Anthroadvice with Allegra

Lena Pham
May, 2017

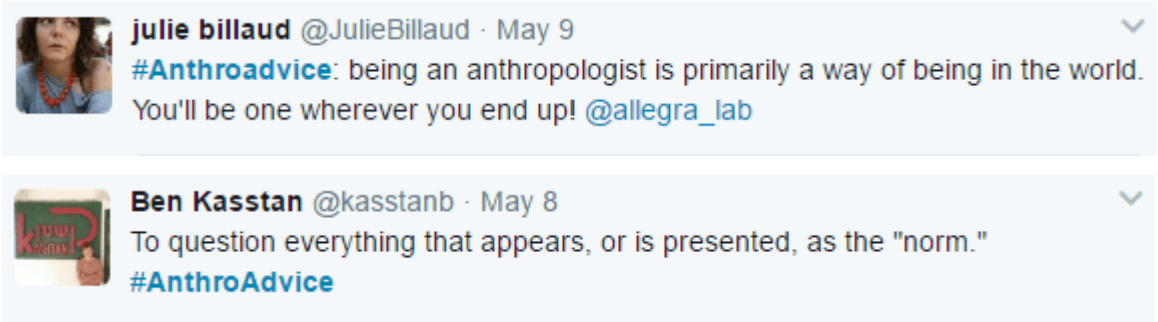
When curating this thematic week, I wanted to end with some advice from Allegra Lab's own editorial team. However, this turned out to be trickier than I had imagined. While I did get advice from some on the team, others were uncomfortable with the idea of giving advice. They were worried about sounding paternalistic or pompous. Initially, I was surprised by this response as I hadn't anticipated a problem with seeking for advice. However, I understood where they were coming from. By framing it this way, it implied there was a hierarchy between those who were giving advice and those who were receiving it. As a result of their responses, I decided to shift the focus of this thematic thread.

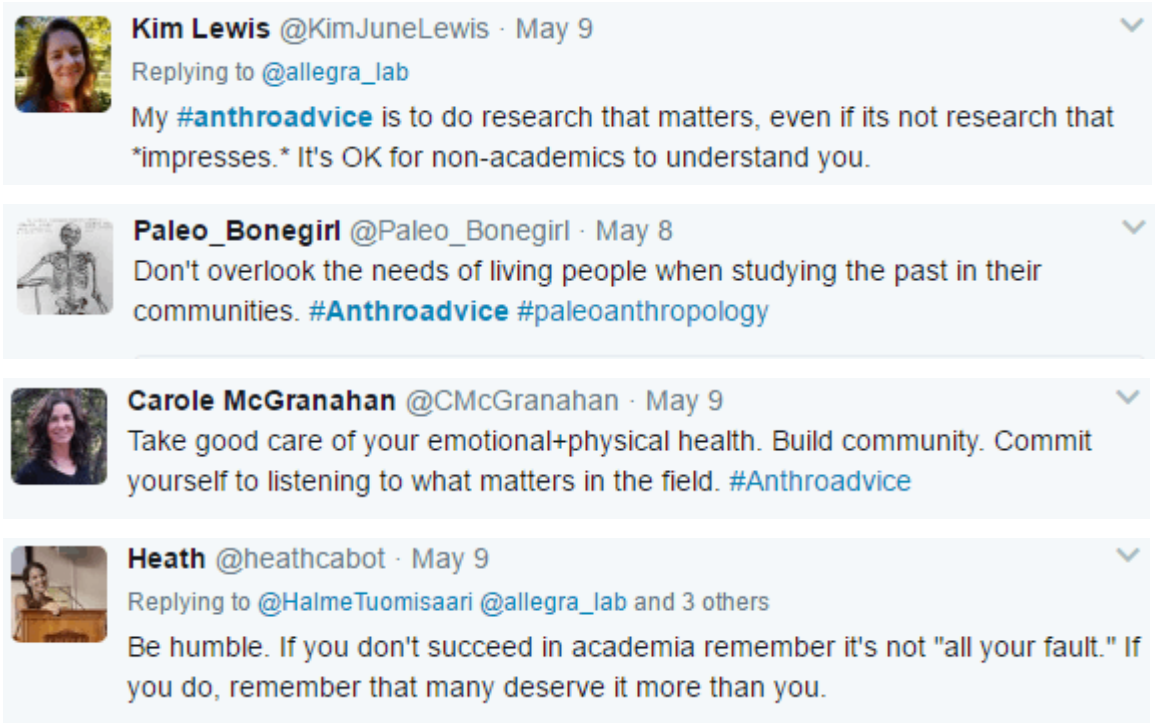
Instead of focusing simply on the transfer of advice from one generation of anthropologists to the next, I tried to frame it as a dialogue between people in different segments of the anthropological community—whether it be students, academics, or those working outside academia.

Particularly for students who are interested in the discipline, I think this dialogue can be quite helpful. Therefore, I would like to encourage anthropologists to continue to discuss and share their experiences. On Twitter, the hashtag **#Anthroadvice** can be used to both share experiences and ask questions.

For those considering a post-graduate degree in anthropology, Miia Halme-Tuomisaari offered these words of advice: "try to get work experience from as many different fields as you can, definitely outside the academia too. With the way things are changing inside the academia today, such work experience will offer skills that may come in handy in numerous unknown ways. It will also offer a very valuable 'outside perspective' of not thinking that the academia is the only professional path that exists. An academic career is by definition one of vicarity these days, and thus anyone who chooses it as a life path will take a great risk. Thus having the buffer of other options via a broader range of experiences will be very useful. And also, so I claim, it will enrich one's research."

Throughout the week, we saw great advice being tweeted on Twitter using #Anthroadvice. Feel free to add your input and use #Anthroadvice on Twitter!





Anthropology, Research, and Advice with Jon Schubert

Jon Schubert
May, 2017

Recently, I sat down with Jon Schubert, Allegra Lab's new Director of Outreach for a conversation about his research, his position at Allegra Lab, and his advice to aspiring anthropologists. Jon is a political and economic anthropologist at the University of Leipzig. Having worked in foreign affairs, development consultancy, and commercial risk forecasting, Jon fell in love with anthropology late (for his PhD). He enjoys grappling with and writing about the big questions of inequality, power, infrastructures, pasts and futures, and the possibility of change, mainly through the perspective of Angola and Mozambique. I conducted this interview as part of my internship with Allegra Lab.

You mentioned that you became interested in anthropology later in your academic studies. What drew you to anthropology?

What drew me to anthropology was first of all the method, as I realised I liked hanging out with people, listening to their stories, and trying to understand their experiences. My previous experiences with more quantitative approaches — dishing out questionnaires to 'beneficiaries' — were rather unsatisfying, and as I'd already done my MA research as oral history, the step to anthropology for my PhD was a small one, even if it meant brushing up on theories to come to appreciate the 'empirical philosophy' side of the discipline.

How do you think being an anthropologist has impacted your work in other areas such as foreign affairs and commercial risk analysis?

I hope that as anthropologists, we can generally bring a critical perspective and an attention to nuance into our work outside academia. I think that is, to me, one of the reasons to study anthropology if you don't want to embark on an academic career. But it has also worked the other way round, challenging me to ask new, anthropological questions about my work, both as a risk analyst, as well as for my fieldwork.

Your new book *Working the System: A Political Ethnography of the 'New Angola'* is coming out this year. What has the process been like?

It's a book that is based on my doctoral research. It's changed quite a bit since I defended my thesis. There were another one and a half or two years working on it before I submitted the manuscript, and there were still some edits to do. But overall, it's been a very joyful and rewarding process. I feel that I've been quite lucky to have landed where I am now. I'm really excited about the book coming out, and I'm waiting to see what they suggest as a cover design. I'm reading through the work now for the indexing, and it forces you to connect themes and topics in the book in a different way than when you were writing it, which is good because it makes me excited about future work in Angola again.

Can you tell me more about your current research project in Mozambique?

This is the project I'm just finishing at the University of Leipzig. I was doing fieldwork in the Ministry of Mineral Resources. I was looking at how Mozambique state functionaries work and how they negotiate competing ideas of development and the common good in daily work because there are a lot of expectations on the extractives in Mozambique about what they should do for the country. You have the industry, but also all the bilateral and multilateral development partners and a battery of consultants who want to tell the Mozambicans how to do this best. So there's a lot of competing interests, and I felt that the functionaries are at the nexus of these interests. It was very short fieldwork unfortunately, but quite interesting. I'm working at one article now on how state and corporate actors are entangled in developing the mining sector. From July on, I'll be starting a new position on a project on war and state formation at the University of Geneva. It looks at how rebel movements shape state practices and ideologies form and contribute to state formation and includes Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, and South Sudan.

Which books or authors have been particularly inspiring to you?

Recently, I've really liked Antina von Schnitzler's *Techno-Politics after Apartheid* which is on the installation of water and electricity meters in Soweto. I think it engages in a very clever but non-showy way with a number of very topical issues in anthropology. It's an interesting book, very South Africa focused but really good. As an ethnography, I've rather recently also quite liked Pascal Ménoret's *Joyriding in Riyadh* — it's basically about youth joyriding and crashing cars. It's a very fascinating and detailed insight into a very marginal youth sub-culture, but it's combined very well with historical and archival research to give a good and very critical yet at the same time sympathetic portrayal of Saudi Arabian society.

Why did you decide to join Allegra and become the Director of Outreach?

Some of the people on the editorial team are people I've known and worked with and engaged with for a while. So when they were looking to build up their team, they asked me, and I was very happy to join the team because I think it's a

fantastic project with a great team of switched on people. If I can contribute to that project in some way then that's really great. The title Director of Outreach came out of our recent retreat in the French Alps. What we want to do is increase the visibility, build up the network, and establish some partnerships. The ideal would be that Allegra can be the official media partner of certain conferences, like EASA. Other than that I'm a part of the editorial team, working with contributors on thematic threads and posts.

Is there anything you wish you had known about the field of academia before deciding to pursue a Ph.D.?

I never regretted doing a Ph.D. I really quite enjoyed it despite the sometimes very tough times, but I also embarked on a Ph.D. without knowing that I wanted to stay in academia. Until quite late, I was really considering a more non-academic profession such as consulting. I always thought I would do the Ph.D., and then move back to doing policy or diplomacy work. But I quite like the academic work: the thinking, the writing, the analysis, the teaching. I also find that the conditions to do that work are increasingly difficult just in terms of funding. Doing the Ph.D. has been very formative for me as a person. I have no regrets. It's just that an academic career as a professional career can be quite challenging, especially with governments slashing funds for education and research. Even as a professional anthropologist outside academia though, you have to do the Ph.D. otherwise they won't take you seriously.

