Anthropologies of the south: cultures, emphases, epistemologies
Edited by Sandy Toussaint

Articles

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WAN

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the end of the Liberal Consensus,* by Peter Sutton,
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Introducción

Sandy Toussaint

Issue No. 5 of the World Anthropologies Network's e-journal is devoted to the cultures, emphases, ideas and epistemologies of anthropologists working in a mix of Australasian and Pacific settings. Read on their own or in conjunction with each other, each article represents a particular aspect of socio-cultural, ecological, material and political life, as well as insights into the interrelated matters that engage, inspire and sometimes frustrate anthropologists, many of which will resonate with anthropologists elsewhere. Cautiously drawing on the sub-heading 'southern anthropologies' as a means of defining and distinguishing, rather than spatially, intellectually or socially containing, the Issue, the focus of each contribution circumvents at least two interrelated issues: firstly, by exploring matters of interest to anthropological practice, ethics and thought in an increasingly globalised world and, secondly, by conveying at least some insights into the richness and the distinctiveness of anthropology in Australasian and Pacific settings. Keeping in mind the collective interests, knowledges and languages of WAN as a network concerned to contribute to 'other anthropologies and anthropologies otherwise' (WAN, 2003, p.265), Issue No. 5 also shows how anthropological and other *redes*, or networks, can be usefully expanded by electronic means in a way that was not realizable a decade or so ago (Toussaint 2006, 2007).

WAN was conceptualized as being an evolving network (Ribeiro and Escobar 2006; Poblocki 2009; Thompson 2008; WAN 2003) that would facilitate the extension and production of knowledge claims and the exchange of ideas both within and beyond nation states, academies and independent groups, including non-government organizations. Issue No. 5 is part of that 'becoming process' (to draw on Bakhtin's [1981] emphasis) as it introduces the work of emerging and established scholars whose background, research and contribution has been fostered within

a spectrum of socio-cultural, geographic and political settings. Issue contents do not, of course, cover all ethnographic areas and topics being explored by anthropologists in so-called 'southern…' (for the current purposes) settings, but they hopefully indicate at least a few contemporary directions.

The Issue opens with a cogently argued article by Thomas Reuter who canvasses the theoretical, epistemological and practical value of cultural critique as a means to address thoughtless modern consumption and its implications for climate change. Reuter's defining piece concludes with a beautiful visual image symbolizing *Hope* (a theme embedded in each article) by Rita Reuter. Reuter's article is followed by Graeme MacRae's rich description and analysis of a project in Bali, Indonesia, where the adoption of measures to combat climate change reveal not only a set of contradictions but also challenges for anthropologists. Christine Pam is also concerned with environmental issues (perhaps indicating a primary Australasian and Pacific concern, as well as a world-wide emphasis). Via Bruno Latour and others, and with reference to ethnographic settings such as Australia, Bangladesh and the Solomons, she explores the extent to which anthropology can not only assist work in this field in its own right, but also in integrated and cross-disciplinary projects, especially where Geographic Information Systems are involved. As Pam makes plain, integrated projects provide the best possible frameworks to ensure the inclusion of indigenous, scientific and other knowledge forms. Nor Azlin Tajuddin's reflective article echoes the concerns of many doctoral candidates who are drawn to particular topics of inquiry for reasons that are a mix of emotional, practical and intellectual reasons. As Nor Azlin shows, personal responses to environmental issues in Malaysia impacted on her research in a way that has fruitfully liberated, as well as made more difficult on occasion, thesis production. Marco Cuevas-Hewitt concentrates on diasporic social movements, in particular Filipino American activists in the San Francisco Bay area of North America. Drawing on anthropology and philosophy, Marco canvasses complex, global notions of belonging within diasporic contexts as a means to explore identity, ethnicity and power relations more broadly. Mandy Wilson's emphasis is on the complexities of gender and culture in an Australian context. She draws thoughtfully and constructively on the work of Mary Douglas and Victor Turner to contemplate the experience of social, emotional and cultural gender fluidity that fosters a 'betwixt and between' liminality for the people among whom she worked. Michael O'Kane's work considers a very different

domain, practice and vantage point where he investigates both the value and the limitations of anthropological work in a multi-disciplinary context. Concentrated on an agricultural project in regional Victoria, Australia, O'Kane deliberates the challenges for anthropologists who work in such situations, especially the tensions that arise as an anthropologist attempts to straddle power disparities, as well as the expertise and knowledge embedded in project foci and process. Brendan Corrigan's article focuses comparatively on indigenous groups in the Kimberley region of northern Western Australia, and the Aru Islands of Indonesia. Concerned to assess not only the value but also the impact and accessibility of 'different stories about the same place', at the heart of Corrigan's discussion is an issue of central concern to WAN: how, when and why some knowledge constructions are privileged more so than others? In Corrigan's case, the example focuses on concepts of place and the interaction between archaeological, indigenous and other knowledge claims to explore the intertwined relationship of knowledge, power and authority.

The Issue concludes with two book reviews of Peter Sutton's (2009) *The Politics of Suffering*. As the opening commentary to the reviews by Pat Lowe and Triloki Pandey explains, the book's publication generated a great deal of debate in print and electronic media, including via the Australian Anthropology Society's inter-active network, the AASnet, an exchange that varied in quality, grace and emphasis. Whilst not everyone will agree with Sutton's approach, the book remains an important one, in part because he contemplates certain aspects of contemporary indigenous life, including indigenous people's relationship to anthropology and sectors of government. These matters not only have relevance in Australian settings; they are also relevant way beyond Australasia and the Pacific.

which Issue content is based, and The University of Western Australia Press for permission to re-produce Rebecca's map which first appeared on the cover of *Applied Anthropology in Australasia*, edited by Sandy Toussaint and Jim Taylor.

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Anthropological theory and the alleviation of anthropogenic climate change: Understanding the cultural causes of systemic change resistance

Thomas Reuter

Abstract

In this article I argue that anthropologists are well placed to investigate the role of cultural practices, social contexts and ethical considerations in enabling communities and individuals to respond effectively and humanely to the potentially catastrophic consequences of those global climatic changes most scientists now hold to be inevitable. The aim is to show how culturally mediated moral considerations and habitual behaviour patterns inform community responses regarding the urgent need for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The article proposes a method of systemic cultural critique to raise awareness of destructive behaviour patterns enshrined in the most basic cosmological assumptions of late modern consumer society.

> 'One must imagine Sisyphus happy.'
>
> *Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, 1942, closing words.*

Anthropology and climate change: What does culture have to do with it?

In this article, I examine what the discipline of anthropology may contribute to the worldwide effort to cope with the certain prospect of substantial and the likely prospect of catastrophic anthropogenic climate change. What anthropologists do is not always clear to the public, and even for us, it has become difficult to remain mindful of the discipline's overall mission in the wake

of ever increasing specialisation. I begin by providing a broad outline of what I believe to be the discipline's fundamental concerns and insights, and why these insights are important in the current struggle to gain broadly based cultural and political acceptance for incisive climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.

