book's analysis of the encounters between the Rwandan witnesses and diverse legal actors offers an excellent example of how anthropologists, as cultural translators, can contribute to international justice. As Eltringham shows in Chapter 4 and as other anthropologists (eg. Merry, 2003) have also underlined, legal actors tend to "demonize" the cultures of historically racialized, persecuted, and dispossessed populations. The culture of such communities, in this specific case, of Rwandans, is often considered as a "key impediment." Eltringham demonstrates that in line with the long-enduring racist portrayals of African people as "ignorant", "devious," or "incapable," many European legal actors who served in the court have perceived Rwandan witnesses and their testimonies as untrustworthy and deceptive.

While the alleged "cultural incapacity" of the Rwandan witnesses was seen as an obstacle to the operation of the court, by turning the anthropological gaze towards those who hold relatively powerful positions, the book demonstrates how such perceptions of Africans decrease the reliability of witnesses' statements.

Testimony takers' ignorance of the culture-specific uses of certain concepts and measures, lawyers' repackaging of the testimonies, infiltration of government spies, reconstruction of witnesses' narratives without the information of the witnesses: these all constrained the court's capacity to hear witnesses' voices. By unfolding how a "legal culture" affects the operations and implementation of international criminal law, the book offers invaluable information to those who want to employ the law in service of justice, however distant and unattainable it is.

In sum, *Genocide Never Sleeps,* with its meticulous and nuanced analysis of the inner workings of the ICTR, and vivid examination of diverse actors who fill the courtroom, is a significant contribution to the literature on the production and practice of the international criminal law. Successfully demystifying international law by showing its human made-ness, Eltringham's monograph should be a must-read for students of law and society studies (including legal anthropologists) interested in the craft of law making. *Genocide Never Sleeps* should also be a must-read for transnational legal activists and human rights workers, who are concerned with improving the effectiveness of international legal instruments.

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Featured Image: Photos of victims of the Genocide, at the Genocide Memorial in Kigali. Photo (cropped) by Andy, Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

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This review is a response to our call for reviews on Law, Technology and Bureaucracy. We have already published another review for Genocide Never Sleeps, as well as one for Dispossessed, for Uberland, for The Gray Zone and for Sentiment, Reason and Law.

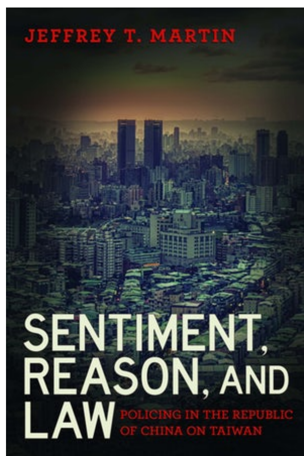
Sentiment, Reason and Law

Ivan Shmatko
July, 2020

What if the police were not independent from political interests? What if various citizens and influential figures constantly intervened in officers' decision-making, influencing the outcomes and therefore preventing officers from dealing with the cases based on the rule-of-law ideal? And what if, finally, this "weakness" of the police institution was the result of an authoritarian past? In his theoretically thick ethnography, Jeffrey T. Martin provides the reader with counter-intuitive answers to those questions. Bringing multiple vignettes from his fieldwork together, he

persuasively shows that our hegemonic notions of what police are and what police ought to be should be reconsidered.

> *Order is not something that should be en-forced, but rather an ideal that must be constantly and collectively negotiated.*



Sentiment, Reason, and Law is the product of multiple years of participant observation in the life of a Taiwanese police station (*paichusuo*). Throughout the book, Martin closely follows police officers in their daily routines, paying particular attention to the ways in which they navigate their complex social and political environment. As Martin repeatedly shows, local police do not fit the Western ideal of the independent impartial law enforcement institution. In fact, various business and political interests are forces that Taiwanese police officers routinely (and carefully) take into account when making their decisions. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, however, this lack of independence from external forces makes the Taiwanese police extremely sensitive towards those people that they police. The result is the visible constant aversion to violence: officers that Martin observed extremely rarely resolved to violence, instead preferring to approach conflicts they encounter with careful attempts of mediation. Be it a report on the illegal gambling (chapter 3), illegal use of the public city space (chapter 5), illegal migration and sex-trade (chapter 4), or even a political crisis culminating in the occupation of the parliament (chapter 6), Taiwanese police primarily seek to maintain “peace and tranquility of the community” through the “balancing acts” of repair (p.116) rather than the simple enforcement of the law.

> *Paradoxically and contrary to conventional wisdom, then, it is precisely the failure to abide by the rule-of-law ideal that helps the Taiwanese police keep society so peaceful.*

In fact, Martin shows that because officers are driven by the imperative of repair, the law itself starts to be perceived as secondary and instrumental. “From the patrolman’s perspective,” Martin argues, “law is simply a thing used to create a link between misdeed and punishment” (p.125). Whether this link is activated, however, depends on the judgement of the officer and on the extralegal circumstances in which the officer negotiates the order with the others. Paradoxically and contrary to conventional wisdom, then, it is precisely the failure to abide by the rule-of-law ideal that helps the Taiwanese police keep society so peaceful, or, as Martin puts it: “illiberal qualities are vital to the way police maintain Taiwan’s democratic order with relatively low levels of violence” (p.2).

This repair work that Taiwanese police do, according to Martin, is fueled by the cultural notions of sentiment (*qing*), reason (*li*), and law (*fa*). In other words, officers tend to navigate the “complex plurality of powers” (p. 143) and, while doing it, are extremely careful to take into account not just the abstract demands of law, but also the “particular *conjuncture* of interests” (p.129, emphasis in original) that characterize any specific conflict that they may find themselves in. This puts Taiwanese police officers in a position where the sentiment and will of the participants has to be acknowledged and then gently molded into a compromise and consensus. It is important to note that “reason” is not aimed at creating universal principles of coexistence, but instead acts here as a “particularistic” molding tool: “The appeal to reason made by a patrolman in the course of managing conflict takes the form of a call to reflection on the part of the involved parties concerning their shared interest in resolving the specific conflict at issue” (p. 129). In other words, this is a form of police work that, contrary to what we can encounter in Western imaginations, “emphasizes affect and/or will over abstract reason” (p.133).

> *While the reference to specific categories of “sentiment” and “reason” could indeed characterize only certain police institutions, the practices of extra-legal and informal conflict resolution that those concepts denote could be found in a variety of places around the world.*

It must be noted that Martin does a great job contextualizing Taiwanese police practices in the local history, looking at the development of the police institution both through the Japanese occupation of the island and through the rule of Kuomintang (KMT). In particular, he traces the weakness of the police institution (its lack of independence) and its reliance on cultural ideas about sentiment (*qing*), reason (*li*), and law (*fa*) precisely to those periods. However, as it often happens, the biggest weakness of the book can be found right where the book is the strongest: while the author roots Taiwanese police in peculiarities of the local history, he fails to connect the experiences of his participants to broader phenomena. For example, while the reference to specific categories of "sentiment" and "reason" could indeed characterize only certain police institutions, the practices of extra-legal and informal conflict resolution that those concepts denote could be found in a variety of places around the world. In my opinion, the book would benefit from more engagement with the rich literature on informalities (e.g. Ledeneva et al. 2018). This would allow the author to tell the reader not just the story about the police in Taiwan, but to connect it to certain tendencies that one can find in post-Soviet, Latin American, African and many other societies. After all, ethnography at its best always finds a way to make "sense out of human differences in terms of human similarities" (Agar 2006, 11).

> *After the murder of George Floyd and the ensuing public discussion about the place of policing in contemporary Western societies, it is extremely important to look critically at the Western fetish of "impartial" law enforcement and to carefully examine the alternatives that exist in numerous societies around the world.*

Martin's book does a great job at showing that police and the state can successfully function without striving to enforce laws at any cost. Given this, it is an extremely timely publication. After the murder of George Floyd and the ensuing public discussion about the place of policing in contemporary Western societies, it is extremely important to look critically at the Western fetish of "impartial" law enforcement and to carefully examine the alternatives that exist in

numerous societies around the world. As *Sentiment, Reason, and Law* convincingly demonstrates, peace and harmony can be much better kept when police are weak, i.e., dependent on multiple wills, sentiments, and desires that they encounter during their work. This weakness makes police sensitive towards those that the institution deals with, and therefore prone to seek compromise rather than resort to force and violence. Perhaps the time has come for many modern societies to understand that order is not something that should be *enforced*, but rather an ideal that must be constantly and collectively negotiated. Should we see order as an "intrinsically collaborative processes" (p.147), and not just as something that police do, we may find ourselves in a much less violent society.

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Featured Photo: Taiwanese police officer taking a rest, leaning on his riot shield-Photo (cropped) by tomscy2000 found on Flickr.(CC BY 2.0)

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Race-Blind: Rethinking a French-American Conversation

Beth Epstein
July, 2020

You don't waste your energy fighting the fever; you must only fight the disease.

And the disease is not racism. It is greed and the struggle for power.
— Toni Morrison, May 30, 1975

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Is France race-blind? For over 30 years this has been one of the foremost concerns framing the work of journalists and scholars from the United States working on questions of immigration, social conflict, urban policy, and identity in France. Whether it be the question of the disadvantaged French suburbs, disproportionately inhabited by people of immigrant origin, or the ban on headscarf wearing in the public schools, or the interdiction on collecting "ethnic statistics": these and other events that relate to diversity are regularly received by American observers as evidence of a country so wed to its republican principles that it refuses to tackle its problems of racial discrimination head on. Recently described in *The New Yorker* as a "distorting force" (July 16, 2018; see also Piser 2018), French race-blindness has been critiqued by observers from across the Atlantic for upholding illusory claims to universality, for serving as a screen behind which the country's essential "whiteness" is concealed, and for obfuscating, under the guise of enlightened emancipation, the discriminating effects of racialized social orders and their defence of the status quo (among others, Beaman 2017; Keaton et al. 2012; Kleinman 2019). United by a common and not unfounded wariness about the French integration project, these accounts sustain what many in France contend to be a particularly American focus on race and difference as fundamental principles of social and political life.

Since the early 2000s these concerns have also received an important hearing in France, reflected in a significant number of scholarly works, political tracts, films, websites and social movements that wrestle with the race question and its place in France historically and in the present day. The scholarly debates on these questions are legion; organizations such as the *Indigènes de la République,* the CRAN (*Conseil Répresentatif des Associations Noires),* the Mwasi Collectif, the Brigades Anti-Négrophobie and others that bring attention to racism and their members' experience of it have further contributed to a landscape of post-colonial

critique that has sought to re-frame debates about French identity and belonging in significant ways. The US experience figures prominently in this discussion, with "Anglo-Saxon" theory – multiculturalism, intersectionality, critical race theory, whiteness studies — providing a significant source of critique and reflection, and triumphant stories of American minority achievement serving as a foil against which the French equivalent is imagined to come up short. Not without controversy, these trends seem to provide evidence – or so some like to argue — of a growing convergence between the US and France with respect to the way racial matters in the two countries are framed.

> *Is France race-blind? More pertinent is to ask how the republican configuration and its multiple effects impact how differences in France are constituted, and the social and political consequences that ensue.*

As I write this my son brings to my attention the news of yet another heinous police killing of a black man in the United States. In France where we live, we watch in desperation as the US continues to slide into heart-breaking recrimination and fatal division. A young man "of color", my son reminds me he is subject to similar forms of discrimination in France: the disproportionate incidence of police harassment and violence against young black and brown men is all too known and shows no signs of abating. I know my son is right and yet I know also that these parallels should not be facilely made. Originally from the US, I have moved regularly between these French and American renderings for the past 20+ years. On the one hand the histories of racial oppression and the racist content of contemporary acts of discrimination in both countries must not and cannot be denied; on the other I am disturbed by how, as a consequence, the vast differences of scale and in practices of collective engagement, social integration, and distribution of resources between the two countries become obscured. It is critical, I argue, not to lose sight of those differences. To do so is to risk reducing race or difference to a simple demographic factor alone; it is to lose sight of the ideological and organizational arrangements that mediate how people imagine themselves and others and the contours of the civic spaces that

they share; and it is to feed into perilous understandings of race as impervious to context — "essentially there rather than historically composed," as the sociologist Julie Bettie puts it (2014:39) – that comfort neoliberal agendas promoting accumulation at the cost of social programs. Such configurations reinforce an idea of race as free-floating and causative, as if it is "race" which creates conflict, and not the other way around.