What is your advice to aspiring anthropologists?

My advice would be to choose courses that will balance the compulsory stuff with stuff that really excites you about the discipline, and read beyond the syllabus.

REDUX: Publishing for PhD students

Luke Heslop
May, 2017

Playing a bit part in organising a workshop on academic publishing for PhD students at the next annual conference of the British Association for South Asian Studies, I was forced to think about how I found attempting to publish journal articles while writing a thesis. The main contributors to this project are prolific professors and journal editors – basically people who know about this sort of thing. My contribution, as a relatively recent graduate, is advice very much from the bottom of the academic food chain. My main thought on the subject was that

it requires patience and preparation.

> *Like it or not, publishing is increasingly important for post-PhD employment in academia and it might pay off to not wait to till you finish your thesis before you start thinking about it seriously.*

Unlike the other workshop co-organisers, I'm far from an authority on the subject of publishing, but here are four things that worked for me and may be of some use to students currently writing up.[1]

Firstly, **write an article and a chapter at the same time**. You can 'double-up'! A 12,000-word chapter will never be the same as a 7000-word essay. Draft the chapter, then craft the article. Use a conference or workshop to focus your essay and sharpen your arguments, as well as give you something solid to work towards.

> *Once you have gone from chapter to article, shared it with some colleagues, aired it publicly and incorporated some stellar conference comments, had it ritually blessed and carried the printed version with you everywhere you go for several weeks, you are probably ready to submit it.*

Redraft the chapter while you wait for peer review comments. When you receive your reviews you may find that some of the suggested emendations already exist in your reworked full-length chapter. Then, when you have resubmitted your changes to the article and responded to reviewers, get back to the chapter.[2]

Teach strategically. As my thesis took shape and I had an idea about what I could potentially publish from it – certain bits do start to stand out – I then applied to teach the courses that would give me some intensive exposure to relevant literature. This also gave me time and space to engage with it whilst I earned the money I needed to continue studying. A degree of selectivity being one of the few benefits of not being a salaried academic. I knew I wanted to write a paper on money, so taught an honours course in Economic Anthropology. Whilst

teaching on this course, I wrote 'Catching the Pulse: money and circulation in a Sri Lankan marketplace', which is now in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*.

Thirdly, **collaborate with faculty**. This does not necessarily mean co-author, but rather, work with a member of your department to create an environment conducive to focusing on w
hat you want to write. Organising a conference with the aim of putting a collection of essays together is a very good way of doing this.

> *There are often small bits of funding available for conference organising when you are a student, but when you finish your PhD and are cast off into the wilderness this may no longer exist. Make use of it while you can!*

I organised 'Anthropology for Sale' with Jamie Cross, and from this we produced a special issue for *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, in which I have a single authored article (currently under review) and a co-authored Introduction. Granted, this article was not completed until I had finished my PhD, but the groundwork was laid a year before my viva. This stuff takes time.

Finally, **force yourself into projects you want to be part of**. Two years ago, at the Annual Conference on South Asia in Madison Wisconsin, I saw a fantastic panel on names and naming practices. It was a seriously all-star cast in the anthropology of South Asia: Jacob Copeman, Veena Das, and William Mazzarella to name but a few. Never the less, I knew I had material that could speak to the project so cornered Veena Das over dinner to tell her so, quickly learning that nobody corners Professor Das. She interrogated me viva-style about what I could contribute and eventually agreed to see an abstract and a draft. The paper fit the collection, was submitted with the set, went through an incredibly rigorous peer review process, and was published in *SAMAJ: South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* the following year (2015). Veena and Jacob helped and encouraged me enormously.

> *If you find a project that your work speaks to and you want to be part of it, my advice is to dive right in, even if – as in my case – you are just a lowly PhD student!*

I graduated from the University of Edinburgh in the summer of 2015 – this time last year. Publishing between then and now has been a heady blend of really intense bits of writing to deadlines (actual and self-imposed) and what can feel like really drawn out things, like waiting for reviewers' comments, to hear back from an editor, or receiving proofs. It takes time, and it takes up a lot of time. Weighed down by the thought of the massive body of work that is your thesis, the idea of writing articles or committing time and energy to anything other than thesis writing for that matter, may seem stressful, your supervisor may even advise against it. However, preparing articles while writing up can be done. Moreover, it can be very beneficial, it can energise your teaching, sharpen a chapter or two, encourage you to collaborate with staff and help you look, and think, beyond your thesis.

[1] The BASAS annual conference holds a special event for graduates and early career scholars. This event is a great platform for sharing ideas. The publishing advice in full will be given by Dr John Zavos, editor of *Contemporary South Asia;* Dr Deborah Sutton, editor of *South Asian Studies;* and Professor Nitya Rao. Next year's conference will be held in Nottingham, April 2017.

[2] I used this strategy to publish my first article, which was for *Contemporary South Asia*, 'On Sacred Ground: the political performance of religious responsibility' (2014).

This post was first published on 26 July 2016.

Featured image by Objects in Space (flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

REDUX: 10 Tips for Surviving Fieldwork & Blogging!

Jessika Tremblay
May, 2017

Today's post was originally published on June 3rd, 2014, as part of last summer's fieldwork thread. Next week we're sharing some of the fruits of our recent call for fieldnotes with you, and while we're getting ready for that, let's revisit some great old reads!

Today at Allegra we are pleased to kick-start our summer thread on Fieldwork! In the weeks and months to come we want to offer inspiration to all those/us enjoying the luxury of continuing projects disrupted by worldly 'noise' of teaching & administrative work by both experiences of newcomers into this time-honored rite of passage in our noble discipline, as well as the veterans returning to their beloved fieldsites. To set things going, we revisit a post that made some blogosphere-noise a while back, namely Jessika Tremblay's 10 Tips For Surviving Anthropological Fieldwork. But first, a few thoughts by her on fieldwork & blogging!

Jessika Tremblay – if we've understood you correctly, you are still continuing your fieldwork, and have now spent more than a year in Java. We've read your 10 Tips to Surviving Fieldnotes – which you have also graciously permitted us to repost here as the inaugural of Allegra's Fieldwork thread. Thus we know a few things of your research already, but would you still take us back to the basics: how would you describe yourself – who are you exactly, why did you end up going to Java and what exactly have you been doing there?

I'm a PhD candidate in the department of anthropology at the **University of Toronto** in Canada, and have been studying anthropology for roughly 11 years, starting with my undergraduate and Master's degrees at **McGill University**. When I started my PhD I had this fantasy that I would do my year of fieldwork in the steppes of Mongolia, living in a yurt and eating Yak cheese all day, but when a funding opportunity came up to do a pilot study in Indonesia, my supervisors, who are experts on Indonesia, suggested I give it a try. So in 2012 I spent six weeks learning Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, and another three months traveling to scope out a potential field site that would allow me to research the role of the internet and new media on socioeconomic development. During that time I accidentally came across an urban neighbourhood in Yogyakarta, in central

Java, that branded itself as a “cyber village.” I immediately became enthralled and with the support of its leader and wonderfully warm residents, I later decided to make it my field site. I returned home for 8 months to prepare an official research proposal, and came back in 2013. Since then I’ve been doing a lot of what anthropologists like to call “deep hanging out,” which means getting to know residents as well as possible and absorbing the cultural landscape, in order to provide depth and context to more pointed interview questions that I periodically undertake with locals.

Your blog is dedicated to your fieldwork, with the ambitious goal of covering your entire fieldwork period. How did you initially come up with this idea; was this something encouraged by your home institution, for example – or have you (no insult meant, we aspire to be ones ourselves!) always been a bit of a computer ‘geek’?

I’m definitely not a computer a geek, by any means. Some may find that ironic since my research topic is so deeply associated with technology, but I think having a humble connection with computers has helped me to focus more on its social, rather than technical aspects.

In fact I was directly inspired by another blog by a team of scholars working on a large-scale project investigating the social impacts of social media in nine different field sites around the world. **Daniel Miller**, a prominent anthropologist known for several works including his 2011 book “**Tales from Facebook**,” and his team have been documenting their research through their blog entitled: **“Global Social Media Impact Study Blog**.” I had been thinking about writing a blog for a while but was hesitant, thinking it wasn’t considered “scholarly” to do so, but when I saw the professionalism and usefulness of sharing work in progress, especially of anthropologists doing work similar to mine, I realized I was letting a wonderful opportunity to share ideas slip away.

> *It immediately became apparent to me that blogging had the potential to widen my network of contacts with similar research interests, encouraging an exchange of ideas and constructive criticism, and just as importantly broadening my audience to the general public.*

So after several months of emersion in my field site I began typing away and experimenting with WordPress to see what I could come up with. It's definitely nerve-wracking to put such raw ideas out in cyberspace before they've been polished, but it's a great way to get feedback before attempting to put them into more traditional forms of print, like journal articles or a dissertation.

Now that you have been keeping a fieldwork blog, what has that experience been like? We at Allegra have of course experimented with this ourselves, and quite enjoy it: having concrete deadlines, even if self-imposed ones, adds a useful boost toward getting all those fieldnotes actually written – and it is also nice know that someone might actually read them.

Writing serves as a useful way toward starting analyses. What of your primary observations?

The most rewarding experience for me has been, like you suggested, starting more in-depth analysis in the middle of field work. One of the most challenging

things for me during this past year has been taking a step back once in a while, in the middle of all the data gathering, socializing, stressing, and just living the experience, to think about what all of this raw data really means. Blogging has given me a chance to do that.

> *I like to mix raw ideas with some basic theory when I write my blog as a way to test the waters, so speak. Sometimes I get feedback from experts in the field that I otherwise might never receive, or only after my dissertation is complete.*

If I wasn't keeping up this blog I would have less motivation to start putting analytical ideas down on the screen first (paper? Who uses paper anymore?) because unfortunately my field notes tend to be much more descriptive than analytical. It's also, indeed, a lot of fun to spend time crafting a post and including photos to share with people like my family and friends back home who only have a general idea of what it is that I'm doing way over here on the other side of the world. It's kind of a justification for questions I often get like "when will you finish your studies?" or "when will you get a job?"

What kind of feedback have you gotten from your blog? Have people noticed it in a manner that you hoped (we dare not ask any concrete page view numbers as that may be a bit delicate among bloggers … we're not quite sure of the etiquette yet!)