In anthropology the world's many diverse cultures are understood as distinct, cohesive and sometimes very durable systems of social interaction, communication and knowledge transfer, without losing sight of the fact that these are also mutually permeable, internally textured, and historically evolving, dynamic systems. Cultural anthropologists are the social scientists most specifically trained to evaluate the differentiating impact of culture – that is, of shared ideas, values, symbols, language, conditionings and histories of interaction - on human consciousness and behaviour across the world's many social systems or 'societies'. This special training of anthropologists consists of long-term exposure to, and in-depth study and experience of a second culture other than their own.[1] Systematic and voluntary exposure to a second culture can help us overcome self-righteous ethnocentric attitudes based on our commitment to our own culture. This leads us to recognize the particularity of each one of the many cultural identities and forms of cultural conditioning found among human populations on this planet, including and especially our own conditioning. Like sociology, anthropology is rooted in western intellectual traditions, something many believe to be an epistemological impediment. We hope to free ourselves from this historical baggage by realising the ideal of a genuinely global anthropology, in which every cultural perspective is given equal recognition, both as a subject and an object position (Ribeiro and Escobar 2006; Kim 2005).

In their effort to characterise, and compare the world's diverse cultural systems and understand the effects of different cultural

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[1]   A discussion of whether ethnographic study of one's own society ('anthropology at home') yields the same potential benefit of achieving a 'bi- or multi-cultural awareness' (Reuter 2006) is beyond the scope of this article. In my view, however, systemic patterns and differences have been observed within social fields on every conceivable scale; between cultures, settlements, cities, neighbourhoods, work places, organizations and households. Hence there is little sense in (artificially) drawing sharp distinctions between cultural and sub-cultural differences, just as the distinction between dialect and language is in essence fluid and in theoretical usage heuristic rather than absolute.

conditioning on behaviour, anthropologists have long discovered the tremendous importance of cosmologies. Cosmologies are not just descriptive models of the world; they are also normative models, that is, models for action. Part of what such models describe is thus the social orders we ourselves create, though individually we may experience it as an objective phenomenon. Cosmologies, whether they are religious or secular, contain our most fundamental and important assumptions about the world and our place as human beings within that world, and about what constitutes a good, meaningful and worthwhile life.[2] In short, they are not just assumptions but can, and often do constitute genuine and valuable insights. Nevertheless, because their character is not certain it is best to treat cosmological premises as assumptions that need to remain open to critical reflection.

While cosmologies may be concerned with fundamental questions by definition, this does not mean we are fully aware as individuals of the cosmological premises that guide our decisions and behaviour as participants in a particular cultural system. Anthropologists have discovered that we know the basic shared assumptions of our culture intuitively and in a holistic fashion, as a gestalt, but may not be fully conscious or able to articulate what they are (Bourdieu 1971). While there are, of course, cosmological discourses that often strive to rationalise and articulate such intuitive cultural awareness, the difficulty in articulating the immense subtleties of our own cultural conditioning is immense. Cosmologies therefore tend to rely heavily on the symbolic or metaphoric language of art, ritual and religion to make accessible to consciousness what is difficult to put into words. In part, cosmological premises also remain embedded in the non-reflexive embodied experience of habitual everyday action or habitus. We therefore can, and typically do, acquire many of the core elements of a cosmology by mimesis or imitation of the behaviour of others around us, rather than through formal, verbal instruction or analytical reflection. Nevertheless, it is also true that in every society there tend to be individuals or groups, such as religious leaders or social critics, who engage in systematic reflection and seek to grasp this tacit cosmology conceptually and to articulate their conclusions so that they can share them with others. Such explicit cosmologies are always partial discursive maps or representations of culture, and even if they are philosophical rather

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[2]   Like cultures, cosmologies are not bounded entities in any simple sense, and hence the behaviour of many individuals, especially in today's world, is influenced by multiple cosmologies. Nor are cosmologies devoid of internal contradictions.

than mythological, will often be forced to resort to metaphor or other poetic devices in order to point at what may be, forever, beyond words.

Meanwhile, the work of biological anthropologists and human behavioural ecologists and neuroanthropologists has shown that fundamental aspects of our behaviour are also rooted in a complex array of dynamic biological processes. These processes include our slowly evolving genotypic characteristics as a species but also environmentally or historically driven epigenetic and learning processes that are far less conservative (Crawford 2007; Jablonka and Raz 2009). The latest research shows that the body, and especially the brain, is shaped by cultural behaviour and vice versa (Domínguez et. Al 2009), making it difficult to assign a singular causal direction to these phenomena. Nevertheless, insofar as there are actual drivers of human behaviour that are located primarily at the level of genetic coding or epigenetic and other forms of somatic experience, rather than resulting from cultural learning, these drivers are likely to be even less subject to conscious scrutiny and present within our deepest cosmological assumptions in a highly abstract form only. This may add further complexities to the task of understanding human nature, or may simply be expressing the same complexities in a different discourse. In my opinion, the subject matter of scientific attempts to map the human cosmos with biological theory (or even with physics) may prove to be identical with the subject matter of our more long-established religious and artistic cosmological imagination, and both methods have the same problem of running into the limitations of the language-dependent aspect of our consciousness.

Along a gradient from explicit cosmological discourses, to cosmological symbolism and innate human tendencies, there is a decline in the degree of accessibility to conscious awareness, and a decline also in culturally conditioned variability. Where exactly we ought to draw the line between nurture and nature, culture and biology, does not seem to be the important question any more. Perhaps such dualism has no place at all in the analysis of what appears to be a single gradient of awareness of a single, though highly complex reality. Rather, the important practical questions are, particularly in relation to the climate change challenge we now face: How can we explain regulated behaviour within a human social collective, especially such behaviour as would seem odd or even self-destructive to a detached outside observer not subject to the same tacit cosmological assumptions? Furthermore, how can we change such assumptions and collective behaviour

patterns against the powerful current of habituation that arises from 'self-resonance' with our own past states and experiences (Sheldrake 1988), whatever the mechanism may be? I would like to argue that, if climate change and other contemporary challenges require from us fundamental shifts in behaviour; we must either strive to increase our awareness through critical reflection or accept the inevitability of hefty Malthusian 'positive checks' on human population numbers (war, disease, famine, etc) in the near future.

The need for reflection is particularly great at this historical juncture, and there is evidence that such a process has begun. My own research, and the research of many other colleagues in the field of the anthropology of religion, for example, suggests that religion, which is one form of cosmological reflexivity, is again receiving increased attention within the public sphere after a period of modernist secularisation. One reason why religious cosmologies may be resurging is that many of our secular cosmologies -- such the cosmology of consumer culture and the cosmology of technological progress-- are very poorly articulated or poorly developed with regards to ethics and long-term consequences and thus lead to unsustainable practices.

To conclude, one key insight provided by anthropology (particularly the post-structuralist anthropology of Pierre Bourdieu and others) is that the shared cultural or cosmological assumptions that motivate us collectively can be 'incorrect', that is, they do not always contribute to a good life. Such evaluations are problematic. For now, however, the point to remember is that collective behaviour is based only in small part on assumptions that are subject to consistent and in-depth conscious reflection, and largely on other assumptions or drivers that lie more or less outside the realm of our conscious awareness. If we want to raise these hidden life assumptions to awareness, and thus acquire the capacity to change them, we thus need to engage in meta-cultural reflection or 'cultural critique'.

Anthropology, climate change and the method of cultural critique

What is cultural critique, and how does it work? Marcus and Fisher (1986) have famously discussed the process and scope of cultural critique, as have many other theorists in anthropology, and I cannot review this debate here. In addition, the idea of achieving greater awareness though critical reflexivity is also familiar from other disciplines, including psychology and cultural studies. The

unique aspect of anthropological critique is that it seeks to raise cultural, that is, collective awareness, and brings a fundamentally comparative or 'intercultural' approach to the task.