French republicanism does, to be sure, offer an oblique rejoinder to post-structuralist analyses that insist on the primacy of difference and identity as keys to unlocking enduring structures of inequality. Within the republican framework, identity concerns are positioned as non-vital components of social life that are not to intrude on the quotidian challenge of building a cohesive collective sphere. Difference is not denied in this schema but is, rather, to be transcended, the better for people of all walks of life to come together and locate the shared interests that allow them to build a common core. For its defenders, the beauty of this ideal lies in its defence of abstraction, wherein people are not tied *de facto* to primordial categories but able to imagine themselves and others in abstract terms. The republican pact is thus considered a bulwark against the solidification of discrete, integral ethnocultural groups, a prelude to civic participation, and a necessary defence against the essentialisms of racial thought.

> *Within the republican framework, identity concerns are positioned as non-vital components of social life that are not to intrude on the quotidian challenge of building a cohesive collective sphere.*

"An abyss built upon the abyss, the emptiness…the unspeakable, the unmentionable, though thought by almost all. Say it not, but act in its name even as its effects are denied, are in denial" (Goldberg 2006:338). For the philosopher David Theo Goldberg, the consequence, not only in France but also in other countries of Europe where race is deemed unsayable, is a masquerade. "No race here. No imagination of the racial because the terms are deadened, taken away…Buried. But buried alive" (2006:338). It is easy to concede with Goldberg

that official French "race-blindness" does not match up to the complexity of French life on the ground, where multiple forms of difference, many of them the product of racist and colonial histories, circulate and play out in significant ways. Important scholarly work and social movements of the past several decades that demand a reckoning of France's colonial history and of the compromised implementation of its enlightenment promise have moved these discussions in significant ways. At stake here however is also how those past and present events are named and mobilised, and the distinct conceptual, political and social practices to which those namings and mobilisations give rise. As a symbolically charged piece of everyday politics, the republican ideal extends deep into multiple arenas of French social life, shaping multiple discourses about civics, allocation of resources, and forms of acceptable practice. Is France race-blind? More pertinent is to ask how the republican configuration and its multiple effects impact how differences in France are constituted, and the social and political consequences that ensue.

> *France's social programs reflect key ideological concerns about the role of the state, solidarity and citizenship that are deeply imbricated in conceptualizations of race and diversity and the way these play out in everyday life.*

Deep-rooted concerns about "solidarity" and the destabilizing effects of "social exclusion," for example, are direct emanations of this ideal that reflect broader concerns about the importance of social cohesion for the advancement of economic and political life. While hardly disinterested – pushing against "social fracture" is a way to protect one's own interests as much as it is an effort to ensure that others do not falter and fall – such principles underscore a conceptualisation of the social as made up of interdependent parts that positions the pursuit of the common interest as a political project. It is this, among other things, which underlies staunch defence of the French state's increasingly fragile social welfare net, including universal health care, dramatically low-cost university education, housing and transportation subsidies, and a panoply of other forms of assistance designed to help individuals and families struggling to make

ends meet. Such services are, to be sure, in the process of being eroded as successive governments appeal to neoliberal arguments about global competitiveness; they continue to stand in stark contrast however to the radical dismantling of public support that has so dramatically impacted American society since the Reagan era. How many Americans know, for example, that economically disadvantaged families in France can receive assistance to help pay for their children's school supplies, send their kids on summer vacation, or allow a parent to stay at home to tend to a sick child? While hardly a panacea for the difficulties sustained by families touched by economic insecurity and unemployment, these and other realities of French life have a direct impact on the way people of various backgrounds are positioned and position themselves in French society. More important for my current purposes, they reflect key ideological concerns about the role of the state, solidarity and citizenship that are deeply imbricated in conceptualizations of race and diversity and the way these play out in everyday life. One has to wonder how far such programs could go toward curing the American racial divide.

> *I argue that analysis of racial matters cannot be divorced from these and other social, economic, and political concerns.*

In making this argument I do not mean to suggest that we should therefore close our eyes to these actions' discriminating effects; I argue rather that analysis of racial matters cannot be divorced from these and other social, economic, and political concerns. Should we not, after all, be raising similar questions about the relationship between the way diversity is codified in the United States and the privatisation of basic goods and services that has proved so devastating for so many of the US's most vulnerable citizens? It is precisely in relation to such neoliberal reforms that these questions find their greatest urgency; if we want to understand how such reforms are wielded then we must pay special attention to the way they act on and are sustained by shifting representations of social difference. The brutal death of George Floyd is yet one more tragic case in point. As the crisis unfolds, it is not only the grievous history of racial oppression in

America that is playing out before the world.

In France too, of course, the past 40 years have seen a significant rise in inequality and racially-inflected social tensions. These are more often than not signified by sensationalised depictions of the notorious French suburbs, which over the course of the past decades have become disproportionately inhabited by immigrants and their descendants. Typically portrayed under signs of violence and disorder, the suburbs have become sites of stigma that exist in contradistinction to the "ghettos of the rich," inhabited by the mostly white bourgeoisie (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot 2016). These and other trends lend themselves to a racial reading; what needs excavating here however is not the demonstration that such phenomena provide that race exists in France, but the historic, economic, and political forces that have brought such disparities into being. What has been the effect of the retrenchment of state services and the whittling away of public support, not only on economic conditions but also on broader conceptions of shared responsibility for the commonweal? How do notions of distinction, difference, merit, austerity, and inclusion conspire to corrode arguments for comprehensive social programs, cast aspersion on practices of solidarity, and sustain entrenched structures of privilege? As the stigmatization of the *banlieue* feeds into increasingly fixed understandings of France and its "others," so has it had a negative impact on policies intended to aid in the development of social and ethnically "mixed" cities and towns (while here too comparison with the United States is instructive: according to a study from 2011, the probability of living in a highly segregated neighborhood is ten times higher for African-Americans in major metropolitan cities such as Chicago and New York than for North or sub-Saharan Africans living in Paris and surrounding towns (Préteceille 2011)). All too frequently overlooked as a result are the flourishing forms of cultural pluralism and civic engagement that also characterise life in these towns, which not only belie overdetermined portrayals of France and its "others" but beg the question of who gains most from racialized depictions of the disadvantaged *banlieue*. It is these questions, about racialized forms of inequality and their effects, that in this moment of insecurity and crisis

most critically demand our attention.

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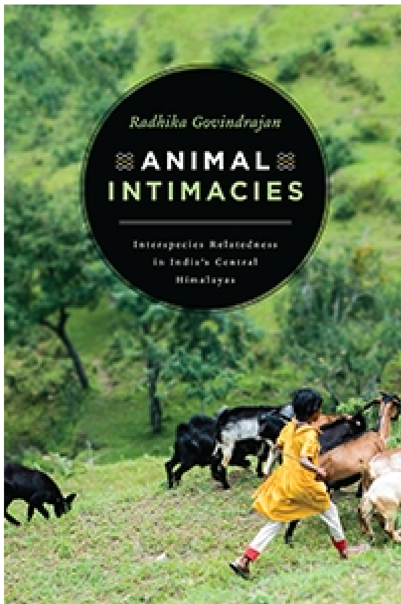
Featured image: Apartment building in Bischheim, a banlieue of Strasbourg – photo (cropped) by Paul Keller, Flickr, (CC BY 2.0)

Animal Intimacies

Darcie De Angelo
July, 2020

In her book *Animal Intimacies* Radhika Govindrajan takes us through a series of

human-animal relations in India’s Central Himalayas, the Kumaon division in the hills of Uttarakhand. Each chapter provides vivid stories that altogether form an insightful account of how affects play out in human-animal interactions. Perhaps the chapters could use more explicit linkages, but the book still presents a convincing representation of human-animals’ relations among India’s lower castes and highlands marginalised regions. The book focuses on the role of sacrificial goats (chapter 2); holy cows (chapter 3); troublesome monkeys (chapter 4); feral hogs (chapter 5); and sexy bears (chapter 6). These chapters discuss the links between love and ethics by conceiving intimacy between humans and animals as a form of reciprocal love and countering these intimacies with those who call for broader reforms for animal ethics such as the Hindu-nationalist animal rights groups in India as well as the global organisations decrying animal abuse in developing nations. Govindrajan specifically references such organisations as powerful entities that do not consider forms of intimacies that exist between people and animals. People like her interlocutors, she says, have “an ethical relatedness,” such as a woman who sacrifices her goat, a Hindu who consumes the meat of a Jersey cow, and the *pahari* villagers who want guns to cull the wild boar populations. These forms of relatedness derive from *pahari* peoples’ lives being entangled with and dependant on the lives and deaths of the multiple species of Kumaon. For example, a woman’s well-being is tied to the well-being of her cow: the author illustrates this relatedness by showing how the woman stays in a crumbling hut with the cow despite a dangerous storm. The central thesis is that this multi species relatedness comes through via human and nonhuman materialities. In other words, animal and human bodies are inter-connected via embodied practices, which she defines as aspects of life and death that leave behind visceral traces, such as bear scat, and directly physical, such as the ways in which a cow leans on the human who milks her. Human and animal bodies become transformed by affective encounters with each other.



In chapters 2 and 3, Govindrajan focuses on the mutual love between humans and domesticated animals, such as goats and cows. Such interspecies intimacies are especially relevant in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, when many are isolated and are turning to animal companions for support. In some places under lockdown, people are only authorised to leave their homes to walk their dogs while in other places people rush to adopt animals from dogs to ducks. This love is selfishly-motivated, for sure, as humans ultimately benefit from newfound companionship and freedom of movement through animals, but this selfishness is part of Govindrajan's understanding of loving relations between humans and animals. Love, she argues, evoking Lauren Berlant's call for new theories of attachment, is always beneficial to the lover and therefore has selfish motivations. Her story of goat sacrifice illustrates this point by exploring the pain of a woman when her favourite goat is slaughtered for a local deity. The woman explains that sacrifice is not a true sacrifice unless there is love for the goats. She refers to an origin story of goat sacrifice where the gods used to only accept human children from their devotees. The kids, that is, the young goats, are literal stand-ins for the children who used to be sacrificed but they are also emotional stand-ins. The women raise the goats, care for them, and love them. With this chapter, Govindrajan explains how gendered these animal intimacies are as their relatedness is imbricated with women's daily manual labour and the state's marginalisation of the *pahari* people who make up the majority of her interlocutors.

> *The central thesis is that this multi species relatedness comes through via human and nonhuman materialities. In other words, animal and human bodies are inter-connected via embodied practices, which she defines as aspects of life and death that leave behind visceral traces, such as bear scat, and directly physical, such as the ways in which a cow leans on the human who milks her.*

> *Human and animal bodies become transformed by affective encounters with each other.*

These stories are not only about animals and their relatedness with humans but also about human politics. This becomes evident in Chapter 3, when Govindrajan describes the conflict between Hindu nationalists and *pahari* and lower castes people with regard to practices surrounding the holy cow. Against a backdrop of religiously justified violence against Muslim minorities, *pahari* people describe how some cows are less holy than others, in spite of the love and care that their owners' manifest. As she explained in the introduction, Govindrajan spends time attending ethnographically to the movement and touches between cow and human bodies as well as the stories people tell her about cows to understand human-cow relatedness. The author highlights distinctions made between the Jersey cows and the *pahari* cows, both of which are local breeds of the region. A Jersey cow, a breed imported by British colonists and now taken up by the nationalist ruling party to increase milk production on an industrialized scale, is not considered as holy because, her *Pahari* interlocutors explain, her Jersey body is different. Indeed, a Jersey cow's body has a more consistent milk supply, a fact that makes her belong to a different category. For Govindrajan's interlocutors, these cows cannot be used in spiritual ceremonies. Through their bodies, Jersey cows also provide an exception to the taboo against bovine consumption. While this claim is convincing, one can also see how caste prejudice underpins this new categorization of "holy" versus "non-holy" cows. Since Jersey cow milk is produced in industrial quantities, it is often given to lower caste people to drink. According to taboos, a cow should stop producing milk when a lower caste person drinks it. When Jersey cows do not stop producing after being given to lower caste people, people do not feel as though their prejudice is undermined, instead, they create a distinctive category—the cow becomes less holy.

Is this an example of relatedness that transforms people's perceptions or is this an example of an exceptional category being created to reinforce customary prejudices? The question is not explicitly addressed in the book but Govindrajan

makes clear that caste prejudice alters bodily experiences as well. At one point the anthropologist describes a scene in a taxi whereby a man uncontrollably gags and vomits as the taxi enters a lower caste neighbourhood. This example demonstrates how embodied practices are revealing of caste prejudices, illustrating Govindrajan's larger argument that both animal and human bodies influence politics.