Feedback has been hit-and-miss. I've only been blogging for a few months and I am still learning about the best ways to get readership. Obviously, for someone who is used to an academic, and sometimes pedantic, style of writing, getting non-academics to read my stuff is a struggle.

> *I tend to post links to my new posts on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites to get as many reads as possible. The other problem is that there are a limited number of people who are interested in the same kind of stuff that I write about, so that I have had to adapt and try to find ways to make my blog posts more interesting to the general public.*

Why would anyone want to read about the theoretical underpinnings of the place of technology in the production of culture when they could just as easily browse an article about why complaining through Twitter updates may have social value? Through blogging, I've begun to appreciate how style and packaging, or branding, are just as important as content. I was really surprised when I saw that my last post outlining 10 Tips for Surviving Fieldwork got exponentially more hits than any of my previous posts. I quickly realized that it was more tailored to a broader audience than just the handful of academics that research social media. That's not to say that I think content should be compromised or "dumbed down" in any sense, but that it's important to understand who it is we are writing for in order to get the hits we hope for.

What would your tips be to all those planning a) fieldwork; b) fieldwork blogging? Do you have any regrets – things you wish someone had told you before you started running the blog?

I think the most important thing to consider when planning to undertake fieldwork is to make sure you are taking on a project that you can handle. Each person has their own personality and limits. While some excel at socializing for hours on end, seeking out large numbers of contacts and informants, others become quickly exhausted after a one hour interview. Some people are thrilled with the adventure and danger associated with risky research locations, such as remote or conflict zones, while others thrive in safer urban conditions.

Be honest with yourself and try to find ways to test your limits before you pick a field site, because taking on more than you can handle can cause a lot of problems very quickly. Adaptability is of course a key asset for any anthropologist, but if you are lucky enough to try short research trips before taking on a full year or more, do so!

Fieldwork blogging is obviously limited to those who are doing research in locations with reasonable internet connections. In my case that's not a problem since I'm studying a "cyber village" where most households have fast internet access. I think reasonable advice here is to think about a hole in the blogging community and see if you can fill it. What can you bring to the blogosphere that isn't there already, and how can you make it palatable to a general audience? And don't overthink it. Professionalism is important, but take the opportunity to test the waters and seek out feedback rather than just trying to impress the world with your polished thoughts right away. I've gotten more out of it that way.

My only regret is not starting earlier on. I arrived in Indonesia in April 2013 and started blogging some time in December (though I only started systematic data gathering in September, after language training). I would have benefited from writing about initial impressions as a way of documenting changes in my analytical viewpoint deeper into my fieldwork.

What about your blogging future? Are you done with the social media or do you have big ambitions for future plans? What about your take of the ongoing scholarly social media revolution – as a dedicated blogger, what is your take of our collective social media future?

I haven't really thought about my blogging future, but I imagine it will continue in some form or another as I return to Canada and try to make more sense of my data. I think perhaps as I start to work on publishing articles and visiting conferences with more regularity, it will be a useful forum for sharing my research, though it might have to take a different form than the more colloquial style of a fieldwork blog.

> *I think there will always be a struggle to legitimate blogging as a productive way to communicate academic research through more "informal" media. I don't think blogging is either a hindrance or a blessing to academics or readers, but it is definitely a useful adaptation, if pursued productively, for sharing information that might otherwise be limited by cost or legal red-tape.*

Overall blogging has been a rewarding and fun way to get people take notice of my work, and I recommend it to those who are seeking a lighter outlet than the sometimes limiting traditional academic media.

Warm thanks for these views, and also, once again, for allowing us to repost your great tips. Here thus useful guidance for first-timers in fieldwork, and welcome reminders of basics to veterans. We wish you a most enjoyable completion for your fieldwork, and of course look forward to your future writings!

Here are the original 10 Tips for Surviving Fieldwork in annotated form – for the elaborated ones, click here. Let them be instructional for the first-time fieldworker & inspirational for the veteran making one more re-entry! And do share your experiences with us!

1. Choose a site you won't hate

2. Learn the language

3. Pay attention to gender norms

4. Don’t take things so personally

5. Harness the power of your introversion

6. Have fun!

7. Find a routine that works for you

8. Keep a log book

9. Never reject an invitation (within reason)

10. Become a foodie

An encounter with theory

Ghassan Hage
May, 2017

Today we will reflect on what it means to ‘encounter, dwell in, read, critique and make use of theory’. The idea of an ‘encounter’ with theory is particularly meant to interpellate those of you who meet it as they are working on their PhD, en passant as it were, and to differentiate you from those who come to their research already dwelling in a particularly theory, perceiving reality with its categories, reasonably knowledgeable of its beautifully lit spaces as well as its dark corners, its pitfalls as well as its potentialities.

An encounter is often already a timid mode of dwelling and the distinction between the two is not absolute. It differs for instance according to whether you are a writer already endowed with a well developed theoretical habitus which gives any encounter an intensity and a depth that is dissimilar to the encounter initiated by other students who do not have a long history of dealing with theory.

An academic fantasy would like to imagine a world of PhD candidates who are all invariably theoretically and philosophically savvy. I know from a long experience that this is hardly the case. For many PhD students, indeed for most writers, the encounter with theory might vary in duration and intensity, but it will remain just that. So to explore the theoretical encounter is significant to many.

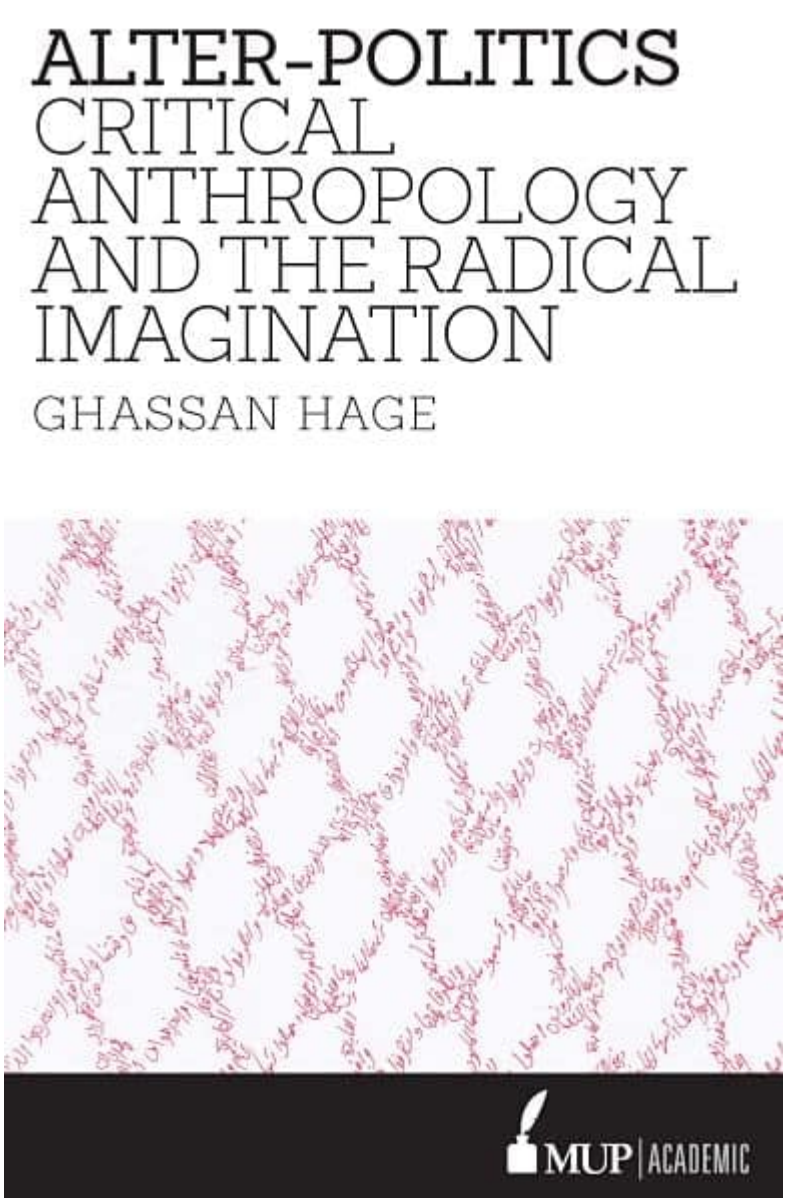
> *As importantly, the way we end up dwelling in a particular theory, or even in theory generally speaking, is heavily influenced by the encounter, which is a kind of 'first contact' with theory.*

So, I want to spend the bit of time we have here trying to instill in you a kind of practico-ethical disposition towards such an encounter; how to recognize theory, how to treat it properly such as to have a good long term relationship with it if this is indeed the outcome. I want to use today to expand, and develop for myself just as much as for you, as one needs to constantly remind oneself of these things, a few pet ideas of mine, like:

- A theory is not a generalization but a transposable generative device that can oscillate between the general and the empirically specific;
- Theory has exchange value and use value. It can be deployed for its own sake and it can be deployed analytically;
- A theory offers a tool or a set of tools. It is neither a church you adhere to nor a football team you support;
- Whenever possible, when first encountering a theory that you don't like, say, I don't find this theory useful, rather than I don't agree, or, this is wrong – I want to encourage you to have a Facebook approach to the theoretical encounter: that is, there should only be a 'like' button to use at this early stage of dealing with theory. If you don't like a theory just ignore it. There is no need to scream 'I don't like' from the rooftops at the level of the encounter – you will have plenty of time to engage critically when your encounter evolves into a serious dwelling.

Thinking through what you want of theory is not something important just now

because you are starting your PhD. It is something you will continue to face throughout your professional lives as academics and writers. I am continuously reminded of this personally. A few years ago, I was in a Paris bookshop and by chance I came across Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's book *Métaphysiques Cannibales*, which you might call an innovative book of theoretical anthropology (there's a great English translation of it now by Peter Skafish). Some parts of it spoke to my concerns more than others, but on the whole I found it a breath of fresh air and I was voraciously reading it in the bookshop for a good half an hour before I purchased it. Most importantly, I thought that a number of theoretical propositions in the book concerning 'ontological perspectivism' were immensely productive. I found myself re-thinking there and then as I was reading it some perennial issues that concern me such as inter-cultural relations in the West and in Israel/Palestine. I was certain that it could help me generate some new insights. I have now written a number of articles (now part of my Alter-Politics book), which at least partly touched on this.