In order to illustrate what I mean by 'comparative' or 'intercultural' critique of culture, it may be helpful to draw an analogy with psychological processes at an interpersonal level. Any undesirable, destructive or irrational aspect of our behaviour and of the underlying life assumptions we hold as individuals are frequently and relatively easily laid bare by the tacit or explicit 'critical' responses we receive from other individuals, who have the advantage of seeing us from the perspective of an outside observer. It is far more difficult if not impossible to achieve the same degree of critical awareness by engaging in a process of solitary self-reflection. I argue that at a collective or cultural level, the same principle of 'greater awareness through inter-subjectivity' applies. Of course the mechanisms of awareness-raising that operate among interacting individuals differ from the mechanisms of intercultural critique, so that an analogous but different intercultural method of critique will need to be outlined.

Collectively shared, cosmological assumptions have a paradigmatic or 'epistemic' character. They tend to be socially sanctioned, and are rarely challenged by individual participants from within a culture (Kuhn 1962). Those few who are located somewhere at the lower end of the normal distribution of levels of commitment to unconscious life assumptions, and at the high end of the normal distribution of reflexive awareness, the Galileos of this world, can and sometimes do challenge the assumptions shared within their own society, often at some risk to themselves. They tend to be punished, silenced or marginalised for daring to oppose the direction of the social system's overall flow of habituation. Sometimes the proponents of change may themselves contribute to a lack of popular acceptability of their suggestions because their awareness is sufficient only to identify the presence of a destructive collective behaviour, but insufficient to comprehend the basic life assumptions that drive the behaviour.

Climate scientists often find themselves in that position because they lack training in cultural analysis. Without the capacity for a very deep cultural critique of behaviour, therefore, the popular response such whistleblowers will receive may include ridicule and persecution. It may also include some nods from bigots who have a similar commitment to simplistic causal rationalism with regard to the analysis of human behaviour as do the whistleblowers ('if you behave in the manner x, the result will be y'), or who so happen to adhere to the same conscious

model of morality (eg. 'as greenies we oppose consumerism'). Unfortunately, the nodders are likely to go home and continue the same behaviour regardless of their conscious opposition, quite despite themselves. Indeed, the same inner inertia in actual behaviour often applies to the proponents of change themselves. Even among those few who do practice an alternative, more constructive behaviour systematically, we may find that the majority is motivated by an intuitive understanding of a destructive cosmological assumptions within their own culture. This intuition may be sufficiently acute to allow them to change their own behaviour, but not sufficiently conscious (in the conventional sense) to allow them to articulate what the root of the behaviour problem may be. Finally, even those rare individuals who are aware of the root causes of major, historical challenges such as climate change, and are able to clearly articulate them, must contend with the fear, resistance and denial of the societies in which they live and on which they depend for their livelihood (see Milton 2007). In the words of two distinguished climate change researchers:

> Changing public opinion and galvanising political and market action is an art rather than a science, but an art made all the more complex by the array of human emotions that discussions like this provoke. If the message is too soft… people don't confront the scale of the challenge… and avoidance is a welcome escape. However, if the message is too hard… people normally switch off, and move into denial, or worse, into resistance (Randers and Gilding 2009:1).

Anthropologists therefore tend to argue that the best critique of culture available to us is an inter-cultural critique, rather than a solitary cultural self-critique. The very existence of other ways of life reveals that our own is just one among many, arbitrary and man-made rather than necessary and natural. From the perspective of another culture, with a set of very different life assumptions, taken-for-granted patterns of thinking and behaving within our own culture can become glaringly obvious. They can then be subjected to questioning and critique. Therein, I would argue, lies the greatest potential for anthropology to make a special contribution. An anthropologically informed, critical intercultural awareness is ideally suited to create an opening for the kind of fundamental cultural change that is now required of us.

I would be sceptical of the chances of success for such an intercultural project of critique if the same old difficulty of articulating and disseminating path-breaking insights were to remain

in place. In the current era of globalisation, however, the project of intercultural critique is aided at a popular level by the fact that people everywhere are now subject to essentially 'ethnographic' experiences of exposure to other cultures; through increased mobility, migration and travel, and by what they see on their TV and computer screens. Fewer and fewer individuals are able to ignore the presence of cultural alternatives and the arbitrariness of their own cultural conditioning, though the resurgence of fundamentalism and ethno-nationalism in many parts of the world shows that many people still strive to resist this trend. In an electronically mediated global society, this would seem impossible in the end. I therefore would suggest that humanity, as a whole, is approaching an anthropological moment when the awareness-raising possibilities of intercultural comparison and meta-cultural reflexivity are becoming more widely available, and the message of anthropology more readily understandable.

When we now look back at the current state of the global campaign to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the lack of willing-ness to actually change behaviour -- despite a wealth of scientific evidence and dire predictions from our climate scientists and a veritable storm of moral arguments for behaviour change from political activists and religious groups — may no longer surprise us. A few lobby groups with special, vested interests aside, most people now agree that the earth is warming, and that we need to both mitigate and adapt to climate change urgently. Why then has the political will to bring about the necessary behaviour change been so sadly lacking? Is it a capitalist conspiracy led by the fossil fuel lobby and others who still profit from the abuse of fossil fuels? Such political explanations abound, but I do not think it is helpful to view special-interest groups as existing somewhere outside of our society and culture, in an imaginary realm of inhumanity. 'They' are really a part of 'us'. If fossil fuel lobbies continue to succeed in derailing climate change negotiations, then we must ask how we all make that possible - why it is that we who nod to the climate science keep returning to the petrol pump just as often as they do.

Of course, there are all manner of excuses for this resistance to change, and some of them have merit. Many will say, for example: 'I cannot do anything as an individual.' There is a shared complicity in this, nonetheless, which begs explanation. From our earlier discussion, it would seem that this complicity arises from the fact that the prolific use of fossil fuels is a fundamental and utterly 'normalised' assumption in our culture. Ours is a crude oil cosmology. The assumptions of this cosmology, and our

unconscious commitment to it, have deep cultural roots indeed, and perhaps they may even relate to our basic biological design as primates.

If that is so, anthropology has an enormous contribution to make, by laying these roots bare. Climate scientists may be able to tell us what behaviours we need to change, but they do not normally reflect on how these behaviours are embedded within a particular culture and cosmology. Economists - who occupy much of the remainder of the policy debate on climate change - do consider the wider implications of the required behaviour change in terms of its flow-on consequences for entire systems of production and consumption. However, they do not tend to consider how we might want to revise our fundamental assumptions of what constitutes a good and worthwhile life.[3] Indeed, given that the modern economic system of mass production and associated cultures of consumerism and ideologies of capitalism are responsible for the current crisis, they will not lend themselves to empowering fundamental changes that would negate their own core principles. It would be like a goat pretending to be a gardener. The effect is familiar. Take carbon emission trading schemes as an example of the amazing solutions our economic gurus proposing: How would you respond if I proposed a system for trading 'speeding certificates', whereby you would travel at or below the speed limit, get certificates for that, and then sell them to me so I can travel at speeds above the limit?

But, to be fair, how can my alternative proposal, based on an anthropological critique of culture, be justified in light of the fact that the discipline has not been all that prominent in informing and advancing the climate change debate until now (see Baer 2007 for a review of contributions)? What is stopping us? Is it the economists, who refuse to listen? Perhaps, but there is more to it.