> *Govindrajan spends time attending ethnographically to the movement and touches between cow and human bodies as well as the stories people tell her about cows to understand human-cow relatedness. The author highlights distinctions made between the Jersey cows and the pahari cows, both of which are local breeds of the region.*

Chapter 4 introduces another central dichotomy: insider and outsider monkeys. It illuminates the tensions between urban and rural people in the forced influx of urban monkeys to rural spaces. As monkeys invade the cities, they are collected and then dumped into the forests of the Himalayas. Such practices leave them traumatized while orphaned baby monkeys tend to become more malicious as they struggle for survival. Urban monkeys, like urban people, disrupt the lives of the *pahari* people. They consume crops like an invasive species and they look and act differently from the forest monkeys who are used to live among the *pahari*people. Govindrajan's interlocutors are able to recognize these monkeys from their different hair and their lack of fear for humans— *pahari* monkeys, one person tells the anthropologist, are shy like *pahari* people. City monkeys' nasty behavior mirrors the violence inflicted by city dwellers on mountain dwellers, who are forced out of their lands: outsider monkeys make the land unlivable. The chapter ends with a compelling moment of love that challenges such strict categorizations: the scene depicts an old man swearing in anger at city monkeys and a moment later, taking pity on an orphaned female juvenile and feeding her one of the pears her troop mates stole.

The next chapter presents a sow. The sow can transform back and forth between

domesticated animals (like cows and goats) and the so-called ‘wild’ species (like monkeys and bears). Govindrajan provides a genealogy of both categories, domestic and wild, as colonial and racist legacies that persist today. Her interlocutors compare the dangerous hogs who forage in their high-value crops and attack humans with adult piglets of an escaped sow from a British-established laboratory. Noting that her interlocutors understood domesticity as part of a pig’s nature, no matter how “wild”, Govindrajan develops the concept *otherwild* to offer a local understanding of wilderness that does not fit neatly into the dichotomy of “wild” and “civilised”. The concept of *otherwild* enables people to imagine categories that exist beyond the colonial and nationalist norms of “civilised” and “wild” even if, eventually, it reinforces them. *Otherwild* better captures how the sow is locally perceived. She exists outside the framework of domination, allowing for people to imagine “a latent possibility of another world,” (123) a theme Govindrajan continues to develop in the penultimate chapter about bears who seduce women.

> *Is this an example of relatedness that transforms people’s perceptions or is this an example of an exceptional category being created to reinforce customary prejudices? The question is not explicitly addressed in the book but Govindrajan makes clear that caste prejudice alters bodily experiences as well.*

Chapter 6, starts with a joke and a warning. Govindrajan’s friend warns her about the bears who might find her sexually appealing because they are generally attracted by city girls. The rest of the chapter recounts a folk tale in which bears kidnap women and force them into a cave for sex. At first, the story tells, the kidnapped woman is unwilling, but eventually, she enjoys sex with the bear. Despite the traumatic histories of abduction and mass sexual assaults that occurred during India’s Partition in 1947, Govindrajan contextualizes these sexy bears as moments of queered pleasure for the women. The women tell these stories in order to reclaim their sexual pleasure in a context where patriarchal relations and actual dangers of bear mauling impose significant restraints on their bodies.

Govindrajan's ethnographic analysis of interspecies relations also explores relations among animals themselves. The book provides interesting scientific information on bears' sexual behaviors, monkey trauma, pig bodies, cow milk production, and goat eating habits, hence reflecting the book series' concern with biological anthropology. The Epilogue, focuses on a more familiar animal: a dog, whose death is, in the local belief system, giving life to a leopard. This story of a dog's death closes the ethnography on a reflection on the imbrications between love and death, interspecies connections and human-nonhuman interactions. To love in this death-life way, Govindrajan suggests, is the only hope we have against the global catastrophe of human-made climate change.

Featured image (cropped) by Stephen Leonardi on Unsplash.

Contesting Leviathan

Josef Adriel De Guzman
July, 2020

In *Contesting Leviathan*, a reference on both the mythical sea-serpent and Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy, Les Beldo seeks to provide a multi-faceted view of the Makah whaling conflict, a legal struggle between the indigenous Makah of North-Western United States, the US Government, and anti-whaling activists that has been ongoing since the early 1990s. He does this effectively by taking an in-depth look at all the parties involved in the conflict, humans and whales alike. Beldo conceives the practice of whaling not just as a means of subsistence for the Makah, but as the cornerstone of differing moral frameworks between the involved parties. The conflict is seen as a "story of translation, of the strategic adaptation of the discourses and practices to fit a dominant interpretative framework" (p.6).

A key feature of Beldo's ethnography lies in his attempt to decenter the human in his discussion and to present each party's views in an equal and balanced way. Beldo demonstrates that the Makah whaling conflict goes beyond the simple struggle of an indigenous group in performing their traditional practices, and that all parties involved – the Makah, the activists, the state, and even the grey whales themselves – represent complex entities in the practice of Makah whaling. The first half of the book focuses on the Makah and the role of whaling in their indigenous lifestyle, as well as the place of the grey whale in Makah culture and spirituality. The second half of the book presents the other parties involved in the conflict – the state, the activists, and the whales. What is important to note is that these two sections are by no means distinct from each other. That is, Beldo is able to maintain the connections between all the parties involved in the conflict throughout the book, illustrating how strongly imbricated these relationships are with and how they collectively contribute to the production of the discourse on Makah whaling.

Chapter One looks at the history of whaling for the Makah. It takes a close look at the claim that for the Makah, the right to whale represents a reaffirmation of identity and sovereignty. In this chapter, Beldo takes apart the argument according to which the practice of whaling is fully representative of the Makah as a tribe. While not all Makah are whalers, most support the right of the Makah to engage in whaling as a means of asserting the rights given to them by the 1855 Treaty of Neah Bay. Whaling is a part of the tribe's history and culture, and whales feature heavily in their spirituality and iconography, but Beldo shows that among the Makah, whaling is also the hereditary right of an elite. Whalers who come from old whaling families have different views on whaling than those who have become whalers after having accessed modern technologies like motorboats and spearguns. The chapter highlights the fact that even within the Makah,

attitudes toward whaling differ greatly.

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Chapter Two takes a specific look at whaling as a means of subsistence for the Makah. Beldo highlights how the term "Yum!" is used by the Makah when referring to the grey whale and is representative of the overall role of the whale in the Makah foodways. "Yum!" refers to how the Makah often respond when asked about the grey whale, a statement intended to play upon the moral value associated with eating whales. As Beldo notes, it is "as if to say, 'Yes, we kill animals, do you have a problem with that?'" (p.63) However, he also points out that it is a rather subversive notion when compared to non-Makah's views of the inedibility of whales. However, for the Makah, grey whales are not seen as a high-value food. The grey whale is not the most preferred whale in terms of palatability – this goes to the humpback whale. The grey whale does not feature heavily in the daily diets of the Makah. So why does hunting it is so important to the Makah? The following chapter provides elements of answer to this question by discussing how politics, identity, and food intersect.

Chapter Three examines the role of the whale in the spirituality of the Makah. A key point to note is the notion that Makah spirituality is best characterized by its variability. Each member of the Makah may have their own set of spiritual beliefs and practices. For example, some whalers believe that the spirituality of whaling lies in the relationship between the hunter and the whale, which justifies the use of more modern equipment in their hunting. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the traditional method of using canoes and harpoons highlights

the spirituality embedded in the practice of the hunt itself. Both are equally valid expressions of spirituality in the community. Beldo argues that these variable spiritual views best explain the differences in how the Makah approach non-human animals, in hunting and other contexts like pets. Chapter Four looks at the role of the state, in this case the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in the whaling conflict. With the realization that the NMFS holds the greatest political power in the whaling conflict, Beldo argues that a "moral consonance" between the Makah and the NMFS allows the Makah to successfully push forward their goals with regard to their fishing rights. The Makah accomplish this by "translating" their goals into a familiar language for the NMFS, changing the discourse from tradition, culture, and practice to the logics of fisheries' management.

Chapters Five and Six provide an account of whaling activists' perspectives. The first part details the origins and history of the anti-whaling movement in Washington state, along with the apparent failure of what Beldo calls its initial "interventionist approach ". This approach is best captured in early attempts by activists to protest whaling activities by using their own boats to physically interfere, which only led to their arrests by the US Coast Guard. By fighting against both the Makah and the state, the activists were unable to gain ground in the conflict. However, in the next section, Beldo shows that when Makah activists embrace the language of the NMFS and focus on legislative reforms, they begin to be more successful. This, however, comes with a cost: by "speaking the language" of the NMFS, activists are forced to abandon their initial moral positions on whales. Their discourse shifts from a focus on aesthetics and whales' rights to arguments related to ecological stock. In doing so, Beldo sends a bleak but powerful message: eliciting change in the policies of the federal government will often entail the need to embrace the inherent moral beliefs of that system, which can often be at the cost of indigenous moral beliefs.

Chapter Seven seeks to capture the grey whale's perspective. While it is impossible to get a first-hand account from the grey whale, Beldo looks at the different interpretations of one particular grey whale's unusual behavior

whoapproaches fishing boats. For the Makah, the approach of the whale signifies its consent to being hunted. For activists, it demonstrates whales' prosocial behaviour. It is important to note that for Beldo, these interpretations of whales' behavior are attempts to speak *for* the whale rather than *with* them. This chapter reflects anthropology's current concern for "decentering the human", by placing greater emphasis on the role that non-humans play in cultural phenomena.

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Overall, *Contesting Leviathan* is a well-argued and well-researched volume. Beldo demonstrates great reflexivity and acknowledges his positionality as a white non-member of the Makah. However, his position as an outsider enables him to present the views of the various actors involved in the conflict. His interactions with the Makah and the activists are both intimate and well-informed, providing excellent context for his argument. The book displays a few illustrations, which contribute strongly to the book's discussion. Portraits of people as well as historical photos of the Makah whale hunts provide vivid insights into Makah culture and society. *Contesting Leviathan* is recommended reading for those interested in a good case study of indigenous groups' claims for their cultural rights. It provides an original take on food, politics, and identity, and on non-human forms of agency.

Featured Image by SarahRichterArt, pixabay.com.

The Murkiness of the Peruvian Lockdown

Michelle Hak Hepburn
July, 2020

Around the world, countries have imposed lockdowns, to varying degrees of severity, in attempts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Graduate students (and other researchers) have had to leave the field, pause their research, or restructure it to online, physically-distant modes. As a PhD candidate “in the field” in Peruvian Amazonia, I, too, have had to grapple with how I will need to reconsider my research project in light of pandemic restrictions. My Canadian university told students abroad to return home; I received the notice on March

16, the same day Peru's national lockdown and closed borders took effect. Peru has now been in lockdown for over 90 days. One person at a time may leave their home to buy food, go to the bank, or to the pharmacy. Although originally the lockdown was set to end on March 31, the government has extended it several times – it is now set to end on June 30. (Although some businesses are starting to be allowed to open, in a limited capacity – and honestly, people here can't afford to be locked in their homes anymore, if they ever could.)

As people in other places are re-gaining mobility, and universities are slowly considering how they will allow in-person research to resume in socially-distant ways, I was forced to grapple with the disjointedness that I've felt throughout lockdown. This feeling of disconnect can permeate all of sociocultural anthropological fieldwork – although our research strives to move beyond and learn from these sometimes-awkward moments. But in times of collective trauma, I was forcefully reminded that the current ordeal can exacerbate past suffering.

> *For me, the fearful murkiness of the unknown has made the air, at times, heavy; my family, my in-laws, and I take turns worrying about all that we do not know about what is happening in the world outside.*

Of the terror and violence of the Amazonian rubber boom of the late 1800s (1879-1912), Taussig writes about "the power of epistemic murk in the politics of representations" (1987: 36). The stories of violence, their exaggerations, and the violent acts themselves swirled and enveloped Amazonia with the affective experience of threat. Taussig starts with the rubber boom, but he explores how the murky threat of danger seeps through stories of sickness, death, and healing in Amazonia in his (then) contemporary fieldwork of the 1970s and 1980s. Today, the murky terror in the age of COVID-19 is spread through and alongside conspiracy theories, miracle cures, and news reports of death and dying. Around the world, there are competing stories and explanations of what COVID-19 is, where it came from, and what to do about it. For me, the fearful murkiness of the unknown has made the air, at times, heavy; my family, my in-laws, and I take

turns worrying about all that we do not know about what is happening in the world outside.