As I began writing publishing these ‘ontologically-inspired’ articles, I was being invited here and there to participate on panels discussing the ‘ontological turn’ in anthropology. The way some people were interacting with my new theorizing made me immediately return to the importance and pertinence of thinking through what constitute a good theoretical encounter. For, to begin with, everywhere around the world there was always someone to hint with a concerned tone that I should be careful ‘joining the ontological turn’. It was indeed as if I was joining a religious sect. And if it is true that some ‘ontologists’ behave like priests of theory, it is the case that some forms of anti-ontologism smack religious

fervor even more. Then there were the many colleagues and friends who wanted to know how could I reconcile my known affinity to Bourdieu with the 'ontological turn'? Have I not heard what Latour and Bourdieu think of each other? It was very hard to say 'I found this or that idea or aspect of the ontological turn useful' without being put in a position where I had to answer a question formulated along the lines of 'but how on earth can you believe in x and y', and where believing in x and y – often having something to do with essentialism – never occurred to me. It was as if I couldn't say that I liked the Christian conceptualization of love without being immediately asked 'but how on earth can you believe in the Holy Spirit?'

> *This is why the first important thing to remember, and live, as a practical ethic is that theory is not a church or a football team.*

You should never belong to a theory or declare yourself a supporter of a theory. Even if you already are a follower, I urge you to get over it. It is not a healthy way to exist, take my word for it. It's one of those 'been there done that' things for me.

There is a more difficult question that needs to be dealt with here: 'If theorists think of their theories as a coherent whole, does that mean that it is not rigorous to pick whatever one wishes to pick from a theory?' My view is that if a theory is a set of tools, one can pick one particular tool from the set without being committed to use the whole set, as long as one understands the ramifications of the particular tool one is using. This can be done with various degrees of sophistication, of course.

> *The more one has a good understanding of the totality of tools in a tool box, and the way they relate to each other, the more one is capable to engage in selective usage.*

While there is always the danger of someone choosing a chisel without realizing that it is useless without a hammer, there is always a possibility of choosing a hammer that proves useful in combination with a variety of other tools. But then

again, some people choose the chisel and end up finding a creative way of using it without the hammer. So, nothing is absolute here, I am just offering analogies.

Recently, Frederic Jameson has proposed that if the hero of modernity is the orchestra conductor, the hero of post-modernity is the curator. He also argued that the curator is to the orchestra conductor what the theorist is to the philosopher. Even if it leaves out Marx's idea of the creative theorist as someone who creates fire by rubbing previously opposing theories against each other which particularly appeals to me, I still find this idea of theory as a curated collection, as opposed to a symphonic whole, evocative and useful. At the same time, however, it is a particularly limited metaphor that feeds into the idea of theory as something one exhibits rather than something that one uses. One inevitably does both with theory, but do I need to tell you about the pitfalls of exhibitionism? Any kind of exhibitionism.

> *Let us just say that the temptation for theoretical exhibitionism is built into university education.*

While we all know how true that mundane formulation is, that 'the more we know the more we know how little we know', we paradoxically remain vulnerable to the seductions of appearing masterful, and of mastering the discourse of mastery, those 'sound bites' that give us the allure of authority. 'Theory', being mainly male-dominated theory, has historically played a crucial role in providing those sound bites. It is very seductive and one easily falls for it: I still fall for it all the time though I like to think that I do so less and less. And of course, global warming is here to remind us that 'mastering the discourse of mastery' is very far from mastery.

I know it is hard to convince you of this but it is so much nicer to read a straightforward theory-free text or a text that shows itself to be honestly struggling to make sense of theory, than a text full of those half-baked theoretical 'sound bites' delivered as 'final truth'. But this is where theoretical exhibitionism inexorably leads to. I see it as partly behind one of the most negative aspects of

theorizing, contributing to what I call paraphrasing Marx ‘theoretical fetishism’.

There is no doubt that theory is consumed like a commodity on a market-like space in the academic/intellectual world. Theories, like many other commodities, go in and out of fashion. Some become so fashionable that they become a must. Indeed one can do a whole Bourdieu-ian analysis of the field of theoretical taste. There are orthodoxies and heterodoxies. There are forms of symbolic violence. There are dominant and dominated… and so on. What’s more, people do not only make statements about themselves by being for or against theory in general, but they do so by choosing particular theories over others, and, perhaps more importantly, by the way they theorise: some are unsophisticated mimics of others theories, some are avant-garde theorisers who break new grounds and open new horizons.

> *And so, as in any field, and again, as Bourdieu states, one is classified by their classification. Or to paraphrase this, theorists end up being theorized by their theorization.*

Accumulated in the form of cultural capital theory is more often than not experienced phallically, as a valued possession that one can ‘show off’. And we can move from Bourdieu to Freud’s conception of ‘the narcissism of small differences’ for a useful understanding of some of the incredibly affective and over the top rivalries that mar the world of theory. The way both some of the producers and consumers of theory differentiate themselves ‘theoretically’ from others, one would think that the fate of the earth is at sake. In Arabic there is a word called ‘*takhween*‘ which refers to the tendency of making of anyone we disagree with a traitor of some sort or another such that the differences between us become automatically incommensurable and a matter of life and death. It strikes me that there is a fair bit of that in theoretical positioning. I’ve gone back to some of my own writings and I can’t say that I am not guilty of that too sometimes.

But a Bourdieu-ian or Freudian approach to the market of theory are not the only

ones that are productive here – and I am doing a theory of the utilization of theory here exemplifying how a theory has to be useful and have a yield: generate some understanding and insights that would not have been possible without it – otherwise why bother with theory? It is in this vein that one can also usefully approach the 'theory as commodity' reality from the Marxist perspective hinted above. For, the appearance of theories on the market and the logic of their production and consumption makes them akin to capitalist commodities. They are experienced fetishistically in the way Marx analyzed the capitalist commodity in his famous conception of 'commodity fetishism'.

> *That is, theories appear as relating to each other and are valorized against each other in the very same way Marx understood the production and power of the fetish.*

For him, the world of the capitalist commodity is such that '(t)he products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race.' So it is with the world of theory, which is the product of human labour (reading, thinking, writing, editing, printing, etc…) but is experienced fetishistically as a product with intrinsic power that has no relation to the labour that has produced it.

It remains a mystery how we academics, who should know from experience how long and how much work it takes to produce a decent sentence on anything, let alone a decent theory, allow ourselves five minutes of reading someone else's work to declare it 'rubbish' or 'agree', utterly devalorising and showing little respect for the amount of dead and living labour that has gone into its production. As with Marx, this fetishistic absenting of the labour process that is behind what we are consuming is not the simple product of a mental mistake: once I know 'the truth' I'll stop behaving this way. Fetishism for Marx was 'more like the experience of the sun 'rising'. It was, and I am sorry to use the word if you happen to be sensitive to it, an ontological form of mystification. This was different from the 'ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling classes' conception of

ideology that invites an epistemological conception of mystification. The latter can be argued and debated against. But with fetishism, no matter how much we are taught that it is the earth orbiting the sun we will still experience the sun rising. Or as Godelier put it long ago: “It is not the subject that deceives himself; it is reality that deceives him”.

To take this critical approach to theory on board means that it is not so much by preaching the right attitude to theory that a diminishing of the unhelpful fetishistic tendencies listed above can come about. Rather, what is needed is a different mode of interaction, a different practice and a different mode of experience of theory that can allow us to begin the process of de-fetishisation. That is, one needs to workshop theory in a way that highlights its use-value, rather than just simply think about the right way to theorize; that’s what I hope to initiate with you.

> *The first thing we need to ask ourselves as we are writing is this: ‘what has this theory helped me see, understand or explain that I otherwise would not have seen?’*

At a most immediate level, this is to oppose a common tendency among non-experienced academic writers to use a quote from a theoretician at the end of an empirical paragraph or section à la ‘This shows that Rancière is right when he argues …’. Such a form of quoting makes it appear as if the main aim of one’s study is to prove a theoretician correct. Unless it is exactly the aim of one’s thesis to prove a particular theoretician right, this is a very poor usage of theory. This is particularly infuriariting in anthropology when a thesis is about Africa or the Middle East, etc. As this form of quoting Western theory at the end of theory-free account implicitly implies something like ‘this shows that Badiou or Butler well understood the situation in Mozambique without ever bothering to go there’. By the way, I bet you neither Badiou nor Butler nor anybody like to be used this way. I certainly hate it when I see another academic using my work just to give authority to what they are saying about racism etc… I much rather seeing it

activated in a way that has helped someone see new things.

Secondly, we need to workshop a way of thinking in terms of a labour theory of value of the theoretical works we are reading.

> *This is essential if we are to learn to be respectful of them as works of labour not as something that just pops up on the theoretical market for your instant enjoyment in a commodity fetishist-mode.*

Think how much it takes you to write an idea. Do you like someone reading a couple of paragraphs you have spent many days writing in the two-three minutes it takes to read them and in those few minutes judging them to be 'wrong', 'bad,' or 'meaningless,' let alone 'stupid' or 'idiotic'. This labour can be accumulated labour too. Not everyone is as well read and as philosophically sophisticated as everyone else. I might sound elitist saying so but, the fact of the matter is that if you are reading a well-established thinker and you feel they need to be given a 101-type lecture in 'social causality', 'essentialism' or whatever else, you should think twice and three times before doing so, as there is a high chance it is you who has not understood the complexity of what they are saying rather than them not being up to your standard of sophistication. So, it might be useful to read them again. In the domain of exhibition, 'critique' requires less labour and yields a lot more cultural capital and thoretical grooviness than 'understanding,' so it is understandable that one prefers to make a sound bite such as 'there is no theory of change in Pierre Bourdieu' than actually understand the complexity of Bourdieu's theory of reproduction. And why do you need to say 'there is no theory of change in Pierre Bourdieu' I might ask? If you want a theory of change go to someone you think has a theory of change and forget about Bourdieu. It's like saying 'Judith Butler makes bad hamburgers' (I actually don't know whether Judith Butler makes good or bad hamburgers but I am taking a wild guess…).

To acquire a good ethic of using theory you need to continue well after this seminar to read writers who live up to an ethic of critical respect, who even while critical of others are always able to understand and forefront the amount and

quality of labour that has gone into the work they are consuming. That is, ultimately, critics who see other theorists as fellow craftspeople engaged in a common pursuit. Not surprisingly this ethic is more present, though I wouldn't say prevalent, among women/feminist writers for example in the writing of Lauren Berlant, Judith Butler or Marilyn Strathern than it is present in the spaces offered by the Badious, Bourdieus and Latours of the world. But there are always male theorists that also stand out. I find Evans-Pritchard's critique of Levy-Bruhl exemplary in this regard. I also particularly like George Steinmetz's introduction to his The Devil's Handwriting and the way he plays Said, Bourdieu and Lacan against each other to help elucidate the logic of German colonialism.