For a whole century now, anthropologists have told themselves (and the world): 'judge not your cultural other, lest thou be judged', and rightly so. There is a world of difference, however, between blind ethnocentric prejudice and critical discernment. Exercising cross-cultural discernment is perhaps a dangerous course to navigate, with a constant threat of lapsing into one or another form of intellectual neo-colonialism, especially where political inequality mars the intercultural dialogue between the

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[3]   Economist Fritz Schuhmacher's famous work (1999 [1973]) is
       one of the few exceptions.

parties involved. Let me therefore reassure my colleagues: the intercultural critique I am thinking of is first and foremost a critique directed at a western culture that is now all but hegemonic. This new 'world order' need not be spared from criticism out of some misguided sense of unconditional respect for all cultures. It is also the culture and associated economic system (or 'material culture') that is the cause of climate change, the more so for having spread out to transform other cultures and becoming an utterly global phenomenon in the process.

A critique of the hegemonic culture of globalisation: Fossil fuels and the addiction to 'free' energy

In the remainder of this article I will make a first attempt at a meta-cultural critique of contemporary global culture, focused specifically at our addiction to fossil fuels and our utterly unsustainable way of relating to nature. I could perhaps have presented a more rigorous and comprehensive epistemological argument in support of my claim about the essential merit of applying anthropological knowledge to the problem of climate change. However, many non-anthropologists would find this kind of discussion rather esoteric and remote from the issues at hand, and I do hope some of them read this journal. Instead, I will now make a practical attempt at applying the method of intercultural critique to our current climate change dilemma, and we will simply see how useful this approach may be.

There are many possible approaches to conducting an anthropological analysis of the climate change crisis other than my own. I could think of several myself, and some of my colleagues may well be critical of the specifically post-structuralist approach I am adopting in this article. I therefore encourage vigorous debate on this and any other, alternative approach that may be available. While a direct and systematic cross-cultural comparison with societies still at the fringes of this global system is beyond the scope of this article, my critique is not just a self-reflexive attempt at pulling-ourselves-out-of-quicksand-by-our-own-hair. It reflects the profound effect on my awareness of the long-term exposure to four different cultures I have experienced in various capacities, as an anthropologist but also as a traveller and a migrant.[4] Such exposure has left me and, in this era of globalisation, is leaving an increasing number of human beings with a certain

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[4]   I have experienced long-term exposure to the cultures of Germany, India, Australia and Indonesia, and have visited more than 60 other countries.

degree of detachment from any one particular form of cultural conditioning.

Why do cultures and cosmological assumptions matter if our aim is to analyse whether and how communities are able to respond effectively and humanely to those catastrophic consequences of global climate change most scientists now hold to be inevitable (Parry et al. 2007). Responses to crises are certainly driven by economic variables, such as the supply and consumption of natural resources, and material factors can forcibly raise awareness by confronting people with a tangible, perhaps even a deadly challenge, such as environmental and economic meltdown or war. This is clearly the case now. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that cultural predispositions make an enormous difference in a crisis situation; for example, between finding peaceful, lasting solutions and short-term knee-jerk responses such as fighting wars to gain control over dwindling resources (Klare 2001). Examples of 'cultural factors' that impact on our responses to crises include such cultural practices as natural science, neo-liberal ideology, democracy, totalitarianism, millenarian movements, economic theories, consumerism, institutionalised crime, Taoist philosophy and academic conferences. As we contemplate this very incomplete list of far flung examples, it is not difficult to see why culture might have something to do with the causes of climate change and with its possible mitigation. While I would not want to dismiss or diminish the value of political economy approaches, I reject any form of 'materialist' reductionism. Even conservative 'natural' scientists and political economists are now starting to see the need for the humanities to become involved in the debate. Indeed, genuine conservatives are today's ultimate radicals. A pertinent example is a new paper by Jack Harich on 'Change resistance as the Crux of the Environmental Sustainability Problem.' Therein Harich (2010:9) argues that: the 'systemic root cause of improper coupling' (i.e. Maintaining a system of human behaviour that is not commensurate with a sustainable environmental system) are 'agent goals that conflict with the common good', a more or less unwarranted 'fear of loss' if associated practices were discontinued, and successful 'techniques [for] enhancing resistance'. Consequently, 'known proper practices' (i.e. Sustainable practices) are not being adopted. This begs the question as to the source of such desperate fear and the object of potential loss, which I will address below.

Post-ecological natural science is perhaps even ahead of conventional social science in realising that the hoary dualisms of modernity are dead in the water, that as members of the species

homo sapiens sapiens 'culture' is indeed our 'nature', and that, by the same token, humanity is fully and irrevocably a part of nature writ large. It is indeed hard not to be concerned, and to hold on to our disembodied, mind-identified, pseudo-transcendental attitude from the perspective of natural science, as we discover ourselves hurtling through space on a small rock covered with a thin film of life, and see our fellow passengers suffering extinction at a rate almost unprecedented in the history of life on this planet. As economist Jeffrey Sachs (2008:139) puts it, 'we are devouring our very life-support system, and finding excuses along the way not to care.' The reason why 'we', this particular species of life, is now a threat to the planet is not because of our physiology and innate requirements for natural resources. All species of mammals, for example, have physiological designs and associated 'resource needs' that are quite similar to our own. Perhaps the most basic need for all animals, and indeed for all life, is the need to secure a supply of energy sufficiently large to support the organism's essential somatic functions and its capacity to reproduce. But while other species too can and do experience environmentally-, and eventually self-destructive population growth, the problems posed by *homo s. Sapiens* are as unique in their quality and scale as they are disturbing.

In my analysis, it is not our physiology but the historical transformation of human culture that has increased our overall population as well as our per capita impact on the natural world dramatically, and in ways that are not sustainable. More specifically, the current trouble is due to a form of culture we humans were able to develop quite recently on an evolutionary and even on a historical time scale. The main steps include: 1) the invention of large scale agriculture and urbanisation some 10.000 years ago; 2) the scientific revolution since the Renaissance, 3) the industrial revolution from the mid-nineteenth century onward, and 4) the rise of a global consumer culture after the end of WW2. This 'we', 'us' or 'our' does not include all previous nor all contemporary cultures, some of which continue to uphold more sustainable ways of life. Nevertheless, all contemporary cultures do find themselves exposed to the direct or indirect effects of a now nearly hegemonic world culture, often referred to 'late' or 'liquid modernity' (Baumann 2000), and an associated economic system of consumer capitalism. In this sense only, I am talking about global 'we'. In other ways, the responsibility rests more squarely with 'us' in the so-called western, developed world.

I would like to encourage anthropologists – especially colleagues in developing (or 'exploited') nations - to study this

contemporary global culture, wherewith to remove the veils of unconsciousness created by fear or denial or ignorance or simply by extreme familiarity or a false sense that there is a lack of alternatives or as a matter of malicious manipulation. What we need is a critical anthropology; more critical than anything we have dared to contemplate before, and if my earlier argument is correct, such a critique is most likely to succeed if it is intercultural. The model of 'cultural analysis' I employ is similar to post-structural psychoanalytic models for the treatment of psychological dysfunctions (neurosis or psychosis) in individuals, and is similarly derived from a layered model of human consciousness.[5] As already discussed, the aim of this kind of cultural critique is to produce a shift from a dysfunctional and unconscious toward a more conscious and constructive behaviour on a societal scale. This is assuming that dysfunctional behaviour is not based on free and conscious choice, but is a result of ignorance.