The fear is amplified by the memory of violent histories. On March 18, the government imposed a curfew (*toque de queda*). President Vizcarra did not call it a curfew (although the media called it what it was), because he didn't want to evoke the "bad times of the past". Instead, he called it "obligatory social immobility." Regardless of what it was called, the curfew-that-was-not-a-curfew inevitably reminded my in-laws of the darker times they lived through in recent past.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Peru was embroiled in armed conflict. The infamous Shining Path began its uprising in Ayacucho, but the violence spread across the country. Meanwhile, in the region of San Martín, where I am based, coca production was booming. The US estimates 40% of the world's coca supply in 1990 was grown along the Huallaga watershed (a tributary to the Amazon) in San Martín and Huánuco (Kawell 2005). Coca profits in the Huallaga funded not only the Shining Path, but also the MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru), a competing insurgency group with a stronghold in San Martín. These groups fought against one another, and also against state police and military forces. Everyone else was caught in the crossfire. In the immediate aftermath of the Huallaga coca boom, Kernaghan discusses the sense of danger, the "sensorial *atmosphere* felt by some(one's) body and a *sensibility* or affective disposition, but also a direction or *good sense* that foresees as well as a faculty of judgement or *common sense*" (2009: 5, original emphasis). The threat of real violence is remembered and held in the bodies of those who lived through the troubled times.

> *The curfew-that-was-not-a-curfew brought back the sense of danger, filling the air and the body with apprehension. The first few nights, my in-laws reflected on the silence. It was so quiet.*

My in-laws, too, have this sense. I notice it in the way the door was barricaded and locked at night, and in other, more subtle cues. The way the body is held, the

fleeting expressions of worry. The curfew-that-was-not-a-curfew brought back the sense of danger, filling the air and the body with apprehension. The first few nights, my in-laws reflected on the silence. It was so quiet.

None of the usual busy sounds of the street, of the motorcycles and moto-cars passing by. There wasn't even any of the loud music that can often be heard coming from one or the other of the neighbour's houses. Silence, both eerie and peaceful. "Before," my in-laws tell me, "during the curfew all you could hear were *balazos* (gunshots)." My partner's childhood home was made of a double layer of cinderblocks, filled with cement. The inner layer was lengthwise, to help make the wall thicker, in an effort to stop stray bullets. Even with their extra-thick walls, when they could hear the gunfire close-by, they hid under their beds until it subsided, or until morning.

The curfew-that-was-not-a-curfew brought the memories of violence and death to the fore, heightening the murky uncertainties of COVID-19. As I sit in my kitchen in the quiet of the evening, after my young children are asleep, my mother or sister-in-law would come and sit with me, to share the memories that inevitably surfaced: of seeing last night's victims laid out in the town plaza as a child; of their own close calls with death; of the dangerous game of needing to be friendly with all sides. The most I can do is witness their pain, and listen. The news stories mirror the memories: in Ecuador, Guayaquil's COVID-19 victims rotting in the streets – their system had been too overwhelmed to collect them. In Brazil, Manaus is building trench graves for their dead. In Peru, in Iquitos, people are turning to the black market to find needed oxygen, where prices are unaffordable and rising (the rising prices of medicinal oxygen also affects other parts of Peru).

My household implemented a strict protocol for entering the house after going to the market for food (shoes disinfected and off at the door, shower and change clothes, wash *everything* brought in from outside). These precautions, which may sometimes feel *too* cautious, come from remembering the real danger of death outside the door, from the *sense* of threat (Kernaghan 2009).

Meanwhile, friends and family in Europe and in North America are starting to see their restrictions slowly lifted. In Canada, their suggested “shelter-in-place” was largely followed, and largely unenforceable (unlike the lockdown in Peru, which is mandated through legislation and enforced by national police and military). During a recent Zoom meeting, I’ve realised (many, but not all) of my colleagues are finding ways to move their research forward, in some form. I, too, have been reflecting on how I will return to my research – following human-tree relationships across urban and rural spaces – with restricted mobility in a place that has inconsistent access to internet and technology.

Through this crisis, I’ve often considered myself in an enviable position. When COVID-19 was first discovered, named, and eventually declared a pandemic, my doctoral research was already paused because of a parental leave. I can continue to postpone my return to research, giving myself more time to adjust to the changed circumstances of the pandemic. I have the opportunity to reflect – and document – my experience of uncertainty and I have the privilege to wait until some of that uncertainty has had time to settle.

> *Murkiness continues to breed distrust and suspicion – of the government, of the official numbers, of the capacity for patient care. People are afraid to bring their sick to the hospital, because staff are too busy to keep patients’ families informed and people fear that the sick are brought there to die.*

I am thankful I still have that pause button, as life in Peru remains suspended in the murk. Despite taking early action, the lockdown has not worked. In San Martín, we were relatively spared until May, when people began to start leaving their homes more frequently in search of income. The public hospital in Tarapoto, the largest city, is now full, while the designated public COVID hospital remains closed for renovations. Murkiness continues to breed distrust and suspicion – of the government, of the official numbers, of the capacity for patient care. People are afraid to bring their sick to the hospital, because staff are too busy to keep patients’ families informed and people fear that the sick are brought there to die.

Many of those needing critical care are treated at home, and struggle to find oxygen, medicines, and doctors able and willing to do house visits – and the money to pay for it all. Rumours continue to spread, some verifiable, about people dying because of lack of oxygen and about government links with mafia to control the local medicinal oxygen market. While elsewhere people are starting to consider life after lockdown, my family and I have settled into our new reality. South America, according to the WHO, is now the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak.

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Imagining the Post Corona

University in Brazil

Claiton da Silva
July, 2020

Frequently, we Brazilian scholars have received concerned questions from foreign colleagues asking what the h… is happening in Brazil. In fact, the situation in the country since June 2013 has been somewhat complex, mixing in one single moment past, present, and expectations for the future. In other words, our condition combines still-fresh memories of the past — the 21 years of civilian-military dictatorship (1964-1985) — with the current threat of Bolsonaro-aligned groups to reinstate a State of Exception, with a complex mixture of neo-fascism that marries a neo-liberal economic agenda to social conservatism. As a result, the expectations for the future outline some unpleasant scenarios.

Metaphorically, it feels like we were shooting a remake of Glauber Rocha's *"Terra em transe"* with the aesthetics of a Spaghetti Western, but in which the political right-wing characters were inspired by Michael Haneke's imagery. In summary, we face this situation that, it seems to me, never reaches a climax – rather confronting it with (un)organized resistance, activism or with a self-deprecating sense of humor, which reflects how we view, flabbergasted, the actions of government and state actors in this moment.

The situation of universities, especially public ones, is not very different. In fact, the pandemic allowed, in little over seventy days on Brazilian soil, air and organisms, the direct enactment of something that had been rehearsed for a long time concerning the future of public universities, and mainly of the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) in Brazilian universities. To get to this point a bit of political history and history of education in Brazil is fundamental. While historiography and historical research institutions were born during the reign of Emperor Dom Pedro II, in the 19th century, to provide meaning and legitimacy to the monarchical domination, throughout the 20th century, HSS have distanced themselves from the official discourse of the national state.

> *We built – with many contradictions, and even under a dictatorship — a very democratic space, connected to social reality and, finally, with a diversity that was one of the planet's most interesting ones.*

Gradually, although not uniformly, Brazilian intellectual writings in the HSS embraced the project of demonstrating the contradictions of leading national and international elites and their role in the making of Brazilian and Latin American inequalities – that is, it is widelyr accepted by scholars in the HSS that the concentration of income of Latin American elites produces social inequality.. In addition, gradually – and again I emphasize that this was not a uniform rule – books or articles that could possibly exalt oppressors, were being pushed out of the academic mainstream. Through this, over three or four generations, we built – with many contradictions, and even under a dictatorship — a very democratic

space, connected to social reality and, finally, with a diversity that was one of the planet's most interesting ones.

The making of the Bolsonaro era: Brazilian post-dictatorship denialism

However, precisely because of academia's democratic tendencies, government officials and civilian ideologues often seek to disrupt this socio-intellectual construction, especially in authoritarian contexts. This was the case with the 1964 civilian-military coup, after which well-known Brazilian intellectuals were exiled by the dictators or went into exile because of the insecurities of the moment. During that time, all levels of education, from basic to high school to university courses, were subjected to reforms that, until today, have not been fully digested. And this is one of the strongest obstacles to imagining a more optimistic scenario for post-pandemic universities. History was abolished as a discipline during the military dictatorship; its resurgence as a subject in schools and as a university degree was strongly attacked for decades, in an attempt to marginalize the role of historians in contributing to analyses in formats of the so-called mainstream media. More recently, historians have systematically been stigmatized as "communists" by Bolsonaro-aligned followers.

Little by little, other HSS disciplines that have historically faced the same repressive structures have also come to be associated with a certain generalizing notion of "communism" — basically being equated with Stalinism and, for this reason, logically seen as violent, almost as "natural" murderers. This skewed view prevailed not only among the extreme right-wing, but also among "democratic" liberals. During the last decade, professional researchers, even those not integrated into institutional policy perspectives of political parties, were seen as *esquerdopatas* (left-o-paths), that is, seen as having an almost pathological left-wing or progressive political position. And this is only one example of the attacks on scholars in the HSS.

At the same time, there has been a rise in revisionist, denialist authors, who

pushed narratives about national history and the political situation from an extreme right-wing viewpoint, blaming “communist” teachers for allegedly having lied about the history of Brazil for decades.

> *During the last decade, professional researchers were seen as esquerdopatas (left-o-paths), that is, seen as having an almost pathological left-wing or progressive political position.*

A short genealogy of fundamental books in this anti-intellectual and/or denialist tradition must necessarily include William Waak’s *Camaradas*, (1993), the *Politically Incorrect Guide to the History of Brazil*, written by journalist Leandro Narloch (2009), together with other reinterpretations to soften Brazil’s brutal past by journalists or academics. Some of these books made waves when they were released, such as *We are not racists* (2006) written by Ali Kamel, a journalist, social scientist and the editor-in-chief of Rede Globo —Brazil’s largest commercial TV network — as well as Demétrio Magnoli’s anti-affirmative action manifesto entitled *A Drop of Blood* (2009). The historian Marco Antonio Villa promoted the Spanish concept of *ditabranda* – or “soft dictatorship” – in books such as *Dictatorship, Brazilian-Style (1964-1985): democracy attacked from the right and the left* (2014), much like other writers, who amalgamate with more or less complex arguments specific ideals of the authoritarian right. These ideas include the existence of a “leftist” conspiracy in the construction of narratives about Brazilian history; or that certain policies of segregation, social exclusion, dictatorship or even extermination would be justified to contain the violence of the “people” or the “communists”.

Just to give you one typical example of this pushback from the right: the collected volume *Brasil: Nunca Mais* (1985), compiled by various religious leaders from documents clandestinely collected between 1961 and 1979, reported 707 cases of political repression and torture in Brazil, generated huge controversy. This book seriously challenged the dictatorship’s master narrative, documenting instead the regime’s extensive human rights violations. Military supporters of the dictatorship

riposted with the publication of *The Suffocated Truth* (2006), by General Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra. The head of the II. Army's dreaded Department of Intelligence and Repression (DOI-CODI) from 1970 to 1974, and a proven torturer, Ustra is revered by the current president Jair Bolsonaro. Similarly, books, newspapers articles and videos by Olavo de Carvalho, an astrologer and digital influencer, popularized and "rebranded" the history of torture.

> *Training teachers, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, is economically damaging to these private corporations.*

In addition to this, ever since the Lula and Dilma governments (2003-2016) decided to expand Brazilian universities, certain strategic roles were reserved for public universities, such as training teachers in the areas of Mathematics, Portuguese Language, and the humanities in general. Given the low salaries offered to teachers in both public and private education, private universities have increasingly reduced or even excluded their offers of these courses. Training teachers, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, is economically damaging to these private corporations. So, currently, publishing houses, mass media communication networks, or digital influencers assert that professional historians are not needed to write about history: they prefer to write history by themselves, reviving old prejudices – as mentioned above.

Future: Quicksand or coming to a stand still

Recently, there have been many attacks against the HSS by the Brazilian government: in 2019 the teaching of philosophy and arts in basic education was made no longer compulsory; resources for research in HSS was cut from 2019 onwards; and in 2020, President Bolsonaro decreed that "historian" would no longer be recognized as a distinct profession. What are concrete steps that scholars can take to resist this erosion and rethink the role of universities – especially in the social sciences – in the formation of real intellectual communities and for society? This question has no easy answers; after all, making predictions

in this current moment is like walking on quicksand. What a historian can do, however, is to try and understand the possible scenarios for the post-pandemic era, especially for public universities and HSS.