This post was first published on Ghassan Hage's blog, Hage Ba'a.

Featured image by Glen Noble (Unsplash)

Advice and Tips for Anthropologists

Lena Pham
May, 2017

According to the AAA, anthropology is defined as the study of what makes us human. In accordance with its broad definition, the field of anthropology is incredibly diverse, and part of its charm is that a background in anthropology can be applicable to practically any situation. However, this versatility can be problematic for students who are trying to imagine what a future in the field of anthropology would look like—both within and outside academia. My desire to explore career possibilities in anthropology lead me to a chance encounter in the classroom with Miia Halme-Tuomisaari. She introduced me to the possibility of working with Allegra Lab during my semester abroad in Helsinki. While interning with Allegra Lab, I've helped with the Twitter feed, fixed broken links, and worked on the search engine optimization of posts. Through my exposure to Allegra's content and interviews with members of the Allegra editorial team, I have been able to expand my idea of what is possible in anthropology. Looking on

the web, however, I felt that there was not much advice out there for aspiring anthropologists.

> *This thematic thread features helpful posts for anthropologists, and I hope that it will encourage anthropologists to share their experiences and the lessons they learned along the way. Use the hashtag* ***#Anthroadvice*** *to share your advice on Twitter!*

Our thematic thread starts off with Ghassan Hage's post, "How to interact with theory while writing your PhD," which was first published on his blog in 2015. He offers helpful tips and analogies for thinking about and interacting with theory. Our next two posts will be from the Allegra archives. In the first post from 2014, Jessika Tremblay shares her tips for fieldwork and blogging. Drawn from her own experience of running a fieldwork blog, she discusses the benefits of blogging and how it has helped her research. The next post contains publishing tips for PhD students from Luke Heslop. It was first published in 2016, and provides tips for publishing articles while writing a thesis. Our last post of the week features an interview with Jon Schubert, Allegra Lab's new Director of Outreach. I interviewed him about topics such as what drew him to anthropology and his new position at Allegra Lab.

OUR AUTHOR GUIDELINES!

Allegra
May, 2017

Allegra welcomes your contributions – we are thrilled to spread the word on new & exciting discussions in the world of anthropology and beyond! Below are our submission guidelines including instructions on how to share the news via the social media.

LENGTH

Contributions should be max 2,000 words. We also welcome shorter papers – circa 500 words to accompany an AVMoFA (Allegra's Virtual Museum of Obscure Fieldwork Artefacts) or a fieldwork playlist. Please keep references to a sensible minimum and include a full list at the end. We are not that fuzzy on the style that you use as long as you are consistent.

Pay particular attention to the TITLE of your post: our aim is to catch the readers'

attention and get titles into broad circulation. Aim for titles of 5 words maximum. Think of distinguishing your title from one in an academic journal; we can assist here.

BLURB & IMAGES

With your contribution submit a 200-250 character (NOT word) summary including relevant key words. This forms the basis for our social media 'blurb', which is essential for attracting readers. If you want to provide images, please do so – but we are also happy to select images for your post. Submit all texts as simple text files, we'll do the layout. If you have links that you want to include, it's helpful to insert the hyperlinks directly in the word doc (Ctrl-K).

EDITING

When you curate a thematic week, ideally all content would be (close) to print-ready. We do have language editors, but since our editors work on a volunteer basis, too, we try to keep their work load sensible. We are happy to work with you on substantive editing – but it helps us if you do reviewing yourself. When we invite you to act as a guest editor, that means you'll really have the final say on content. Our role is to facilitate the flow of content, not to act as 'bottlenecks' or ultimate 'seals of approval' for what goes online, in contrast to academic journals. This contributes significantly to the genuine diversity of voices within Allegra.

AUTHOR BIOS

Please ask all your authors for short bios & photos – these will be included in our authors' gallery. Also, include max 5 keywords on areas of expertise and languages you might be happy utilise with the press, as we actively reach out to journalists to make use of Allegra's roster of authors. We will also be revising our section of regular contributors to include all of our guest editors. And do remember to provide us with your own bio & photo.

HOW TO GET THE MESSAGE OF YOUR THEMATIC WEEK OUT?

> *We do what we can! Yet nothing tops collaboration!*

We will share the threads and individual posts via our FB & Twitter streams. This gets nice visibility. However, we also depend on contributors and guest editors to take an active role in spreading the word to create a buzz around your posts: please 'like' the shared content on our FB and ask your contributors to do the same. SHARE the content both in FB & Twitter – this boosts the algorithm like nothing else & makes the posts much more visible in the feeds of others. Share via Twitter yourself too & like our shares and retweet them. Think of a couple of different ways to share the same content at later times — as reaction to specific events, or in response to posts both on Allegra and other platforms. All this will make an enormous difference in how much visibility we can gain.

TIMETABLE

Finally, if you envision delays in the date of submission, please let us know! We can manage delays, but the earlier we know, the better. Do submit everything LATEST on the WEDNESDAY preceding the week of publication. Our Manager of Things and Stuff, Andrea (andreak@allegralaboratory.net) will then distribute the work to our editorial team and ensure that everything runs smoothly.

> *Do you want to pencil in a date for submission & thematic week yet? We look forward to hearing from you!*

On Art and Activism

Allegra
May, 2017

It’s EVENTS’ time again!! From England, to The Netherlands, to Portugal, and all the way to Australia with a stop in Houston to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the historical 1977’s National Women’s Conference , this month, we’re all about art and activism! They tend to go naturally together, many have argued.

As always, if you want your event to feature in our next events list or if want to write a short report, don’t hesitate to get in touch with our events assistant Aude at audef@allegralaboratory.net.

Symposium: **Drawing Conversations 2: Body, Space, Place**

8 December 2017, Coventry University, England

Papers are invited for this one-day symposium intended to consider interrelationships of drawing, body, space and place. At the heart of this will be the body acting as the conduit between interior and exterior, private and public. Drawing in this sense can therefore be elastic in definition, from two-dimensional mark making, to more spatial languages that might involve capturing movement, three-dimensional drawing, or indeed understanding the processes of making the movement, mark or gesture. How do these gestures make meaning? What impulses from a particular space or place impelled the drawing? What is the relationship of the final work to a space or place?

Twenty-minute papers are invited from practitioners, historians and theoreticians. They can include projects undertaken, or be about particular works or ideas by others. [more]

Deadline for submission of paper proposals: 15 September 2017

Conference: **Mapping the Emotional Cityspace: Spaces, Performances and Emotion in Urban Life**

18 September, 2017, University of Adelaïde, Australia

Since Henri Lefebvre suggested that space is socially constructed and

constituted, cities have been reclassified from static 'maps' for human activities to performed spaces that draw together human behaviour, meaning, discourse, and material conditions in their production. Cities are not simply a background for movement, but a function of cultural and emotional practice. That cities are named, given boundaries and called home – and in turn that cities name, define and give identity to their inhabitants – has equally implicated emotion in their production, as a recent turn to emotional geographies and urban emotions reminds us. This symposium seeks to contribute to this burgeoning scholarship through exploring the productive relationships between emotions and cityscapes across time and space.

We are particularly interested in the relationship between urban geographies, architectures, buildings, and materialities and emotion. How are neighbourhood boundaries produced through and with emotion? How do emotional communities form and define themselves through urban space? How does architecture and the physical environment inform social relationships and behaviours and vice versa? And how do the emotional imaginings of urban environments impact on their histories, identities and communities? Moreover, what are the implications of such emotional productions of the cityscape for relationships of power, identity and more within them? [more]

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 1 June 2017

Conference: **Art & Activism: Resilience Techniques in Times of Crisis**

15-17 December 2017, Leiden, The Netherlands

The conference *Art & Activism* aims to understand the force of art to engage and express political sentiment. At the heart of any art that can be called activist is a

firm revolutionary belief in the possibility of societies reforming and improving. Behind its obvious involvement with present issues and concerns, activist art is always oriented to shaping an ameliorated future. This public role is not uncontested. The arts are (perpetually) under attack. A sense of crisis, moreover, is widely felt among contemporary artists and activists, who experience precarity, marginalization, and vulnerability on a daily basis and may put their bodies on the line. The idea of crisis, both in the arts and in society, has been widely articulated by scholars and critics. This interdisciplinary conference aims to create a space in which participants from scholarly, artistic and activist backgrounds can learn from and collaborate on a horizontal plane. [more]

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 31 May 2017

International Conference: **Invisible Republic: Music, Lettrism, Avant-Gardes**

25-27 October 2017, University of Lisbon, Portugal

In *Invisible Republic: Bob Dylan's Basement Tapes* (1997), Greil Marcus charts a countercultural sound map, a kind of laboratory where a new language is being forged. This is where, Marcus argues, we can locate the true voice of the century, a new consciousness, the alchemy of an undiscovered country. From this starting-point, we propose a journey into the tangled relationship between music, the avant-gardes and counterculture. […]

The present conference aims at exploring and bringing to the fore the "invisible republics" of culture, the ephemeral, the suppressed, the unconformity of artistic and political undercurrents. Above all, it asks how these separate geographical territories speak to each other, and how this might reshape our historical understanding of European and American modernity. [more]

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 30 April 2017 (first CFP) and 25 May 2017 (2nd CFP)

Conference: **1977-2017: The IWY National Women's Conference in retrospect**

5-7 November 2017, University of Houston, Texas

This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the 1977 National Women's Conference, the domestic answer to the United Nations' International Women's Year initiative. The Houston Conference, as it came to be known, was the largest federally mandated gathering of American women in history. On this occasion, 2000 delegates elected from fifty states and six territories and roughly 16,000 observers came together to craft a twenty-six plank National Plan of Action, submitted to President Jimmy Carter in 1978. The conference remains one of the most imaginative and wide-ranging exercises in civic engagement realized in the twentieth century, and we seek to draw attention to the diversity, ingenuity, and determination of participants who dared to dream up concrete policy goals of "what women want." The recent global response to the Women's March on Washington suggests just how much the issues debated at the Houston Conference still resonate.