I would define cultural dysfunction as a basic, cosmological and hence pervasive tendency to engage in behaviours 'collectively' (all in parallel on their own, or all differently but in concert) that together are injurious to human life, well-being and dignity, and to the integrity of the environment. I agree with Jared Diamond (2005) that the total collapse of societies has been more often due to a failure to maintain a sustainable mode of collective behaviour toward the environment than due to internal tensions brought about by 'social behaviour' in the narrower sense. Such sustainability failures are also the most important dimension of cultural dysfunction for the purpose of this discussion. However, this does not mean we should accept ethnocentric explanations based on reductionist ecological theories. Ecological and economic behaviour can and does vary greatly across different societies operating within similar environments. These differences arise from variable cultural priorities and associated habitual behaviours, and also from variable cultural techniques and technologies of production, distribution and consumption. Ecology can be a constraint but it does not actually tell us what to do, nor is our behaviour confined within some simplistic rational-choice process of profit-maximising. The fate of different social systems in terms of environmental sustainability thus

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[5]   As I earlier observed about culture and language, thinking in terms of layers or only boundaries is merely a heuristic device and may have no ultimate reality. In reality, consciousness moves along a smooth gradient of awareness in ways we are only beginning to understand. Still, as a heuristic it is very useful to think of different degrees of consciousness.

depends on what one could broadly describe as 'economic' or 'ecological culture' and 'material culture', rather than unfolding in an imaginary culture-free world of individual rationality or ecological determinism.

Intercultural analysis is capable of revealing the unconscious drivers of dysfunctional (harmful) collective patterns of habitual behaviour within a given culture, behaviours that also include the use or misuse of specific technologies and resources. One way of conceptualising and critiquing cultural dysfunctions relating to the use of resources is to think of them as 'addictive behaviours'. I would define cultural addictions as normalised or institutionalised collective behaviours that cause serious harm, but which we find ourselves unable to discontinue, even though we may wish to do so, because they arise from unconscious (and hence unknown) assumptions and drives. Collective addictive behaviour is thus normalised, ignored or even valued positively within a society, despite its negative effects. One reason is that negative effects may take a long time to unfold before they are strong enough to produce incentives for reflexivity (i.e. A crisis). In addition, negative behaviour patterns are often interdependent with other patterns of behaviours that together constitute an integrated way of life. It is thus important to detect the compensatory functions of overtly 'dysfunctional' behaviours within a systemic context because they point to the underlying drivers of the behaviour. Even though a harmful behaviour may not be justifiable by virtue of its compensatory function in any absolute sense, because it is harmful in its overall net effect, it can have small positive side effects that are disproportionately valued in the society concerned. Sudden discontinuation of an addictive behaviour can also genuinely jeopardize the system as a whole in cases where the compensation effects and other forms of systemic integration are significant considerations. In most cases, such considerations raise fears that the system is under threat, and trigger a resistance response. Over time, such spontaneous resistance responses develop into more highly developed and effective 'resistance techniques'.

If we reflect on our contemporary societal addictions, the noxious habit most obviously related to anthropogenic climate change is our widespread reliance on fossil fuel combustion in cars, machines and electricity generators, and our dependence on fossil fuel-based fertilizer production and agriculture (see also Newell 2000:9; Baer 2008). Ironically, the addictive nature of the chemical substance 'petroleum' – in a more literal sense - is evident in the practice of petrol-sniffing widespread among

extremely poor, marginal and often indigenous communities, mirroring the less visible dysfunction and addictive behaviour patterns of the global mainstream. But what are the hidden drivers of petrol addiction in mainstream society, where poverty is not an issue? The attraction seems to lie in the possibility of artificially enhancing the amount of energy or life force we can command for the purpose of mobility, mechanised mass manufacturing, food production, etc. An abundant supply of cheap energy increases our ability to manipulate, control and consume the objective world and thus artificially enhances our sense of being alive. This additional life force is not authentic, however, and comes at the cost of alienation. It is borrowed from petroleum and coal, which are fossilised hydrocarbons produced by prehistoric plants that have been outside the active carbon cycle of our planet for millions of years. Our appropriation of a separate energy source other than food and wood (renewable energies which are derived from the photosynthesis processes of living plants) has made it possible for us to entertain cosmologies that, likewise, portray man as a subject separate from and largely independent of the life processes of planet Earth. This conclu-sion - concerning the cosmology that helps to maintain fossil fuel addiction - is supported by my research on global trends in cosmological thinking (Reuter 2008). The research suggests that modernity was characterised by precisely this kind of transcen-dentalist cosmology, whereas the latest trends indicate a swing toward earth-based spiritualities with monistic cosmologies that locate both man and the sacred within nature.

The idea of analysing fossil fuel use as an addiction is not entirely new. It was first put forward (to my knowledge) by progres-ssives like Pulitzer Prize winner Gary Snyder in the response to the 1970s fuel crisis. Snyder spoke of the distortion in our livelihoods caused by a one-off 'fossil fuel subsidy' and commented on the addictive nature of the consumerism underwritten by that subsidy through the medium of modern mass production (Snyder 1980). Apart from its impact on per-capita consumption, others have commented on how the fossilised 'life force' harnessed from hydrocarbons has also been a key driver of human population growth (Sachs 2008), which – along with per-capita consumption - is a key variable in the overall greenhouse gas emissions rate. If we were to analyse this energy and consumption addiction by looking back at our society through the external lens of some of the cultures I have studied, it would appear that we have developed a dysfunctional cosmology. The problem arises from the delu-sional idea that the human 'part' stands apart; that it has a trans-

cendental character and is thus separate from the natural 'whole'. The part then comes to regard the whole as an external object to be appropriated, controlled and consumed, while gradually forgetting that it owes its very existence to the whole. This deluded outlook lies at the heart of the addictive pattern of consumerism, especially our star-crossed love affair with the motor car, our need for speed, motion and mobility, obsessions that all count among the hallmarks of late modernity. This attitude toward life is deeply entrenched in a dualistic philosophy of modernism that has created for us a cosmology wherein the holistic embodied Self has been lost to a process of ever increasing identification with transcendental mental forms and separation from nature. This mind-identified pseudo-self pursues material gain in order to find itself again within material existence, and is led by this Sisyphus quest into a perpetual treadmill of desire for more, and more and still more. The removal of self from the world leaves a hole in the cosmos, small but large enough to pour the whole world into – all to no avail. Such insatiability or 'desensitisation' is also evident in drug addicted individuals, who will require ever greater quantities of a particular substance to escape the realisation that there is in fact a qualitative lack in their lives that no amount of the substance can ever remedy. Addictive object relations thus arise from an underlying insanity or dysfunction in the domain of subject relations.[6]

From a cultural history perspective, one could also say that secularisation, the loss of recognition for the sacredness of the whole in favour of an appropriating attitude towards it, has led to an objectification of the natural world, including our own bodies or 'inner nature'. Ironically, the disembodied, separated, mind-identified transcendental modern subject is plagued by an insatiable hunger for material objects classed as consumables (including human bodies), failing to realise that it is in fact cannibalising itself in a vain attempt to recover its lost sense of unity with nature.

Many prominent spokespeople of tribal or more traditional societies have commented on the madness and alienation of

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[6]   Alice Miller (1979) refers to this endemic dysfunction as narcissistic disturbance, and contrasts it with a healthy state based on self-acceptance. She comments at great length on the profound insatiability, and ultimately the fragility, associated with this common condition.

modern man.[7] In some of the particular cultures and cosmologies I have studied, the annihilation of the mind-identified self - which is the primary source of fear in modern man (Reuter 2009) - is an important project and seen as utterly desirable. Indeed, the annihilation of the false, illusionary, mind-identified self is regarded as the main prerequisite for genuine Self-realisation, and is said to lead to an experience of unity with the sacred, the whole, the existential ground of Being.[8] Identification with the larger whole is seen as the foundation of all moral conduct in these and many other non-modern societies, and while not everyone is expected to feel completely at one with the cosmos, there are also more modest and achievable intermediate steps, such as feeling a sense of care and responsibility toward one's community or one's natural environment.