> *It is important to tell foreign readers that Brazilian and South American universities tend to be privileged spaces for building citizenship.*

For this reason, I sketch out two scenarios: in the first, not very optimistic one, I say that I do not believe that the post-pandemic era will destroy authoritarianism's utopias related to the Humanities and Social Sciences. In other words, even with the truce that the mainstream press has offered to progressive movements in the past weeks, a utilitarian tendency predominates in the national public opinion: investments in these areas are considered only to be a waste. The second scenario, in my opinion, is that the resistance of associations, groups or institutions may find the cracks in the formerly well-structured alliance between neo-fascism and international capital. If so, we might be able to keep running even if we stand still, to riff off Lewis Carroll's allegory of the Red Queen's Race, until we can breathe in a more democratic context. For that, however, it will take a lot of effort from all democratic forces.

It is important to tell foreign readers that Brazilian and South American universities tend to be privileged spaces for building citizenship — especially the public ones, although not only these. In some ways, as scholars, researchers and teachers, we already have a certain expertise to deal with contexts of reconstruction: many groups and associations are building strategies to give visibility to our work during the pandemic, or resisting attacks against the university, such as the National History Association (ANPUH), the Brazilian Society for the History of Sciences (SBHC), or working groups in political history or public history, among others. Though this has often come at the cost of professors' and students' lives during the dictatorship, we have been demonstrating fantastic resilience in the struggle for democracy. Ultimately, this makes us think about and rethink the role of the Humanities and Social Sciences

in the university and, consequently, of the university in social life. Some strategies already exist, but they must be reinforced, such as the Brazilian University Extension, a programme of outreach, which seeks to connect academic knowledge with — in the case of the institution where I work – the knowledges and practices of historically excluded social groups, such as indigenous peoples or landless workers. The difficulty, however, is that university extension has an implicitly inferior status within the humanities. That is, being a researcher gives you recognition – and access to fundings — much more than being an "extensionist". Another strategy to rethink our role in university and in society is to build increasingly cohesive interdisciplinary groups to solve concrete problems, such as epidemics or pandemics. Historians of health and disease, as well as social scientists — I call attention mainly to the fundamental role of Anthropologists, but not only — have developed very important knowledge about tropical diseases or concepts of health and illness among indigenous populations. However, these topics, with the exception of some important research centers like Casa de Oswaldo Cruz do not attract the interest of young researchers. That is just one of the challenges, but persistence, resilience, and commitment are some of the characteristics of groups that resisted dictatorships and that will not perish in the era of fake news.

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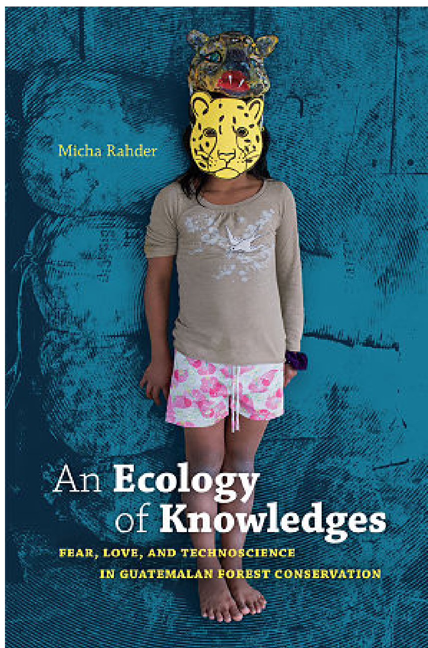
An Ecology of Knowledges

Melanie Ford
July, 2020

Micha Rahder's *An Ecology of Knowledges: Fear, Love, and Technoscience in Guatemalan Forest Conservation* is an ethnographically rich account of the dense conservation networks and politics that operate within the country's Maya Biosphere Reserve. Hailed as a global "hot spot" for ecological research, the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) has an undeniable presence in the world of scientific research, environmental NGOs, archeological and heritage sites, and conservation funding. The MBR is located in the northern region of the country, spread across twenty-one thousand square kilometers but divided by several national parks and hundreds of small towns. Rather than having a general set of conservation laws for the entire region, each national park and town reside under different conservation jurisdictions regarding ecological research, resource extraction, and human settlement.



As Rahder notes, this incongruity results in a spectrum of conservation laws based on geography, racial identity, and national politics.These spatial-legal tensions become the focus of her research.

Rather than limit her study to one conservation effort, town, or park within the reserve, Rahder broadens her scope of analysis to ask how the MBR functions as a "a coherent, bounded reserve object, beset by knowable, measurable problems" (26). Her insights are based on 18 months of fieldwork between the years 2007 and 2017, where she spent the majority of her time at CONAP (The National Council of Protected Areas) and the Guatemalan branch of the U.S. NGO the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). Through her work with these organizations, she also spent time with community members of the towns Paso Caballos, Uaxactún, and Carmelita, three differently populated towns within the reserve. These divisions in research locations across the reserve provides a comparative understanding of the operations behind both national and foreign conservation organizations, and the juxtaposition of livelihood experiences between mostly Q'eqchi Maya migrants and Peteneros. Detailing how these scientific, conservation, and cultural worlds collide, Rahder writes of a landscape that is often challenged by violence, scarcities, and disaster. Nevertheless, she demonstrates how actions out of love, fear, and paranoia effectuate conservation practices that respond to the everyday challenges of operating the MBR.

The structure of the book is not to be taken for granted. While Rahder theorizes

ethnographic objects and intimacies, she is most talented at weaving a wide spectrum of ethnographic moments to illuminate a larger, book-length analytic. Her exhaustive notes on the work of scientists, organization administrators, and local community leaders are written across three sections, nine chapters, and more than a handful of vignettes. These vignettes, or what she calls "narrative vines," are threaded through the text and "form spirals of meaning as they appear repeatedly at different points in the text, emphasizing the nonlinear relations between different sites and scales" (7). The composition of the book's chapters follows suit. Rahder writes her chapters as patches, partialities, or fragments of a "knowledge ecology," an epistemic framework she uses to "describe and incorporate a multiplicity of epistemic frameworks, like a snake eating its own tail." (3). In tandem with the knowledge ecology emerges her concept of the "nooscape." Extending from the word "noosphere"—used by natural scientists in the twentieth century to refer to a holistic, balanced, "emergent global mind"—the nooscape incorporates Marilyn Strathern's theory of partial perspectives and is characterized as "situated lashes of ecological-knowledge-worlds-in-the-making, emergent phenomena based on relative and situated scalar processes of partial connection rather than nested part-whole relationships" (4).

> *While the knowledge ecology is an analytic framework that allows Rahder to write across many different epistemes, the nooscape is the interstitial space between epistemes that connects at once a variety of knowledges from different scales, times, and places. To be more precise, the nooscape is "patterns of collective thought and action that emerge from and fold back into the material-ecological worlds of northern Guatemala" (4).*

This looping, self-devouring effect of the knowledge ecology and the nooscape is not lost on readers. At times it can even be disorienting. Knowingly so, Rahder leaves the reader with "some lingering uncertainty about how certain patches connect—or don't" (156). Reading this book is thus to accept an invitation to participate in the disorientation of conservation life within the MBR. It is also to reflect on how knowing material and materializing knowledge are mutually

constitutive.

An Ecology of Knowledges makes a significant contribution to the anthropology of conservation, the state, and Latin America. A wide range of anthropological researches observe how conservation projects often blame marginalized and disempowered people for environmental degradation and forcibly remove indigenous and poor communities from the land to be protected. In Guatemala particularly, anthropologists and geographers research how conservation projects in Petén utilize the military in order to enforce globalized conventions of conservation, such as burning down houses as a method for preventing the expansion of human settlements in forested areas (see, for example, Grandia 2010 and Ybarra 2017). Rahder does not ignore these realities. Instead, she builds off these studies to prioritize a detailed account of the relationship between conservation actors and local communities, as well as "push back against common critiques of conservation by addressing the ways that people working in conservation institutions (many of whom are themselves local) attempt to understand and reconcile multiple human needs with multiple environmental priorities" (8). This subject positioning results in an ethnography that admirably illustrates how decisions made behind institutional walls are influenced by their failures in their applied contexts. Scholars interested in Guatemala, and Latin America more broadly, will appreciate how Rahder situates the work of these environmental professionals within national democratic politics and the region's growing emphasis on green security states (Mendoza 2018). This includes learning how conservation initiatives retain authority through a mutual dependency between NGOs and the state (Chapter 2), how funding and professional positions for conservation institutions are affected by presidential elections (Chapter 3), how assumptions about ethnicity and migration are quantified into population statistics and written into conservation policy (Chapter 5), and how sources of local livelihoods are repurposed as conservation initiatives (Chapter 7).

Unable to provide a chapter by chapter summary, I finish this review by explaining the three sections of the book:"Double Visions," "Patchiness and

Fragmentation," and "Composing and Composting Knowledges." In "Double Visions," Rahder sets out to understand how scientific practice and paranoia work in tandem to produce environmental knowledge about the MBR. Particularly in chapter two, "Eye of the Storm," she follows the work of CEMEC (Center for Monitoring and Evaluation), a CONAP affiliated environmental tracking center for the reserve. Located within a politically fraught climate, Rahder analyzes how the institution generates and evaluates "useful" and "objective" data about the reserve that promotes technoscientific neutrality but nevertheless draws from a range of personal and political speculations. Chapter three, "Mapping Gobernabilidad," examines the implementation of "governability" in relation to the management of the MBR. Faced with violence, narcotics trafficking, and organized crime, conservation agents are forced to reckon with their contradictory reliance on the military in order to maintain authority and surveillance of the region. Rahder concludes that, "*gobernabilidad* indicators lead to a confusion of responses, a striving for control and clarity that only further reproduces violence and contradiction" (91).

The second section, "Patchiness and Fragmentation," focuses on the breakdown of consensus and action between different parties who care for and live in the MBR. In particular, chapter six pays attention to the politics of allowing, sensing, and preventing fire. Fires are a common occurrence throughout the MBR. Their causes are differentiated as well as their meaning. For example, Rahder notes that fire has been used as an agricultural tool that allows *campesinos* to farm, as a violent military tactic known as scorched earth campaigns that burn down unwanted settlements and their belongings, and as a political tool of resistance and protest by marginalized communities. These implications of fire "shift and blur(the boundaries) between conservation and development, war and peace, forest and farm, success and failure, individual and institution" (184). The differing relations to fire prevent any consensus on how to manage their presence in the MBR.

The last section of the book, "Composing and Composting Knowledges" focuses on the insights gained from implementation of conservation projects. For

example, chapter eight, “Wild Life,” deconstructs “the wild” and describes how “wild encounters arise in and between sensing and knowing bodies, and remain rooted always in the particular places they occur” (227). Rahder’s experiences with the wild take place through jungle excursions with veterinarians and research biologists to extract, feel, and see the “real” MBR. This results in two types of wild encounters that are contingent upon one another: 1. Encounters with wildlife and 2. Spontaneous and mind-blowing experiences, “as in a hippies declaration” (222). Placing camera traps in remote areas of the jungle and anecdotes of fieldwork experiences unveiled rare encounters with jaguars and macaws that were then turned into conservation data. Through these “wondrous” experiences, Rahder exposes how wild encounters are actually instigated and well-crafted, rather than spontaneous and unexpected, moments. Traps, experiments, and anecdotes become objects that politicize what is considered “wild,” “natural,” and “conservationist.”

After nine chapters and ten vignettes, the book concludes with a short afterword. What to do with all this information? Instead of situating her work within the larger discourse of environmental anthropology, Rahder ends the book with a personal note: “my own knowledges about the MBR are inseparable from the dynamics I describe throughout this book. This also means that my own attempts to transform something of this knowledge into usefulness is a patchwork of successes and failures, shifts and gaps” (266). Ending with this methodological reflection ensures that the nooscape does not remain archived on the reader’s bookshelf. Instead, this note pushes the reader to apply these same questions upon themselves as they continue to learn, build, and share knowledge across a multivalent yet fragmented world.