During a three day conference, November 5-7, we aim to take stock of this momentous feat as well as consider the separate concerns articulated at a "pro-family" counter-convention held in Houston simultaneously. A scholarly academic symposium will coincide with a delegate and observer reunion. Commemorative activities will occur simultaneous to academic sessions and begin the prior weekend. In holding two events at once, we seek a cross-pollination of ideas and

action, bringing together academics and activists, current and lifetime students and teachers, and those that remember being there alongside those who seek to carry the torch forward. [more]

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 15 July 2017

Featured image by Anne Ruthman (flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

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70 (or so) Essential Books in Anthropology – Allegra's Readers' Choices

Allegra
May, 2017

Which books did you, our dear readers, consider as *really* essential reading in anthropology? Here's the list of books that you suggested – all 70 + of them! The end features also suggestions for biological anthropology. Should we add a separate list for linguistic anthropology, queer studies – something else? We look forward to continuing the debate!

This version does not include the books included in our original TOP 30 list. Thus it looks like we'll have to create yet another list to synthesise these two. Of course the task in itself is impossible, namely to arrive at any exhaustive list on which we'd all agree. Yet this exercise is useful also for another reason: to get a sense of how our field sees the 'core' of our collective endeavour. If we don't like what we see here – namely the predominance of the 'white Anglo-American Male Panel' – at least we know where to start initiating change!

Allegra’s readers suggested list:

1. Anderson, B. R. (2016). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.
2. Bataille, G. (1993). *The accursed share, volumes II and III*(Vol. 2). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
3. Behar, R., & Gordon, D. A. (1996). *Women writing culture*. California: University of California Press.
4. Benedict, R. (1989). *The chrysanthemun and the sword: patterns of Japanese culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
5. Bohannan, L. (1954). *Return to laughter*. London: V.Gollancz.
6. Bourdieu, P. (2002). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
7. Bourgois, P. (2010). *In search of respect: selling crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8. **Briggs, J. L. (2001). *Never in anger: portrait of an Eskimo family*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.**
9. **Carsten, J. (2007). *After kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.**
10. Cerwonka, A., & Malkki, L. H. (2007). *Improvising theory process and temporality in ethnographic fieldwork*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
11. Clastres, P., Hurley, R., & Stein, A. (2007). *Society against the state: essays in political anthropology*. New York: Zone Books.
12. Daniel, E. V., & Ortner, S. B. (1997). *Charred lullabies: Chapters in an anthropography of violence*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
13. Dave, N. N. (2012). *Queer activism in India: a story in the anthropology of ethics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
14. **Descola, P., Lloyd, J., & Sahlins, M. D. (2013). *Beyond nature and culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.**
15. Escobar, A. (2012). *Encountering development: the making and unmaking of the third world*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

16. Farquhar, J. (1996). *Knowing practice: the clinical encounter of chinese medicine*. Boulder: Westview.
17. Favret-Saada, J. (2015). *The anti-witch*. Chicago, IL: Hau Books.
18. Fei, X. (2001). *From the soil: the foundations of Chinese society*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California press.
19. Feldman, I. (2008). *Governing Gaza bureaucracy, authority, and the work of rule, 1917-1967*. Durham: Duke University Press.
20. Ferguson, J. (2009). *The anti-politics machine: "development," depoliticization, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
21. Ferguson, J. (2012). *Expectations of modernity: myths and meanings of urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
22. Foucault, M. (2010). *The birth of the clinic: an archaeology of medical perception*. London: Routledge.
23. Gennep, A. V., Vizedom, M. B., & Caffee, G. L. (2010). *The rites of passage*. London: Routledge.
24. Handelman, D. (1998). *Models and mirrors: towards an anthropology of public events*. New York: Berghahn Books.
25. Harris, M. (1989). *Cows, pigs, wars, & witches the riddles of culture*. New York: Vintage.
26. Harrison, F. V. (2008). *Outsider within: reworking anthropology in the global age*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
27. Harrison, F. V. (2010). *Decolonizing anthropology: moving further toward an anthropology of liberation*. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologists, American Anthropological Association.
28. Herzfeld, M. (1991). *A place in history: social and monumental time in a Cretan town*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
29. Ho, K. (2009). *Liquidated: an ethnography of Wall Street*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
30. Hull, M. S. (2012). *Government of paper: the materiality of bureaucracy in urban Pakistan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

31. Latour, B. (2005). *Science in action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
32. **Leach, E. R. (1993). *Political systems of Highland Burma: a study of Kachin social structure*. London: Athlone Press.**
33. Lévi-Strauss, C. (2010). *The savage mind*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
34. Livingston, J. (2012). *Improvising medicine: an African oncology ward in an emerging cancer epidemic*. Durham: Duke University Press.
35. Lock, M. (2011). *Twice dead organ transplants and the reinvention of death*. Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press.
36. Lutz, C. A., & Collins, J. L. (1998). *Reading National geographic*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
37. Maanen, J. V. (2011). *Tales of the field: on writing ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
38. Mafeje, A., & Mafeje, A. (1991). *The theory and ethnography of African social formations: the case of the Interlacustrine Kingdoms*. Dakar: Codesria.
39. Martino, E. D. (2005). *The land of remorse: a study of southern Italian tarantism*. London: Free Association Books.
40. Mintz, S. W. (1985). *Sweetness and power: the place of sugar in modern history*. New York: Penguin.
41. Mudimbe, V. Y. (1995). *The idea of Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
42. Mueggler, E. (2001). *The age of wild ghosts: memory, violence, and place in Southwest China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
43. Munn, N. D. (2007). *The Fame of Gawa: a symbolic study of value transformation in a Massim (Papua New Guinea) society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
44. Muñoz, J. E. (2009). *Cruising utopia: the then and there of queer futurity*. New York: New York University Press.
45. Newton, E. (1979). *Mother camp: female impersonators in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

46. Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2006). *Insiders and outsiders: citizenship and xenophobia in contemporary Southern Africa*. Dakar: Codesria books.
47. Ong, A. (2006). *Flexible citizenship: the cultural logics of transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
48. **Powdermaker, H. (2000). *Stranger and friend: the way of an anthropologist*. New York: Norton & Company.**
49. Power, C., Finnegan, M., & Callan, H. (2017). *Human origins: contributions from social anthropology*. New York: Berghahn.
50. Ramphele, M. (1997). *A bed called home: life in the migrant labour hostels of Cape Town*. Cape Town: D. Philip.
51. Riles, A. (2010). *The network inside out*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press.
52. **Rosaldo, R. (1989). *Culture and truth: renewing the anthropologist's search for meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press.**
53. **Rosaldo, M. Z., & Lamphere, L. (2002). *Woman, culture, and society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.**
54. **Said, E. W. (2004). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.**
55. Savard, R., & Proulx, J. (1982). *Canada: derrière l'épopée, les autochtones*. Montréal: Hexagone.
56. Scott, J. C. (2008). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
57. Scott, J. C. (2011). *The art of not being governed: an anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT
58. Scott, J. C. (2008). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press.: Yale University Press.
59. **Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed.**
60. Spivak, G. C. (1988). *Can the subaltern speak?*Basingstoke: Macmillan.
61. Stewart, K. (1996). *A space on the side of the road: cultural poetics in an "other" America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
62. Stoller, P. (2010). *The Taste of Ethnographic Things The Senses in Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

63. Taussig, M. T. (2003). *The devil and commodity fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press.
64. Trinh, T. M. (2009). *Woman, native, other: writing postcoloniality and feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
65. Trinh, T. M. (2011). *Elsewhere, within here: immigration, refugeeism and the boundary event*. New York: Routledge.
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TOP 30 Revisited – Readers' Choices

Allegra
May, 2017

Back in in 2015 Allegra published "The 30 Essential Books in Anthropology" – a list curated via a small-scale survey among junior and senior anthropologists. The list received instantly vast attention, attracting a great number of comments and becoming one of our most-read posts of the year.

We revisited the list on March 16th, 2017 as our intern Lena Pham came up with the idea to share it via our Twitter account. This was part of our ongoing plan to develop our social media presence and find ways to offer our content new visibility.

This time, quite unexpectedly, the list got into massive circulation, receiving an unparalleled response in our social media history. At our own Facebook page, the post received 300 likes. It was shared at HAU's feed, resulting in almost 600

reactions and over 200 shares. The post's response was also unparalleled in Twitter, multiplying our regular daily interactions.

Now the list is again our most-read post this year. We'll wait in great anticipation to see whether it will be topped by future posts later in the year! Along with its popularity, the post received much – justified – criticism. As we also commented on our introductory words in the March 17 post,

> *the list is very white and male, and barely incorporates any works after the post modern turn including works by indigenous anthropologists, inter-sectionalism and feminist critiques. How could that happen, at Allegra, with our determined criticism both of the ethnocentrism of our field as well as its male dominance?! These are all questions that we'll continue to mull over at Allegra for quite a while!*

To address this criticism, we asked you, our readers, what books you thought were missing. In return we received over 70 suggestions. The book most frequently cited as missing by commenters was *Beyond Nature and Culture* by Philippe Descola. Other books that were mentioned by multiple commenters included Anna Tsing's *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* and Roy Wagner's *The Invention of Culture.* Edward W. Said was also suggested multiple times.

The list also received criticism due to its focus on essential socio-cultural books, with a lack of books from fields such as archaeology, linguistic anthropology, and biological anthropology. A list of essential biological anthropology books was suggested by one of our commenters. (List included at the end of our revised list shared tomorrow).

> *One commentator brought up the distinction between essential and influential books. He noted that there are books that have greatly influenced the field but are not necessarily "essential" reading for anthropology in general.*

As an example, Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (flawed as it is) is one of a few ethnographies that is more influential in the place it wrote about (Japan) than perhaps it is in the discipline today. Fei Xiaotong's *From the Soil* is a key text that started much of what we recognize as anthropology in China today.

Authors named as essential included also Sharon Hutchinson, Peter Gow, Anne Christine Taylor, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Alfred Gell, **Pascal Boyer**, **Tim Ingold**, Katherine Verdery, Gayle Rubin, David Schneider, George Devereux, and Leslie White.

Other books mentioned included Aihwa Ong's *Flexible Citizenship* for its influence on migration studies and James Scott´s *Seeing like a State* and *Weapons of the Weak* for their influence on the field of political science.

Mother Camp by Esther Newton was also highlighted, with the accompanying words "The book provided a start for entire fields of exotism at home, lesbian & queer anthropology, and has strongly influenced the wider fields of feminist and queer studies (and more)."

> *As the discipline of anthropology continues to change and develop, the books we deem essential should also change.*

Through the comments and contribution of our readers we were able to start a discussion about this topic and reflect on the criticisms that arose. These types of interactions with our readers are important as Allegra Lab continues to grow.