Some of my western colleagues will see other peculiarities in modern global consumer culture through the lenses of the other cultures they have studied. Together with local colleagues and other representatives of these communities themselves, we can perhaps serve as the eyes of the world, in all its cultural diversity, turning a critical gaze back upon modernity. A recent example of such critical consciousness arising from the margins is the vehement attack launched at the Western world, in view of its voracious appetite for fossil fuels, by the government of the Maldives after the failure of the climate change summit in Copenhagen (Todorova 2010).

I would like to add that some human dysfunctions are so profound that they cut across many cultures, and the most basic of all is the attachment we have to cultural conditioning per se, which contributes to our proclivity for identification with mental forms. Fortunately, intercultural comparison can lead us to realise that all such conditioning is relative, and sometimes arbitrary, though it is undoubtedly also very useful so long as we understand that. Just as individuals learn and grow in awareness through inter-subjective experiences with other individuals who

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[7] An example is 'Uncle' Bob Randall, a Yankunytjatjara elder and a traditional owner of Uluru (Ayer's Rock) in Australia (see Randall 2003 [autobiography]). For an interview refer to www.globalonenessproject.org/interviewee/bob-randall.

[8] I am referring here to the well-known concepts of *nirvana* in Buddhism and *nirvikalpa samadhi* in Hinduism, and to the less well-known concepts *manunggal* ('achieving unity') and *awang uwung* ('the emptiness that is full', i.e. non-duality) in Javanese and Balinese mysticism.

are different, so cultures must now engage in dialogue to pool their different resources quickly, in a spirit of mutual respect, towards averting the global environmental disaster we are facing. Cultural globalisation based on mutual respect and dialogue is, I believe, a powerful cure for addictive behaviour. It presents us all, not with imaginary alternatives to our own cultural addictions but with real alternatives that have been lived, tried and tested (see also Maybury-Lewis 1992).

Will this kind of inter-cultural exchange ever happen? Well, to some degree it is already happening, because cultural globalisation is essentially a form of knowledge exchange. And then again, no, it will not happen in the way we may think it should, unless we actively pursue this goal. Apart from raising global awareness and reflexivity, exposure to the mirror of other cultures through globalisation can also lead to regressive responses such as the renewal of exclusive ethnic, nationalist or religious identities we are now witnessing in many countries. This kind of fear-driven defensive response may be an obvious option but it is not 'natural'. Rather, it is orchestrated and serves as a political tool for some of the dysfunctional and unscrupulous individuals we allow to pose as our leaders. Theirs is a kind of globalisation response we could well do without. On the other hand, there are also movements and institutions whose members fight consciously and constructively to defend the right to cultural diversity, and who thus contribute towards maintaining the potential for equality, global dialogue and a genuine global consciousness.

In essence, what I propose is that, on the long road to a global state of freedom from unconscious and dysfunctional conditioning, one of the best ways to advance is to raise consciousness through a juxtaposition of different forms of cultural conditioning. Such a global anthropological dialogue will reveal the arbitrariness of all conditioning, and the fallacy of the quest to glean a separate sense of self from one's own collective or personal story, in a cosmos that has no walls.

Further suggestions for an anthropology of climate change

There are of course numerous other possibilities for the anthropology of climate change not yet considered within the model proposed above. Nevertheless, when we explore some of these other climate change issues that are suitable as topics for anthropological analysis, we soon find that they all somehow come back to the fundamental problem of unconscious conditioning, and

highlight the need for awareness raising through intercultural reflexivity.

One of these topics is the issue of climate justice. There has been considerable debate about the ethics of climate change in negotiations in Kyoto, Bali, and now Copenhagen, particularly in relation to the rights of developing countries, who do not have the same historical responsibility as developed nations in terms of their proportional contribution to rising levels of atmospheric greenhouse gases and global warming. Another aspect of this ethical debate is the issue of responsibility toward future generations. The reason why I may appear not to have said much about ethics is that, as I understand it, ethical consciousness has two basic forms. One form arises naturally from awareness. The other is a mental construct to enhance one's own self-image based on the need to think of oneself as right and others as wrong and morally inferior. The first can only emerge through insight, through the kind of awareness work I have outlined above, while the second is ultimately ineffective because it is deeply embedded within and part of the dysfunction of identity politics and unconscious cultural conditioning. Ethical behaviours towards the natural environment and towards other human beings, as seen from this perspective, arises only as a consequence of more appropriate subject relations, namely, from an object perspective on the Self as part of an all-encompassing whole.

Another important issue that anthropologists will have much to say about is the influence of utopian and dystopian thought on our response to the climate change challenge. The analysis of futuristic imagination is an important task because such imaginings are forward projections of culture-specific, present-day cosmologies, and are used to either legitimise or discredit these cosmologies. For example, dystopian imaginings of a future world dominated by machines, such as the Terminator series of movies, can be understood as a critique of our blind faith in salvation through technological progress. Other literary critiques use a technique of 'imagined intercultural juxtaposition', whereby the present is contrasted with the alternative 'culture' of a more ideal or 'utopian' future society.

Futuristic thought is not restricted to the realm of mere individual imagination, influential though that may be in its own right. Such ideas also help to motivate the rise of new social and religious movements, some of which I have studied. How will the millenarian expectations created by such social movements effect societies over the coming years and decades? Will we succumb to dystopian expectations, such as the apocalyptic vision of the

pre-millennial dispensationalist evangelicals, who regard efforts to avert catastrophic climate change as a misguided attempt to stop a prophesised and necessary crisis that will prepare the ground for the second coming of Jesus Christ; and who have thus supported reactionary responses such as the US-led war for oil in Iraq? Or will we be inspired by other imaginings of the future that are more constructive, in that they explore potentially viable alternative ways of life, both in theory and in practice? Will we be able to imagine a future that it is at once desirable and achievable?

Be that as it may, the imagining or active pursuit of alternative ways of life always involves a process of intercultural comparison and critical evaluation. Anthropology and the critical eco-humanities in general can assist by analysing popular culture, religious, political and social reform movements, including the sustainability movement itself. If we chose to do so, however, we should remember that these experiments are not just interesting specimen for our butterfly collections, they address what is a genuine cultural crisis of unprecedented proportions; a crisis to which we too seek the answer urgently, as what time we still have for conscious action quickly slips through our fingers.

I discussed earlier how people derive an identity from specific personal or collective experiences and stories - with all their unique historical traumas and moments of glory. This process of self-inscription is well known to anthropologists due to the immense impact textual approaches have had on our discipline.[9] And here is another vantage point from where we can begin to analyse modern consumer culture. Another of our modern cultural addictions is our voracious appetite for consuming other people's stories through television and other media. What is this entertainment and reality-TV addiction all about? It is most likely a substitute for dialogue, and seeks to fulfil the need to escape the insane isolation of one's own personal story in a world where community life as we once understood it is no longer available to many of us.