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Featured Image by pixabay.com

Towards anthropological self-de-confinement

Ruy Llera Blanes
July, 2020

While we now seem to be approaching post-confinement, and after the closure of campuses and improvised conversion to online teaching, there has been much discussion regarding the long-term effects of the COVID19 pandemic on the university system, in particular regarding teaching and research, and more generally in the labour infrastructure. Will the multiplication and flexibilization of teaching and research methods actually diversify and improve our research? Or will this online transition become a pretext for the 'cheapening' and subsequent precarization of labour, following the same neoliberal austerity logics of the financial crisis of the late 2000s? Will this lead to the final transformation of teachers, administrative personnel and researchers into a precariat? For anthropology, adding insult to injury, we face additional methodological impediments imposed by bans and restrictions on travel and circulation, with a serious impact on our research designs and planning. More than in other

moments of crisis and uncertainty we have experienced in the past, this seems to be a highly challenging moment for anthropology. How, then, will we process the de-confinement as a discipline? I argue that this extraordinary moment poses a fundamental struggle – individual and institutional survival in the current scientific landscape – and at the same time a unique possibility for a disciplinary refashioning – from a marginal yet critical intellectual elite to a civic, engaged, grassroots discipline. As I develop below, there is a potential for an anthropological self-de-confinement through a reframing of our 'critique' and our 'publics'.

> *Will this online transition become a pretext for the 'cheapening' and subsequent precarization of labour, and lead to the final transformation of teachers, administrative personnel and researchers into a precariat?*

Regarding our struggle: while we might agree that it is still too early to discern an overarching structurating movement regarding the future of our discipline in the age of post-confinement, it is worth looking at some indicators in the academic landscape. In what follows I discuss examples from the university and research environments in Portugal and Spain, which I have navigated in recent years as researcher. I start with the research funding environment and the place of anthropology in this landscape, and then reflect on the current and possible social roles of anthropology as an academic discipline in the current situation of confinement and post-confinement.

One interesting institutional development has been the speedy response by national funding bodies in terms of creating a fast-track funding scheme for COVID19-related research. This was the case of the National Science and Technology Research Foundation (FCT) in Portugal, which launched several micro-calls for research related to AI, gender, and biomedics. By "micro-calls" I refer to funding programmes of 2 million Euros in total for the funding of 55 research projects, as is the case of the RESEARCH 4 COVID-19 initiative. In Spain, the Ministry of Research and Innovation (MICINN) has also sponsored

urgent COVID-19 research, albeit focusing exclusively in microbiological and biomedical research.

Both cases reveal an interesting institutional reframing, marked by the urgent establishment of research initiatives in response to unexpected societal developments, overlooking traditional and most likely unnecessary bureaucratic procedures along the way. But in the process, they continue to ignore the labour situation of the majority of early and mid-career researchers in both countries, who are the driving force behind this research but continue to survive on fixed, short-term scholarships. For instance, in Portugal, while funding for COVID-19 projects is emerging, the National Union for Higher Education (SNESUP) submitted a request to the Portuguese Parliament for a 90-day extension of 1-year contracts for researchers and lecturers. This is telling of how politicized and bureaucratized scientific research is today, determined by a near-sighted, nationally and ideologically determined scientific policy – in Portugal and elsewhere – and should be understood within the wider framework of isolationism and divisionism that has marked the international community's response to the pandemic.

> *These urgent responses perpetuate a classic bias: the emphasis on 'hard sciences' in the search for answers and tools for societal problems, and a subsequent sub-bias towards quantitative results.*

Furthermore, as anyone familiar with these environments can easily anticipate, these urgent responses perpetuate a classic bias: the emphasis on 'hard sciences' in the search for answers and tools for societal problems, and a subsequent sub-bias towards quantitative results. As a token, take this poster of an event organized on 10 June by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) to discuss "The Social Impact of the Pandemic", which includes demographers, economists, journalists, climatologists and economic sociologists. Apparently, despite the existence of dozens of anthropologists working in CSIC's laboratories and research centers – from the Centre for Human and Social Sciences in Madrid to

the Institute of Heritage Sciences in Santiago de Compostela –, the main research institution in Spain seems uninterested in what social anthropologists have to say on the subject of social consequences of pandemics and health issues.

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You might ask: if there were any anthropologists in the CSIC event, would it have made an actual difference? In this respect, instead on focusing on what the public administration and institutions can or should do for anthropology, I would rather focus on what anthropology can do for society in this particularly extraordinary context, and more broadly on the role of our research *in* and *for* society – especially in a time in which scientific and empirically based knowledge is increasingly becoming an obstacle to populist governance. For instance: after decades of anthropological deconstruction of race as an ideology, racism and xenophobia are becoming increasingly normalized in political rhetoric. To say the least, this implies a serious case of irrelevance of the anthropological discourse, decades after Lévi-Strauss's pivotal text for UNESCO. Recently, the Spanish Anthropological Association (ASAEE) denounced a text published by the famous biologist Javier Sampedro in the mainstream newspaper *El País* where he argued, in the framework of COVID-19's victim toll, against the anthropological deconstruction and for the biology of race. In their response the ASAEE explained that "races don't exist, but racism does".

> *The continued anthropological irrelevance regarding its own core issues is as much a product of scientific hegemonic ideologies as it is of our own 'confinement' in circular, self-referential critical discussions about anthropology.*

My point here is that, while the ASAEE's denunciation was necessary and to the point, the continued anthropological irrelevance regarding its own core issues is as much a product of scientific hegemonic ideologies as it is of our own

'confinement' in circular, self-referential critical discussions about anthropology, placing our institutional statements as reactions against external attacks instead of proactive interventions and engagements. The invitation is thus for anthropology to de-confine by recuperating its longstanding activist trajectory – ever since Franz Boas and Margaret Mead – into a militant stance that brings us closer to a social, grassroots 'fifth estate' that counteracts the exercise of inequality that stems from either the state or private enterprise.

Here, I would like to highlight cases of disciplinary mobilization against implicit or explicit violence stemming specifically from the situation of pandemic, and more generally from processes of social and political injustice and emerging necropolitical rule in 2020. One example for this comes from Portugal. The Portuguese Anthropological Association (APA) has recently denounced, through the work of anthropologist Cristina Santinho, the particularly difficult situation experienced by refugees and asylum seekers in Portugal during the confinement, considering their individual situation of isolation in hostels and precarious legal status and their condition as targets for increasing xenophobia and racism. The work has been of combating the invisibility of refugees and migrants and their situation in the current context, and is performing a critical review of the work of official Portuguese institutions such as the Portuguese Council for Refugees (CPR) in their response to the situation. This has allowed for a public exposition of a situation beyond the official hegemonic narrative of Portugal's hospitality in such cases.

> *The invitation is for anthropology to de-confine by recuperating its longstanding activist trajectory.*

Another example comes from Brazil, where both individual anthropologists (e.g. Carlos Fausto) and the Brazilian Anthropological Association (ABA) have exposed the effects of the pandemic on indigenous communities in Brazil, denouncing the role of local, federal and national government in the unfolding of a structural health vulnerability among indigenous communities in Amazonia. In their

statement, the ABA used anthropological and medical research to explain specifically how ongoing industrial and artisanal (*garimpo*) mining in the states of Roraima and Amazonas have produced an environmental disaster that has had long-term consequences in the health and livelihoods of local Yanomami and Ye'Kwana communities, making them particularly vulnerable to the virus.

While this might seem another case of anthropological "band aid", savage slot, exonostalgia or third-world charity (in the worse sense of the term), in fact it highlights Brazilian anthropology's activism within a highly polarized cultural politics battle towards the recognition and defence of indigenous and Afro communities in the country. In a moment in which COVID-19 intersects with Black Lives Matter, this is no longer a case of moral self-complacency for bourgeois anthropologists. And in fact, while one could argue about the practical relevance of institutional press releases, in this case ABA's public positioning has had the merit of standing in opposition to the Brazilian government's brutal neoliberal policies regarding indigenous and disenfranchised communities. As a result, the Brazilian minister of education Abraham Weintraub has openly expressed his hate against sociology, anthropology and philosophy and his choice of using public funds for other disciplines.

> *The moment of crisis might also be one of opportunity in terms of what we anthropologists do with anthropology. Perhaps it is time to self-deconfine from our Marriott or Sheraton gatherings, or from our university campuses, and do something with our knowledge and ethnographic experience. This implies refashioning 'critique' from an intellectual exercise of conceptual deconstruction towards a civic counterpoint, using the grounded, shared knowledge we produce with our interlocutors in our ethnographies to combat any form of discrimination.*

Both cases from Portugal and Brazil show an anthropological work that has used ethnographic insight and formulated 'critique' not for its own heuristic purposes but as a method to counteract violent and oppressive consequences of the

pandemic and state social, economic and health policies by challenging their narratives.

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In sum, while anthropology and anthropologists are facing dramatic, trying times in terms of struggling for dignified labour and research conditions, the discipline's subaltern position within political and media science policies continues to render anthropology as a 'useless' knowledge, especially in times of COVID-19 crisis. In response, we can either continue to complain about the situation in the department corridors (or now Zoom chats), or instead mobilize towards making an actual difference with our knowledge and networks. While this dilemma is not necessarily an either/or situation, the moment of crisis might also be one of opportunity in terms of what we anthropologists do with anthropology. Perhaps it is time to self-deconfine from our Marriott or Sheraton gatherings, or from our university campuses, and *do something* with our knowledge and ethnographic experience – both in the settings where we conduct our research and in the academic environments in which we are inserted. In my view, this implies refashioning 'critique' from an intellectual exercise of conceptual deconstruction towards a civic counterpoint, using the grounded, shared knowledge we produce with our interlocutors in our ethnographies to combat any form of (health, political, economic) discrimination.

Featured Image: Margaret Mead Stamp by John Curran, Flickr, (CC BY 2.0)

Image: CSIC event poster- found on the CSIC website

The grassroots movement Union of Refugees in Portugal (UREP) has set up a fundraiser to help their work in support of refugees in problematic situations

Here is a link to know more and support the indigenous struggle against

COVID-19 in Brazil, and another link for an Avaaz petition for protection of indigenous communities promoted by Sebastião and Lélia Salgado

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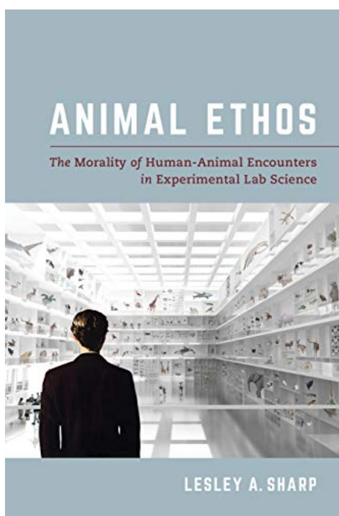
Animal Ethos

Christina Douglas
July, 2020

Ethics, or moral philosophy, work with general principles of right and wrong, of just and unjust, of appropriate and inappropriate, which usually lean towards obscuring what may crop up in between. Lesley Sharp's new book, *Animal Ethos:*

The Morality of Human-Animal Encounters in Experimental Lab Science, explores how laboratory inter-species morality dwells in this space of in-between. This may seem like an extremely difficult, if not even impossible endeavour. However, Lesley Sharp meticulously documents how working and living with animals in experimental laboratories often entails interspecies intimacies leading to everyday morality. The author does not aim to offer animal welfare advice, nor to set up ethical protocols for working with animals living in research facilities.



Lesley Sharp looks at how experimental labs involving animals may become 'moral laboratories' (Mattingly 2014) through everyday care, how living and working with and alongside non-human animals generate affective practices and moral tensions.

Animal Ethos is informed primarily by seven years of extended fieldwork in university research facilities across the U.S. and the UK. However, Sharp's research related to morality spans three decades, covering cadaveric human organ transplant, xeno-transplantation (non-human organ transplant) and artificial human organ replacement. In this regard, Sharp proves to master the anthropological craft of thick description and intricate theoretical discussions of a topic that commonly eludes the scientific discourse.

The first part of the book, *Intimacy*, speaks about morality in terms of the sentimental structure of laboratory life. Sharp shows how the animal model (i.e., the use of animals to model human diseases, cures and treatments) and the moral stand that may engage are based on a contradiction. The animal has to be human alike *enough* to stand in as their substitute, but unlike *enough* not to resemble too

much humans so it may be deemed unethical or too morally disturbing. In this respect, the morality of lab worlds bridges across the human-animal divide in a likeness/unlikeness moral tension that questions the human exceptionalism that dominates in Western philosophical tradition. Looking at experiments involving monkeys and non-human primates (NHPs) watching TV, Sharp shows how lab work circles back as actions of enriching lab animal life. This is reminiscent of studies specifically designed to map animal cognition (in particular for testing theory of the mind hypothesis) and sentience, only to then be incorporated in arguments and strategies of animal welfare, although not always for animals living in a lab. This practice speaks about moral endeavours that add different perspectives on morality, transforming the lab animals into something more than objectified resources of research data: something to think and feel *with*.