Click here for the full list of Allegra's reader suggestions!

Interview: Gabriele del Grande is Free

Paloma Yáñez Serrano
May, 2017

Gabriele del Grande is a journalist and human rights activist, co-director of the documentary 'On the Bride's Side' and founder of the blog Fortress Europe. He is now doing research for his new book 'A Partisan Told Me', rethinking the Syrian war from the people's perspective.

After being detained on April 9th in the city of Reyhanli, Gabriele del Grande, was put into isolation in a removal center of the Hatay province of Turkey. During his

15 days he was held without charges and started a hunger strike. Fortunately today, Monday 24th, he has been released at 7.35am.

Dr. Alexandra D'Onofrio, Gabriele's partner and fellow anthropologist, agreed to tell us her experience of these confusing and tense days, while Gabriele was held in the removal center.

Paloma: Can you tell me about Gabriele's research?

Alexandra: Gabriele has been working on his new project 'A Partisan Told Me', for which we realized the video for the crowdfunding together in Athens before he left. 1342 contributors, he calls 'grassroots publishers', participated in the campaign, encouraging him to do this research. His idea was to travel to Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Tunisia and Libya, working with memory to re-tell the story of the Syrian war from its beginning, from the uprising in 2011 until now, following all the different phases and the rise of ISIS.

> *The intention was to talk about the complex dynamics going on, not only from the perspective of geopolitical analysis, but primarily from the human point of view of the protagonists' stories.*

Those people who were on the street from the very beginning, or who ended up taking arms, at a certain point, to then change factions once again; the story of families who have brothers fighting on opposing sides. Gabriele was trying to reflect the complexity of the war, understanding that whatever side one takes there are no winners. It is difficult, because he doesn't take sides, so many people are unhappy with that because he is not openly saying he is pro one side or the other. Of course, he was pro-pacifist and the activists who took the streets initially were his main contacts at the very beginning. But then the war complicated everything, and most of them are not in Syria, they are out, they are the defeated.

> *'The book I have in mind will tell the story of the war in Syria and the birth of the Islamic State through a great project of narrative journalism which weaves*

> *the epic stories of the common people into the history of the last twenty years of war and terrorism. Because Isis is talked about every day, but very few people have really understood what it is all about. Who are the men and the women who in their thousands have joined to defend the Caliphate? Who are the civilians who stayed behind in their towns? But above all: how did we get here?' Gabriele del Grande*

Gabriele del Grande explaining his research about the Syrian war:

What happened when the Turkish Police arrested him?

Apparently, when they got him, he was eating in a restaurant while talking with a Syrian informant. They were in Reyhanli a city near the border with Syria, but he had no intention of crossing the border. Border areas are always interesting locations for listening and collecting the stories of fugitives. Eight policemen approached them in the restaurant and started asking about what he was doing and his job. Probably he told them they were just talking, but they didn't believe he was a journalist because he had no camera and they took him in. Initially they told him they were just going to check and he would be deported soon. The problem is that all this is unofficial, nobody has told us anything official. There is no official written declaration onto white paper saying Gabriele del Grande was stopped and detained for this reason. They have been telling us he was stopped in an area where he shouldn't have been without permission, because it is a movement-restricted area and there is a lot of attention, especially under the referendum. But the job of a journalist is often to be in places where "a witness" shouldn't be. So they took him, checked him and they said they would expel him the next day.

Initially, what we know is that he was supposed to be sent back Thursday 13th, when he had a flight back to Athens. However, that same day, instead of sending him to the airport, they took him to another removal center, where he was put into isolation. The previous center in Hatay, being near the border, was full of

Syrians. The Turkish Authorities who saw him do his normal thing, 'talking to people' in Arabic, didn't know what was going on and probably became suspicious. When the Italian honorary consul went to the detention centre in Hatay on Friday 14th April he was refused permission to see or talk to Gabriele directly. The director of the centre told us that he was interviewing people and that his behaviour represented a threat to security, so they decided to move him, without telling the Italian authorities, and us as a consequence, where he had been transferred.

The Italian honorary consul was told that Gabriele didn't want to talk to the authorities. Later, we found that this was not true at all. He had actually written down on a paper that they made him sign that he wanted to see the consul. So as they restrained his right to call or see the lawyer and the consul, last Tuesday 18th he smashed his cell and forced the door in protest in order to get a call. Finally, they allowed him to call us, and that's when we found out where he was locked up, that he had asked to see the authorities and a lawyer, that he was in isolation and that they were interrogating him about his work. As he was not under arrest, we have no idea who interrogated him.

In the interrogatories he has given general replies but refused to give any detailed information without the presence of a lawyer. Later, when they found out he was actually a quite famous journalist, as the news of his detention passed on the CNN, they were very excited about it, wanting to do selfies with him. He was joking about it, when he called me. At least there is a nice atmosphere inside, although it is like a prison. The problem is being detained without information, without legal assistance, without knowing what is going to happen, how long are you going to be in and even being interrogated without a lawyer.

If Gabriele had been officially arrested he would have had right to a lawyer almost immediately, but these are removal centers – detainees are there in order to be expelled, so there is no reason to isolate somebody and detain him for a number of days, without removing this person. Taner Kilic, our Turkish lawyer, says it is

completely illogical to the place and to the process of removal what is happening to Gabriele and that it is illegal.

> *Now we are in a very special Turkey, there was the referendum but also the country is under a state of emergency laws, so understanding what is happening, how long it can last and what rules there are, is very complicated.*

Do you have a theory about what happened?

People have been saying many things. Some say they were following him and they just waited for him to be in the right spot, catch him, put him in a place where rights would be suspended, so that they could find out a bit more. I am not sure that this is completely true. These were particular days where the attention was particularly focused on people talking to each other. Maybe there were just following him without knowing if he was a journalist or not, and caught him because they found his movements suspicious. Maybe they didn't realize what he was doing exactly, but slowly found out what type of job he was doing and wanted to use him in order to get information he had. Maybe this is a lesson the Turkish Authorities are trying to give to other journalists researching this kind of sensitive issues. It is very complex and there is a bureaucratic issue as well. Bureaucracy takes lot of time in Turkey, so it is not necessarily a complot. We are all confused about why they are kept him so long. Is it just because of the bureaucratic reasons? And if he was just waiting for expulsion, why didn't they give us his file?

They did not give the lawyer the file on Friday 21st when he asked for it. The thing is that they probably don't want to tell us he was set for expulsion because they want to keep investigating about his work in case they find out from him some useful information. This information might then also put him in a position of being charged legally.

So what is so suspicious from Gabriele's work, can you tell me some anecdotes he told you about his research these past months?

He would come back with so many of these anecdotes. Anecdotes of survival

strategies in Syrian prisons, stories of love, jokes of men, because it is mainly a male situation where he manages to do his interviews. It is a male storytelling context. That gives you the idea of how he interviews people, which can be said to be very anthropological. Even through he might sit down with a recorder, the conversation he has with his informants is usually very informal and it develops in a flow. Because he can pick up all the nuances in the language, conversations would flow from political to religious, from the scriptures to the news, or from jokes to talking about parenthood. So because he knew it was ambitious for him alone to reflect on all the complexity of what Syria has turned into and talk about the war through the human stories of the people that got involved in it, he felt propelled to study a lot. He has been collecting material which has been inspirational to Islamic militants, videos, books. He was learning the Koran, every morning he would recite Suras to remember, and understand how people really got motivated in Islamic activism. It is not only about major power sources, money and arms coming from everywhere, but it is also a story of oppression.

> *If you have been oppressed for decades and decades, both by neoliberal states as a religious activist – like it happened to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt-, Islam and redemption are the few sources of hope that are left.*

Redemption, in the sense of taking over, is a way for the militants to say they believe in an alternative to individualism, consumerism and that they want to to be in charge of their “own” land, redefying values and ideals according to a re-interpretation of tradition. However many militants also understood that the war has turned people into beasts, hence they abandoned the arms or their position within the organization and fled to other states.

At the same time, Gabriele would come back saying there is something very interesting about war, people get really addicted to it and they miss it after. War is also a drive for life even if you are going to die, but it gives you a purpose that you are doing something. In a way, war is part of the story of Islam and how it came in to being according to the religious scriptures.

To conclude, can you tell me something about how you felt these days?

I always thought this could happen. He is that kind of person that is aware of the risks, but feels the urge to be where he needs to be as a journalist, to tell the story of this historical moment. He started going to Syria when we found out we were expecting our first child. Before, he was in Libya and that was quite troubling, because it was during the war and the shelling. It was difficult, but I have trusted him all along; I have trusted the fact that he is an incredibly clever man who has his antennas ready. He not only speaks with people, but he also doesn't call too much attention, he goes really embedded, as they say. He can pass as an Arab and is often hosted by his friends that are locals, so it is very rare that he takes the distances of conventional journalism and yet his work is widely recognised both in Italy and internationally. He is always open and honest about his work as a journalist wherever he goes, but it is the way that he carries out his research that keeps him safe too, and that has made me trust him and appreciate the necessary work he produces. Of course, I would like to talk to him about this time and understand whether he expected this or not. Especially since he wasn't working on sensitive topics in Turkey, like the Kurdish issue for example. When he left I was normal, like every time, and I knew where he was going to be. I knew he was in Reyhanli to interview Syrians waiting to go back in and had no intention of actually crossing the border, as some people suggest. He was there because that's where many Syrians with very interesting stories are right now, populating the border waiting to get back to their country.

> *On a final note, I'm sure he will have made the maximum of out of this experience. He will be soon writing stories about these places he has been and that we all have been imagining. He is probably going to come back stronger than what he was.*

Even though he is expected to be menaced or feel threatened, he is going to come back with more stuff to tell and a greater urge to tell things, nothing like this can stop him. So the decision is left to us, we either go with him or we are left behind.

I would say that it is better for the rest of us to take the ride, otherwise we will be losing out from it. After these days of anxiety, let’s see him back and we will see on which adventure he’ll take us next.

Collaborative music video making in the cityscape of Goma (RDC)

Eugenio Giorgianni
May, 2017

This paper presents a collaborative approach to making music video clips as an ethnographic research tool. The case study is a one-month fieldwork trip in Goma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conducted between February and March 2015 with fellow filmmakers Paloma Yañez Serrano and Benjamin Llorens Rocamora.[1] More specifically, the present work analyses the experience of a collaborative music video clip realised together with a group of young Congolese musicians.