Again, some of these stories may contain elements of real and tried life experiences, while others are imaginary or hyper-real. In either type of story, as in real life dialogue, there are opportunities for inter-textual comparison and critical reflexivity as well as for ethnocentric judgement or escapist exoticism. Judgement abuses comparison to feed the dysfunctional self which always needs to

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9   Textual approaches are now spreading into other fields. A relevant example and product of this influence is the 'narrative psychology' movement (Sarbin 1986).

feel superior in order to alleviate fear, and escapism does little better because it simply replaces one identification with another until the other becomes limiting and painful as well. This ultimate uselessness of the drug of entertainment helps to explain why there is such an insatiable desire for more and more distraction, just as there is a desire for more and more material possessions. Critical reflection, however, would lead to the realisation that stories have no natural boundaries, and that one may consciously embrace the whole story that is life, rather than clinging to a particular historicized identity.

Another highly effective contribution anthropologists can make to assist in the fight against climate-change-producing human behaviour is to tell the real-life story of the first victims of climate change. Storytelling is important for human beings because it highlights the relativity of our own story and our interconnectedness with other people in our neighbourhood, our nation, and our region of the world. Indeed, many stories of climate change victims are transnational stories, which make us ever more aware of the global character of this and other sustainability issues. To raise awareness about the effects of climate change and the need for adaptation, some of the important stories that need to be told urgently include: 1) How particular rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, Australia and in other arid parts of the world are experiencing and preparing to face the multidimensional challenge of adaptation to an even hotter and drier climate; 2) How Pacific nations are experiencing and responding to the challenges of displacement in the wake of rising sea levels (see Rudiak-Gould 2008); 3) How developing nations are experiencing climate-change related pressures as well as opportunities such as the new carbon off-set schemes (REDD) which could alter their policies concerning forestry and agriculture; 4) How people in developing nations are dealing with the potential displacement of many millions of people who live in low-lying coastal cities like Jakarta or prime agricultural production areas such as the Mekong Delta. Telling these stories, in as literarily adept and interesting a manner as possible, is one way in which anthropologists can really bring the reality of climate change to the awareness of the public. These stories should not just be fear invoking, however, as Kay Milton (2007) has pointed out. Climate change stories should also show how people in a wide range of situations and local cultures manage to adapt and survive by adopting new ways of living they already had available in their tool kit, or finding entirely new ways they had never before thought possible.

Anthropologists can also engage more directly and make such stories happen, as Graeme McRae's (2008) work in Bali shows, namely by facilitating inter-cultural knowledge transfer or by telling the story of such transfers for the benefit of encouraging others (see also MacRae and O'Kane, this issue). By knowledge transfer I do not mean development. Development is essentially a fairy tale we in the western world tell ourselves in order to whitewash what is all too often an export of our dysfunction and an extension of our greed to other countries, lest they remind us that it is possible to live by different principles. What I mean by knowledge transfer is a multi-directional exchange where everyone is a learner and a teacher. For example, travelling through the increasingly arid Murray Darling Basin in Australia, I am always reminded of the way traditional agriculture is practiced in arid central India and Eastern Turkey. Australian farmers have little cultural inclination and know-how for producing traditional dry-land crops that thrive in such conditions. Instead we keep using enormous amounts of irrigation water to grow cotton and rice as summer crops, using expensive technology to create the fleeting illusion that this is a wet environment, before the whole mirage collapses into a heap of salt-logged, sun-cracked soil, as has already happened with rice in the Riverina region. Such behaviour is astonishingly suicidal on a collective scale, and this is sadly reflected in the astronomical male suicide rates of rural Australia today.

Hope. Oil on paper. Rita Reuter (1996)

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WHAT CAN ANTHROPOLOGISTS SAY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

Graeme MacRae

Abstract

'Climate Change', until recently the preserve of scientists and well-informed environmentalists, has recently and suddenly taken on new public meanings, rhetorical power, economic value and political currency. On the one hand, the burgeoning climate change economy has spawned a raft of new consultances, enterprises, exchange systems and entrepeneurial opportunities. On the other, 'climate change', 'global warming' and indeed 'carbon' itself have become powerful cultural symbols carrying a complex range of meanings. In this article I report a case-study of a waste management project in Indonesia that has re-invented itself as a 'climate change' project, partly as a strategy to attract funding. This story is followed by some suggestions as to how we might think about the unintended and sometimes contradictory or ironic flip-sides of 'climate change', and returns finally to the challenge for an ethnographically-based anthropology of climate change.

While there may be debate about the reality or the extent of climate change and how best to deal with it, there is no doubt as to its reality as a phenomenon of public knowledge and popular culture. However, the vast majority of discussion about climate change tends to be science-talk, politics- and policy-talk or economics-talk with much of it repackaged in the form of media-talk. In addition most of this discussion tends also to work from top-down, globalist, universalist perspectives largely emerging from wealthy nations of the north embodied within the slogan of 'global problems need global solutions'. At the same time, the idea, image, and metaphor of 'climate change' is out there in the world of public knowledge, taking on a life of its

own, 'changing the way local events are framed and understood' (Milton, 2008:57-8) and having all sorts of effects, that we do not seem to know very much about.

One of the more surprising aspects of all this, much-noted, but little-understood, is that, despite the overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is real, threatens life as we know it and causes varying degrees of anxiety, fear or terror for most of us; we (collectively, globally) are doing so little about it. Or, as George Monbiot puts it, while we mostly agree that climate change '…is the single most important issue that we face …We have also agreed to do nothing about it' (2007:ix). The Copenhagen summit of December 2009, seems sadly to have done little to change this agreement by default. Ironically the only nations to demonstrate any real commitment to reducing their own emissions were a group of nations of the south, with already low emissions, but who were also most vulnerable to the predicted effects of climate change (Omidi 2009). This ongoing disconnect between knowledge and behaviour, evidence and action, suggests that all is not well with our understanding of 'climate change'– there is something wrong or missing in our models of it as a system or process in which human thought and behaviour are clearly key elements.

Climate Change (hereafter CC for brevity) thus clearly involves social/cultural facts as well as meteorological, political and economic ones. Yet the 'science' of CC is (to date) rather short on social science, let alone the science of anthropology. The voices of social scientists are also rarely heard in public debates on CC. Notable by their scarcity are discussions of the cultural dimensions of CC – as a set of meanings that intersect in complex ways with its other dimensions, its social organisation, how it is worked out at the level of local practice – by real people in the real world.[1] These are the very modes and levels of analysis that anthropology seems especially well-equipped for – its special provenance.

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[1]   This lack of an anthropological voice is not for lack of interest on the part of anthropologists. Recent conferences (AAS 2007, ASA 2008), journals (TJA 2008, SfAA (2008), The Asia-Pacific Journal of Anthropology (forthcoming), Ethnos (forthcoming), books (Baer and Singer 2009) as well as funding applications, all testify to growing interest and commitment to CC research. My point however is that anthropological voices and perspectives do not (yet) form part of the conversation or, as Kay Milton puts it 'It is not enough to talk to ourselves about these things; we need to make our voices public' (2008:58).

Kay Milton has suggested that 'an anthropology of climate change' might usefully consist of three main elements: contributions to big-picture debates, analyses of discourses of CC, and of 'realities lived on the ground … with thoughts, feelings and strategies which may or may not engage with the global discourse' (2008:58). Anthropology is indeed well-equipped for these tasks, but among them, it is the third that seems least likely to be addressed by the approaches of other disciplines. Part of my argument here is that such analysis of 'realities on the ground' and especially its frequent lack of fit with 'global discourse', is one of the most important contributions anthropologists could and perhaps should be making to CC research.