The second part of the book, *Sacrifice: An Interlude*, delves into the moral and often emotional labour emergent in working with animals whose lives have to be terminated. Although the experimental use of animals capitalizes on a moral calling on saving humans' lives, the rhetoric of heroism and salvation are usually absent. However, the stigma associated with animal lab research is not symmetrically manifested inside the lab world, where animals' lives and deaths become celebrated through individual and collective forms of memorialisation. Thus, killing becomes 'sacrificing', 'culling', 'sacking', or, as in the case of animal carers and vets (reflecting an outside vocabulary), 'euthanising'. Killing, Sharp shows, is strictly regulated through research protocols: on the one hand, as a way of collecting data through necropsy, on the other as a humane way of avoiding a (miserable) lab life of being 'recycled' in new experiments. This is also reflected in the third part of the book, chapter 5, *The Animal Commons*, where the author shows that the logic of sharing lab animals (or recycling them into further experiments) does not always correspond to an assumed implicit moral action of avoiding death.

The third part, *Exceptionalism*, addresses the tension between practices of saving animals when the experiments conclude, research biocapital resulted from the data extracted from living and dead animals, and potential scarcity leading to

sharing practices, both of biobanks and living animals. As Sharp shows, the moral strain that arises from these conflicting values and practices pertains mostly to inherent affective hierarchies of species (for instance, dogs – and in particular Beagles – vs. mice or zebrafish). This is further discussed in the conclusions, where the author reflects back on her own research choice to focus on mammalians. The author's few concluding observations on opening a dialogue between different parties involved in the lives and deaths of lab animals (i.e., scientists, technicians), do not have necessary an advisory note. Rather, the author uses her own remarks to communicate her observations about what may go unseen: the benefits of opening dialogue between activists and lab personnel; between different hierarchies established in the lab; assuming an animal's point of view; the importance of language related to death and sacrifice; the push back of unnecessary suffering in experiments.

Animal Ethos is imbued with moral insights for someone unaccustomed with laboratory life, although the author doesn't aim to justify or excuse laboratory practices involving animals. Thus, the book reveals a complex world in which animals' lives and deaths are regulated not only by species, but also by professional hierarchies, in which animals whose bodies are strictly controlled, become intimately known through everyday care and work.

> *Without justifying in any way, the pain and suffering induced on lab animals, the author pictures a world more complex than that illustrated by animal rights activists: an intimate and often affectionate, but nevertheless troublesome morality of inter-species relationality in experimental lab environment.*

Animal Ethos proves that working alongside animals in experimental laboratories does not reproduce a common public perception of human animal divide, although relations of interspecies hierarchy and power are intrinsic to lab work. Indeed, the morale (so to speak) of the book could be summarized in the following way: while philosophers are still debating whether moral agency is a distinctive trait of humanity acquired and manifested within the boundaries of our own species,

everyday inter-species encounters reveal something deeper about our relationality with other species; that animals are not only good to think (about), but also to think *with* or *alongside*, becoming agents or partners for human moral thought and action. Thus, I believe the book would be a fantastic read not only for academics, specialists and activists interested in human-animal relations, but also to anyone willing to understand what it means, indeed, to be human in a more-than-human world.

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This review is in response to the call for review on Climate Change and the Environment.

Featured Image by Tibor Janosi Mozes, pixabay.com

Cultures of Hygiene: Interview with Claudia Liebelt

Claudia Liebelt
July, 2020

This interview with Claudia Liebelt was conducted by Mihir Sharma and was completed and edited between 25 and 29 May, 2020 over e-mail in Berlin.

What is your current research during the Corona pandemic about? What motivated your interest in these questions?

In mid-March, when the shutdowns and travel restrictions in response to the spread of Covid-19 were first issued, I was busy preparing for a longer stint of ethnographic fieldwork in Istanbul, Turkey. Following up on my earlier research on aesthetic body modification and the making of middle-class femininities in Turkey, I was planning to focus on the immense, though neglected role of smell and perfuming in everyday beauty practices. The provisional title of the project

was "Olfactories of Beauty". The idea for my current research began to materialise as I listened to the news from Turkey about panic buyings of Eau de Cologne, which many now started to use as hand sanitizers. At the same time, in preparation of my fieldwork, I was reading anthropological and historical studies on the therapeutic, even medical role of smell. Subsequently, the olfactories of beauty transformed into the olfactories of hygiene. Like Annemarie Mol, who was able to study hygiene and pollution thanks to an earlier and quite open grant that she had, I too was able to adjust my research to the current situation thanks to a Heisenberg Fellowship awarded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

The aim of "Olfactories of Hygiene" has evolved to seek an analysis of the social, cultural and affective configurations of sanitization and bodily hygiene in relation to smell and olfactory practices. The study of these practices, in particular the use of hand rubs and sanitizers, I hope, may significantly broaden our perspective on and understanding of the current Covid-19 pandemic and crisis, in particular its social and cultural underpinnings.

You say in your project description: "In what ways are the notions of hygiene and sanitations related to sensorial affects, or: does sanitized modernity smell, or is it rather odourless?" Do you have any results yet? To non-social science audiences interested in your work: why does it matter how modernity smells? Could you walk us through this?

Due to the fact that sniffing and smelling have long been considered animalistic and are devalued within the classical hierarchy of the senses, the politics of smell are deeply entangled with the politics and histories of race, class, and gender. Moreover, they are tied to our often tacit assumption of modernity. The relationship between modernism, hygiene and smell is extremely interesting, but has only rarely been studied. During the late 18th and the entire 19th century, social and medical reformers, who from the 1830s formed the so-called hygiene

movement, but also scientists, urban planners and artists were obsessed with smell. In *“The Foul and the Fragrant”* Alain Corbin (1986) describes how in 1790, shortly after the storming of the Bastille, scientists in Paris were sent out by the Société Royale de Médecins to explore the odors of the riverbanks, to ‘sniff them out,’ as Corbin writes, in an attempt to monitor the health and sanitary situation. While germ theory and Pasteurism in the late 19th century forever changed our assumptions and practices of hygiene, not least in relation to smell, European modernists until well into the 20th century were driven by the desire to create odourless cities with airy boulevards, panoramic vistas and smooth and shiny surfaces. In his analysis of the “smelly immigrant” trope, Martin Manalansan calls odorlessness the basic ‘utopic myth’ of the modern city. Perhaps one could say that modernism –itself an aesthetic practice and affective desire– was *born* out of the olfactory anxieties and vigilance that resulted from the stink of larger European cities in the 18th century, above all of Paris.

> *Due to the fact that sniffing and smelling have long been considered animalistic and are devalued within the classical hierarchy of the senses, the politics of smell are deeply entangled with the politics and histories of race, class, and gender.*

Colonial “modernisers” then set out to not only rule, but also, to polish and deodorise other parts of the world, a practice that gained momentum in times of epidemics. From historian Robert Peckham’s study on the draconian colonial “cleansing” policies in Hong Kong during the Third Plague Pandemic in the 1890s, one gets a sense of how strongly smell figured in the colonial attempt to control the pandemic. Reports regularly mention nauseating “Chinese” odors and poorer districts in particular were described as saturated with a “noisome and noxious” atmosphere. In order to fight these malodors, seen as leading to and emanating from sick bodies, infantry troops were sent in large numbers to disinfect or simply to burn people’s belongings. When I see images of spray machines disinfecting poorer residential areas and streets in Hong Kong and other Asian cities these days, I have to think of this history of violence, which

obviously continues to haunt these places…

If we look at Turkey and Germany today –the two places that my research most closely relates to– we can see that the idea of an odorless modernity continues to affect and guide us. For example, until recently, Eau de Cologne, *Kölnisch Wasser* in German, was considered a thing of the past among younger urbanites, something one's grandmother might continue to use. As mentioned above, due to the shortage of non-perfumed, 'medical' hand rub, this has recently been changing in Turkey. In addition, what I find interesting is that while 'medical' hand rubs are not commonly associated with any smell, they do in fact smell, often acrid, alcoholic or chlorine…

"Due to the global outbreak of COVID-19 practices of bodily hygiene, cleanliness and sanitation have achieved new meanings in their everyday uses." What are these new meanings and uses, and what are their consequences? Who has to bear them?

In the current pandemic all of us are called upon to radically change our hygienic and bodily behaviour to stop the spread of the coronavirus, that is, to practice social distancing (or rather, as many have poignantly emphasized, *physical* distancing), refrain from touching our eyes, nose and mouth, wear facials masks and sometimes, gloves, and wash or clean our hands for at least 30 seconds with soap or hand rub. Now, you might say that even before, most people used to wash their hands after using the toilet. But according to what I gather from an online survey and interviews, the time and efforts devoted to cleaning one's hands and also one's house, for example, have significantly increased in response to these calls and in fear of the virus.

What I think is even more significant is the epidemiological and political significance that these seemingly banal everyday practices have suddenly been afforded. Political authorities and global organizations like the World Health Organisation (WHO) tell us that by staying at home and following these safety

precautions, we can change the course of history. Just think of how absurd the fact that the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, shares a video of herself washing her hands for more than 30 seconds while humming the anthem of the European Union, or the fact that the German chancellor talks about the best way to disinfect one's facial mask (by ironing), would have appeared to us before March 2020.

> *Political authorities and global organizations like the World Health Organisation (WHO) tell us that by staying at home and following these safety precautions, we can change the course of history.*

While some of these bodily practices, such as the use of hand rub or sanitizers or of facial masks in everyday life are newly adopted, others, such as shaking hands, are discontinued. All of these bodily practices have always been changing and are tied to ongoing, yet particular histories of social encounters (who extends one's hand to whom, or who is obliged to kiss whose hand), but what strikes me as an anthropologist studying such practices is to see how sudden and radical these changes took shape. Greeting rituals like the handshake, I've been teaching in my Anthropology of the Body class for many years, are highly formalised and habituated, ingrained in our bodily hexis, so to speak. Even if shaking hands, at least in Germany, was no longer the standard technique of greeting –even before the spread of Covid-19– it was nevertheless indispensable for negotiating particular social interactions –when being introduced to someone new, or upon confirming a business deal, for example. It is (or should I say 'was'?) embedded in particular moral and symbolic cosmologies (one extends and shakes one's *right* hand, as Robert Hertz pointed out in his essay on the pre-eminence of the right hand), and upon refusal, is –or used to be– rather effective in its humiliating effects (just think of the Prime Minister of Thuringia, Bodo Ramelow, refusing to shake hands with Björn Höcke, the leader of a far-right extremist organisation within the right-wing populist party *Alternative for Germany*, AfD, upon his installation into office in early March).

Don't get me wrong, I'm not waxing sentimental about the end of the handshake here. Infectious diseases doctors have long warned that the handshake poses a serious health hazard and is one of the great causes for the spread of viruses. However, to repeat, when we look at the handshake, the sudden and radical changes in meaning of this bodily technique during the current pandemic comes into sight. Also, how quickly scientific knowledge on germs and viruses, infections and epidemics became common knowledge, in a popular process of becoming literate, so to speak! Thus, when right-wing populists like US President Donald Trump, Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro or the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson continued to publicly shake hands or refused to wear masks well after many of their citizens had started to take the safety precautions recommended by the WHO, this was readily understood as a political act. With fatal consequences, as we can now see…

Which research methods have you been using for your work? What are some challenges you have encountered? How did you overcome them?

Due to ongoing travel restrictions, classical fieldwork, in my case to Istanbul, is currently out of the question. Instead, I opted for a combination of participant observation in Berlin and a couple of virtual and online tools, inspired by some of the entries in the crowdsourced document on "Doing fieldwork in a pandemic" linked to the American Anthropological Association's website on COVID-19 Resources. For example, I set up a bilingual online survey (not least, to get in touch with people ready to conduct a subsequent video interview), asked a number of acquaintances, friends and relatives in both Turkey and Germany to keep hygiene- and smell-related diaries, and attempt to do some kind of participant observation in social media such as facebook, youtube, and twitter. Not least, I've embarked on a journey of auto-ethnography, talking to family members about different smell-related encounters and memories. So far, this has been really interesting and enriching. Even though I spent most of my adult life in Germany, I've never conducted fieldwork here!