Although collaborative music video clips have been included in various ethnographic films such as *Fabrik Funk* and *Golden Scars* by Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier and *Shooting Freetown* by Kieran Hanson, there is very little academic literature on this experimental research method (Boudreault-Fournier 2010, Ranocchiari 2015)[2]. This paper intends to contribute to the inclusion of collaborative music video making within the academic debate, following up on the panel 'Music Video Clips as Participatory Research Tool in Ethnomusicology' presented at the second AIBR International Conference of Anthropology in Barcelona, Spain, on 9 September 2016.[3] The reasons for this are in epistemological, ethical, and political reflections concerning the fieldwork, as I discuss below.

When the music matches up with the images

The methodology of collaborative filmmaking within audiovisual ethnography was born with Rouch's *ciné-trance*, achieving through the camera the principle of a shared anthropology between the observant and the observed. Ethnofiction is a participatory genre where the subjects/actors improvise fictional actions in front of the camera, inspired by their own lived experiences (Sjöberg 2006a). Collaborative music video clips can be considered as an application of ethnofiction to ethnomusicological film (Ranocchiari 2015: 233-234).

We do not necessarily have to consider music video clip in its standard commercial shape —two to three minutes long, fast-paced, with jump cuts— although this format can be applied when useful.

What is important is to elaborate together with the musicians a creative dialogue between images and sounds, in a format —the video clip— that constitutes a global vocabulary of popular music, which process touches all the steps of the musical ecology, from the conception and production of the piece to its dissemination.

Music video clips are non-human actors with a strong impact on musicking (Steingo 2015: 120). Digital music media are 'reshaping overlapping national and global imaginaries and the changing nature of cosmopolitanism' (Shipley 2013: 363). This is particularly outstanding in transnational societies marked by large emigration such as the Congolese (White 2012: 728-729) where music circulation between homeland and diaspora is widely digitised, and video clips convey important aesthetic values and visual components of the cultural production. Such a circuit contributes to the creation of 'cosmopolitan styles that transcend local-global oppositions' promoting instead a sense of 'worldliness' (Shipley ibid: 368). Particularly in the case of hip-hop and all the other genres generally labelled under the umbrella term of 'urban music', the visual code spread by videos – gestures, attitudes, way of dressing, urban scenarios – is an unavoidable aspect of this global community, which corresponds to the claim for modernity, rebellion and self expression by larges masses of African youth (Charry 2012).

Besides, the recourse to video clip allows the diasporic artists to shape their art message to target Congolese audience, at the same time that enables the Congolese musicians to make their tunes circulating abroad, in the hope of capturing the attention of Euro-American sponsors and media.

Although only an elite group of wealthy Congolese citizens have access to the Internet on a daily – or even weekly – basis, video clips remain relevant for the national market, as TV is one of the main media responsible for spreading music trends and crazes, through programmes and channels dedicated to Congolese music transmitted on a continental scale.

On a local level, the hand-to-hand circulation of digital music files – via devices

like USB flash drivers, cellphones and MP3 players – allows audiovisual files to be disseminated through the network of music market and media and to reach the public, even if offline.

Video clips as a research method

The video clip inspires a hermeneutic attitude that decentralises text and textuality and opens up to non-discursive forms, which are the natural means of expression for billions of human beings, illiterate, marginalised, or oppressed, who 'do not have the privilege of explicitness' (Conquergood 2002: 148). The non-narrative structure of the video clip, 'a hybrid between an advertising vehicle and postmodern video art' (Wollen 1986: 169) is appropriate to express non-verbal imagination and aesthetics of the musicians, and stimulates the use of body language and dance as organic codes within a particular musical language.

The intertextual nature of video clip as a film process places the present research in dialogue with an articulation of musical meanings wider than the mere sonic artefact.

Collaborating with musicians through the video clip turns fieldwork into a mutually beneficial project, in which all subjects involved in the ethnographic encounter can take part in while pursuing their own interests. The making of the video clip gives a deep insight of the economic and social circuits where the work of the musician participants is located, integrating the researcher in a more intimate sphere, both human and professional (Ranocchiari 2015: 229).

By involving the artists in the realisation of the visual texts that will support their tunes, we seek an integrated approach to the ecology of transnational Congolese popular music, including musical creation, sense-making through music, political impact, social positioning, economic networks, strategies of diffusion, dialogue with the audience, musicians' dreams and desires.

As in other collaborative film techniques, the filmmaker has to share the authority and relinquish part of the control on the process in order to leave room for the musicians' creativity.

Collaborative music video making in Goma

During our fieldwork in Goma, the methodology of participatory video clip allowed us a great deal of access to the life spaces and histories of the musicians, who were enthusiastic about taking part in a documentary film, and excited about collaborating in the realization of their music video clip – the first one, for some of them. On several occasions, we were exhorted to take the camera out and film in private domestic reunions, in spite of my worries. The medium of the 'moving image' softens the boundaries and highlights the opportunities 'that can arise when one culture observes another very different' (Wissler 2009: 45-47). The lens mediated the process of sense-making we went through while observing, and being observed.

The camera was the contact tool, in a context where white people are unlikely to be seen walking on the streets or engaging with locals in public spaces, hence every normal interaction implied in doing ethnography – and, even more, the collaborative approach we were adopting – was welcome as surprisingly, pleasantly bizarre.

> *The huge imbalance of power between us investigators and the average population of Goma is implicitly present in every image we have taken. However, the audiovisual collaboration has allowed the narrative structure of the subjects of research to overlap ours, giving life to an extremely intense field experience.*

Almost all the artists we knew live in shacks without running water or electric power, and music does not provide them with any source of stable income. Nonetheless, they dedicate all their energies to their music, which they perceive as a mission. Bob White (2010: 744) states that Congolese popular music 'has

never done a systematic criticism of power'. To the contrary,

> *the musicians we engaged with in Goma defines what they play as 'la musique de la révolution', which consists in clamouring for the social changes they need: no more war, massacres, corruption; free education; less social inequality; and an to the exploitation of Congolese wealth.*

The specificity of Goma music scene is predicated on thirty years of bloodthirsty civil war in the Kivu region. The war attracted countless multinational NGOs to face a constant humanitarian emergency. NGOs and programmes like UNICEF play a crucial role in local cultural production, promoting music events to support their agenda. In a context where there is virtually no private music market, the possibility to find a sponsor influences the shape of the musical message, pushing the artists to adhere to the rhetoric of European and North American NGOs.

Although many local musicians consider themselves 'conscious' artists, many video clips realised in Goma represents the singers as wealthy and stylish urban hustlers – i. e. *Yoka* by M'Chriss feat. M'yomba; *Beautiful Forever* by M'Chriss feat. Will'Stone; *Unapedeza* by Mista Faba. As there is no room for these images in real public space in Goma, marked by extreme poverty, usually videos are shot in hotels: semi-interiors (gardens, swimming pool or terraces), interiors (confortable rooms, night clubs) or close-ups of fancy cars passing by the few kilometres of paved road that link Goma city centre to the Rwandan border.

Will'Stone, Voldie Mapenzi, Mista Faba, and Black Man Bausi, the four artists who took part in our project, selected a song called *Amani Kila Siku* (kiSwahili for 'peace every day') that features the four of them for the shooting of the video clip. The lyrics express the need of local people, specially the youth, to overcome the endless conflict that afflicts the region. We proposed them to shoot the video outdoors and to involve the people in the streets in the filming.

> *The artists accepted this, welcoming the challenge of something new to them, and appropriating it to their message; so they led us through the branches of*

> *their semiotic networks, pointing our camera to the most significant scenarios for expressing their message.*

Their agency has shaped the political sense of the images, that is, the aesthetics of the video, without any explicit narrative apart from sounds and words of their music.

Urban space encodes all of that; in our walking with the camera, the streets were eliciting most of the content of the film: a line of children carrying water into bins introduced the issue of the privatization of Lake Kivu resources. Buildings ruined by the last lava flow gave the artists a perfect scenario to enact the main concern of their music production: war. The lyrics of their song are a continuous claim for peace.

> *By selecting the semi-space of a tumbledown edifice to shoot a part of the video clip, musicians have been able to show war through place, evocating the massive bombing during the battle of Goma in 2013, and locating their clamouring for social changes in an appropriate setting.*

The tension between our ethnographic approach to filming, and the aesthetic video tailoring that musicians are used to in Goma, swiftly emerged after the editing of the clip. Will'Stone, one of the rappers featuring in *Amani Kila Siku*, gently observed that a strip of his undershirt appears at several points in the video clip; however, he did not ask us to remove these clips. A few days after we released the video online, Will'Stone commented on *Amani Kila Siku* Facebook page:

> *I really love this film because there is no editing, just a real reality.*

Conflict resolved.

Hanging out with the musicians, following their pathways, being welcomed to

their networks led us to expand the communication with them. They brought us into their kaleidoscopic routine, walking miles, as the waves of communication in Goma are physical rather than virtual, and interactions are mainly face-to-face. Amani Kila Siku was played in a loop, continuously, as they bring their music everywhere with them: on a USB stick, to try to convince radio speakers, journalist and venues DJs to play their songs; on a portable stereo, to play on the way, everywhere they go, until the battery dies.

The film process involved several friends and acquaintances who actively participated in the process, choreographing, suggesting solutions, chatting with us between takes. Plus, the shooting sessions elicited interesting pieces of public discourse, putting street vendors and moto-taxi drivers in dialogue with the artists about the role of music face to the harsh living conditions of the region.

Such an intense adherence to the musicians' personal point of view has inevitably restricted the spectrum of our observations, limiting our capability to critically elaborate the inputs from the fieldwork. The result of our research is inevitably guided by them, as is our whole gaze on Goma. At a personal level, that is achievement enough.

[1] The fieldwork project focused on shooting the material for a documentary film about the everyday life of four local singers selected for the second edition of the Festival Amani, an annual international music event held in Goma. This film, called *Amani Kila Siku*, is still in production.

[2] Both Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier and Dario Ranocchiari are ethnographic filmmakers who have included music videos in their researches; that means, virtually no attention has been given to collaborative music video clip inside academia apart from scholars who are practitioners of video clips themselves.

[3] The panel, co-chaired by Dario Ranocchiari and I, included papers presented

by Kieran Hanson (the University of Manchester) and Yushi Yanohara (Kyoto University).

Videography

Amani Kila Siku by Voldie Mapenzi, Mista Faba, Will'Stone, Black Man Bausi

Yoka by M'Chriss feat. M'yomba

Unapedeza by Mista Faba

Beautiful Forever by M'Chriss feat. Will'Stone

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