Moreover, with partial lockdowns and restrictions of movement in place in Turkey and elsewhere, I noted that many people now document even the most trivial details of their intimate everyday lives with their smartphones, uploading the resulting videos to youtube or facebook. For example, I've tracked the hashtag #kolonya, Turkish for Eau de Cologne, to see how people came to make use of *kolonya*, traditionally used in an everyday gesture of welcome and as a sign of hospitality during the holiday of Eid al-Fitr, Ramazan Bayramı in Turkish. As you can see from a resulting blog post, I've learnt a lot from these postings and videos. This kind of virtual ethnography, at least in my case, rests on the fact that I've been to Turkey before and that I'm in constant touch with friends and relatives there. It would be much more difficult if I had been planning to embark on a first-time research, as part of a PhD, for example. Indeed, I feel with the many PhD students, whose research plans and indeed, whose academic careers, are currently on hold and in the long run much more severely affected than mine. The only way to mitigate the long-term effects of this is to make a collective effort, act in solidarity with young researchers, who are even more precarious these days, and perhaps even rethink the value and idea of fieldwork itself. I think this is indeed a good time to rethink the classical form of fieldwork 'elsewhere,' in favour of more collaborative and decolonial encounters, taking into account the relationality of different 'heres' and 'theres'. As Ruth J. Prince recently put it in a moving essay about the experience of doing and discontinuing fieldwork in Kenya during the outbreak of the epidemic and taking one of the last return flights 'home,' 'our detached and benevolent claim to ethnographic participant observation, always from a position of privilege and relative security, is put into question at precisely the moment when true participation finally becomes inevitable.'

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To sum up, I'm not sure whether I'm managing to overcome the challenges that

the spread of Covid-19 and the resulting regulations have posed for my research and also for my everyday life more generally. Like most things these days, this is an open-ended experiment and work in progress. And while for me, the past few months have indeed been a time of creativity and learning, I recognise that my own situation is rather privileged. (Apart from struggling with a lack of childcare and homeschooling my daughter, which has been truly dreadful at times!)

Given your specific focus on the intersections of the body, political economy, and gender, what are some questions which have surfaced through your work (past and present) which might inform our praxis during this pandemic?

In an earlier research, I focused on the devaluation and feminization of care workers, which I think have become both very visible, but are also exacerbated in the current situation. Thus, I wrote my PhD on migrant care workers from the Philippines, who as the largest group of migrant nannies, caregivers and nurses around the globe are on the frontlines of virus exposure and care-taking. Moreover, the devaluation and feminization of care work holds true for both paid service work as well as for an ongoing gendered division of labour within private households and families. Take for example the warning of academic publishers that the gender gap in academia is carried to an extreme in the current situation, with many male researchers obviously experiencing a creative boost, whereas female researchers are hindered in their work and overburdened with childcare responsibilities, suffering from the effects of closed kindergartens and schools.

Questions of touch and intimacy that I've been looking at in both my research on care work and, more recently, beauty service work, are of course very pertinent in the current situation, becoming increasingly digital on the one hand and rendered illegitimate and suspicious on the other. Ursula Probst and Max Schnepf have recently produced a thought-provoking reflection on the current digitalization and transformation of intimacy, *Thinking Sex in Times of Corona*, forthcoming in Somatosphere. What I find important to remember is that the digitalization of intimacy does not necessarily imply disembodiment. However, it certainly goes

along with a sensory reduction –just think of smell!– along with a strengthening of the visual. This dominance of the visual in social media such as instagram or dating platforms, especially in regard to body images, poses great risks. Thus, we certainly need more studies on how highly mediated, cosmetically altered body images affect (younger) people's subjectivities and bodily practices, especially when they are confronted with a plethora of these images at home alone.

> *Given the imminent climate catastrophe and the digitalisation of our everyday lives, we live through a truly posthumanist moment.*

On a more conceptual level, I find that the current pandemic really shows the relevance of the work done on multispecies coexistence, relational anthropology and posthuman subjectivities. In particular, it shows the interrelatedness and relationality of our bodies, or rather, of embodied matter. Given the imminent climate catastrophe and the digitalisation of our everyday lives, we live through a truly posthumanist moment. I'm a long-standing fan of feminist science and technology scholars and new materialists such as Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing and Rosie Braidotti and hope to be able to make more use of their conceptual outlines in my future work.

Given that bodies are the sites of biopolitics – what are some reflections on the biopolitics of pandemics given your research and own experience living in Berlin, Germany through this pandemic?

The notion of biopolitics helped Michel Foucault to describe how, during the 19th century, populations were increasingly measured and ordered into distinct categories to become better manageable, with important effects on the subjects' sense of the self. It proves extremely helpful to understand how ideas of the standard, the average and the normal continue to affect and indeed shape our material selves, in terms of both bodily substance and subjectivity. However, a concept that I find even more helpful for making sense of the current situation is

‘microbiopolitics,’ coined by Heather Paxson in her anthropological research on raw-milk cheese in the US to describe how the ‘dissent over how to live with microorganisms reflects disagreement about how humans ought to live with one another’ (2008: 16). The notion builds on the important work of Bruno Latour, especially his *Pasteurization of France* (1988) where he describes how the Pasteurians, in relation with the hygienic movement transformed microbiology into what he calls a complete science and in consequence made sanitization indispensable. When Latour describes Pasteur as a researcher ‘who was able to interest a large educated public in the well-nigh daily drama of his experiments’ (1988: 86), I cannot help but think of the virologist Christian Drosten, whose podcast is regularly quoted in my conversations with friends and neighbours, for example, when we discuss whether we should allow our children to play together in the backyard.

Not least, the notion of post-Pasteurian microbiopolitics, which the Pasteurians, according to Paxson, regard as irrational risk behaviour but the post-Pasteurian raw-milk cheese producers themselves understand as a resistant move beyond antiseptic attitudes, helps me to think through the political debates around the Covid-19 regulations in Germany these days. While I can sympathise with Paxson’s cheese producers, being myself a great fan of raw milk cheese, I am alarmed by the emergence of so-called “hygiene demos” in Berlin and other cities in Germany, whose anti-vaxxing supporters could certainly be described as post-Pasteurians. While the protesters refer to ‘hygiene’ to protest the government’s hygiene restrictions, their use of the term in combination with their iconography brings to mind European fascism’s and German Nazism’s use of the term. Thus, when I hear these people talk about a second holocaust (because the government allegedly threatens to enforce mass vaccinations against Covid-19), wearing T-shirts and masks with yellow patches like Jews were forced to wear them during the Nazi regime, also publishing a poster of Christian Drosten next to the infamous Nazi physician Joseph Mengele, for me, as the granddaughter of a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, this is deeply disconcerting.

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> *other cities in Germany, whose anti-vaxxing supporters could certainly be described as post-Pasteurians.*

Apart from the fact that I feel sorry for Drosten and the many other scientists and politicians who see themselves confronted with threats and hate campaigns these days, I'm bewildered by the abuse of Jewish suffering and the holocaust that this rhetoric and iconography entails. The rise in anti-Semitism, conspiracy theories and more generally a politics of resentment have already become palpable.

When in early April I posed the question –in my website description of *Olfactories of Hygiene*– whether 'post-Pasteurianism' would survive the COVID-19 pandemics, the 'post-Pasteurian' mass demonstrations in the name of (anti-)hygiene were not yet existent. It's weird, and I have to say deeply disconcerting, to see one's research questions being answered so promptly and taken into such unanticipated directions by social reality.

What would you urge young anthropologists to do in terms of research (bachelor's thesis, short-term ethnography etc.) in these times?

For me personally, writing a Corona diary, engaging in virtual ethnography as well as in auto-ethnography have been really helpful and productive in the past few weeks and months. There lies an immense potentiality in virtual ethnography, which we (or should I say I?) are only just beginning to explore. For example, I'm currently supervising a very promising Bachelor student, who conducts research on a sex robot App, creating and then interviewing her own avatar to think about questions of gender, posthumanist subjectivity and co-existence.

While some might find it helpful to read into the history of epidemics, microbiopolitics or hygiene to make sense of the current moment, others may feel an urge to stay away from these themes, which are now so much part of our everyday lives. Most of all, I think that the curiosity, attentiveness and ability to listen to other people demanded of any good fieldworker are really important

these days. Now is the perfect time to train these skills!

What are some blogs, podcasts, or portals you recommend for people interested in following your work and work on related topics?

The sheer amount of anthropological blogs, podcasts and portals that are being published on Covid-19 alone these days is simply breathtaking. The online journal and collaborative website *Somatosphere* has been compiling a series called Medical Anthropology Weekly on Covid-19, with a large collection of texts, audio and video materials within, but also beyond Medical Anthropology. I'm doing my best to scan through this weekly compilation and read or watch whatever catches my interest. Within German speaking social and cultural anthropology, I follow the boasblogs as well as the blog of the German Anthropology Association's, the DGSKA's, working group Medical Anthropology/Medizinethnologie. The newly founded DGSKA working group that I'm part of, "Gender & Sexualities | Queer Anthropology," does not have its own blog yet, but a mailing list as well as a facebook group. And of course, I would like to invite everyone interested in finding out more about my own research project to visit my new research blog on the Cultures of Hygiene.

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You have to strike, assholes!!!

Alessandro Chidichimo
July, 2020

You ask, “What concrete actions can we take?” You have to strike, assholes! We need to take the example of Aboubakar Soumaoro in Italy, who organized the 21 May strike of agricultural workers to demand more rights. The labourers have no food, no water, no house, most of them have made a long and dangerous journey to reach Europe, the workers are mainly migrants, but among them there are also Italians, and now they have decided to strike.

How do the farm workers, those who prepare your fruit baskets for your conferences, which you eat while you hypothesise about their lives, manage to organize a strike when they have no rights, no contracts, no residence permits? Those with no homes, whose scant wages would at best allow them to die slowly of hunger, can drum up the energy and the wherewithal to organise, and you can’t do anything?

> *Start to know what is really important for the system, and start to boycott it from inside and outside.*

You mustn't be afraid of losing your bourgeois privileges. If you're together, you're not afraid. If you are alone, then yes, you must be afraid, because you will more easily fall prey to the hawks of human resources, to those who want to cut your teaching contracts, those who tell you that you are worthless, to those who blame it on the financial crisis while they build a fucking Aula Magna.

Okay, that is easy for me to say because I have nothing to lose, I understand that. I live alone, I have no children to support, I don't have a contract at university except for some meagre teaching hours, I have an office given to me by a friend in his institute because he believes in my research, I live partially with state aid and teaching Italian in private schools that pay me little and according to the hours worked.

I don't have anything, I won't lose anything: I mean nothing that I can be tied to. I don't have any books with me because, after the 17th time I had to move, I realised it was no longer feasible to own books.

But what I haven't lost yet is myself. It's my 10 years of study, it's all the pages I've read and all the pages I've published, it's the texts I still have to finish, it's what I want to do. What I haven't yet lost is this life. You have your life too, and right now, it's starting to look as much on the edge as mine.

> *Go beyond the university. Start to teach in bars, in restaurants, in the park. Democratise knowledge.*

What are you waiting for to get together with the precarious workers, the overworked researchers, the working poor in your department, what are you waiting for? Like the foreign workers and the Italian workers who united on May 21st, we should all join and strike *en masse*, together to ask for our rights.

How could it be done? Take Sun Tzu and *The Art of War*. Start knowing who you are and knowing your enemy. Because being invincible is something inside yourself; being vulnerable is something inside your enemy.

Make some new allies at your place of work and elsewhere. Who are your students? Tell them that you are forced to teach bullshit, that your salary is ridiculous, that your department is at risk.

Launch a campaign to read Marx or other texts to help people understand the conditions in which they are existing. Tell your department that you will teach the fucking program, and introduce some lectures on Marx. Slow down the rhythm. Reduce the program in all your classes. Start giving importance to unhurried, deliberate reading in your class. Slow down the rhythm of meetings. Use administrative paraphernalia against the system. Dress entirely in red or violet for the whole semester.

> *During the pandemic you have continued to work from home to guarantee your students' right to an education, but who guarantees your rights? Who protects you?*

Go public. Go to the television stations, go on the internet, tell everyone that the university wants to reduce your rights, but also the rights of the students, and ultimately of everyone, because the universities are there for the freedom of the people, both present and future. Tell parents that you cannot do a good job with their children, because your unsettled working and living conditions cause you anger and pain. Fight for your rights every day until the war is won.

Why do you not have a contract like other workers? Stop arguing and theorizing, we already know everything, we have read everything, we have written everything, we have the intellectual wherewithal to deal with this situation. We have to stand together. We have to put a stop to this system, assholes. I believe in an unlimited general strike, starting for all, immediately. The time has come to act.