The substantive part of this article is a climate-change story at just this level, but not in any of the familiar sub-genres. It is one in which CC appears in unusual form and its effects unanticipated. At the same coeval time,productive changes to a small development project in one of anthropology's 'most favoured of favourite' 'out-of-the-way places' (Geertz 1983, Tsing 1993) are evident. While I do not pretend that this is how all CC research should be done, the example does, I think, illustrate the kinds of knowledge that can flow from a distinctively anthropological approach, open as Anna Tsing says, to 'the ethnographer's surprises' (2006:x) and revealing a certain lack of fit with standard global discourses of CC. This story is followed by some suggestions as to how anthropologists and others might think about these unintended and sometimes contradictory or ironic flip-sides of 'climate change'. I then returnto the challenge of developing an ethnographically-based anthropology of climate change.

A (different kind of) climate change story

The ethnographic subject is a medium-sized, district-level waste management project in a very ordinary village on the island of Bali in Indonesia. It has been running since mid-2004, and is the fruit of a long and complex history that need be retold here only in outline.

Bali is a tropical island with rich volcanic soil and abundant seasonal rainfall. The pre-human ecology consisted largely of rainforest with a coastal fringe of mangrove swamps. Traditional subsistence ecology was based on partial clearing of this forest for the cultivation of crops, mostly rice in fields irrigated by complex systems of channels and tunnels (Lansing 1991) and the extensive use of forest products, especially indigenous coconut

trees and bamboo, as well as introduced banana palms, for the construction of everything from the tiniest ritual offerings to the largest architectural structures. In this culture, surplus, unused or abandoned materials were simply left wherever they fell. 'Waste management' consisted of regular sweeping of organic material into piles out of the way of the business at hand, to be eaten by chickens, dogs and pigs or simply to decompose. Quantities large enough to cause inconvenience or of a kind to cause ritual pollution were burnt. Neither 'waste' nor 'waste management'in the sense that it is known in industrial economies existed.

In the 1970s the Suharto regime began to open Indonesia to the global economy in various ways including foreign investment, imported consumer products and tourism. Both population and prosperity increased and with them so did levels of consumption, including motor vehicle use, along with consequent demands for resources and production of wastes and pollutions. By the late 1980s serious waste problems had begun to emerge, especially in densely populated urban areas.

Bali was typical of this pattern but it was also a special case, because of its unique mode of development based on tourism. While tourism is in many respects a relatively 'clean' form of deve-lopment, it requires high levels of amenities and consumption to service the needs of tourists, most of whom are from affluent industrialised countries. These needs include non-local foods and drinks which tend to come in non-bio-degradeable packaging. The prosperity that flowed from tourism also led to the development of a local middle class with new tastes for consumption of similarly packaged goods (see fn) This packaging soon became the major source of a new kind of inorganic waste, especially in the more prosperous and touristed areas.[2]

While tourism was clearly part of the problem, it was also part of the solution. By the end of the 1980s tourists were complaining about rubbish on the streets, beaches and in rivers. The government initiated street cleaning and rubbish disposal systems which consisted essentially of trucking and dumping at best into primitive landfills and at worst over banks into river gorges. A minority of the local middle class, young, educated and often with overseas experience, began to debate the problems and

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[2]   The global packaging industry understand this very well and are specifically targeting the growing consumer classes in develoing countries. http://www.bvents.com/event/383920-propak-indo-nesia-22nd-international-series-of-exhibitions-for-the-processing-packaging-industries

seek solutions, often leading to the formation of environmentally oriented NGOs.

Ubud is a small town in south-central Bali, known as a centre of 'traditional' culture, especially the arts, which has grown rapidly as a result of tourism based on this cultural resource. In 1981 a local organisation called Yayasan Bina Wisata was formed to increase mutual awareness between tourists and locals and to attempt to guide tourist development in a direction considered compatible with local culture. Despite their efforts the rubbish problem grew apace in the rapid development of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1993 (when I began my research in Ubud), the problem was out of control, with rubbish lining the streets and unregulated dumping and burning occurring at the edges of town, and tourists publicly pointing out the contradiction between image and reality (Fleischman 1994). In the same year a group of educated, middle-class Indonesians (mostly Balinese) formed an organisation called Yayasan Wisnu, named for the Hindu deity associated with preservation and maintenance of the universe (http://baliwww.com/wisnuenviroworks/). One of their first projects was in Ubud, a practical attempt to set up a system for rubbish collection and recycling (Bali Post 1993). This project did not eventuate for a variety of reasons, mostly to do with the convoluted factionalisms of local community politics. Two subsequent projects in the late 1990s likewise foundered on the shoals of local politics.

In 2001 the local Rotary Club became interested in the problem. Rotary Ubud consists mostly of western expatriates, and its president at the time, and the driving force behind this project was David Kuper, a retired chemical engineer from Switzerland. He also had some years experience working for SwissContact, a Swiss aid agency in Indonesia, so he was in many ways well-equipped with the technical and management expertise needed as well as some local experience and knowledge.

In 2003 Rotary, together with Bali Fokus, another NGO specialising in waste issues (www.balifokus.or.id), worked with the local council (LKMD) in Ubud to develop a plan for a processing facility for Ubud's waste, based on recycling as much of it as possible, together with an improved waste collection and a public awareness campaign. They designed a system, arranged funding from international aid/development sources and leased a site in a nearby village. However, the village in question was less than enamoured with the prospect of becoming the rubbish dump of Ubud and a tourist industry from which they derived

little direct benefit. Once again things got bogged down in local politics. The funding had time-limits attached to it, this pressure exacerbated the tensions, and by the end of 2003 everyone had became frustrated and this project too collapsed.

In 2004, David and Bali Fokus started again. This time, however, they approached the tricky political waters through a successful tourism entrepreneur in Ubud, who had a strategic network of political connections throughout the district. This man happened also to be from a village called Temesi, in a poorer area further away from Ubud where the main landfill dump for the district (of Gianyar) was located. He persuaded both the Temesi community and the district government to agree to a pilot project to recycle part of the waste stream at the existing landfill and arranged for all the necessary consents to be processed in a matter of days (rather than the usual weeks or months). Rotary already had funding of $240,000 from the Swiss and American international aid agencies, sufficient for a facility designed to handle about 4 tonnes of waste per day. The facility was constructed very rapidly and was officially opened in mid-2004.

Figure 1. The Temesi Recycling Facility. Photo David Kuper.

The facility consisted essentially of a large open shed with access for waste at one end and egress for finished products at the other. Inside was a long conveyor belt on which the rubbish was sorted manually by workers from the local village. The recycleable materials (glass, metals, paper and plastics) were separated and packaged for sale to networks of professional scavengers

(pemulung) who transported and sold them to recycling plants in Java.

Despite minor problems, social as well as technical, the system worked well, but it was limited by two critical factors. Firstly it was processing only a small fraction (about 4 tonne/day) of the existing waste stream (more than 50 tonne/day) and it needed to process much more to achieve the economies of scale necessary to pay for itself. Secondly, it become increasingly clear that less than 10% of the waste stream was actually recyclable, while more than 80% was in fact organic material.[3]

Fig. 2. 80% of Waste is Organic Material.
Painting by Hendro Wiyanto.

The proposed solutions were as clear as the problems and also relatively straightforward: to enlarge the facility to process at least 50 tonne/day and to shift the focus from recycling to production

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[3]   This proportion is typical for waste streams in the less urban parts of Indonesia (Zurbrugg 2003:5, see also Tang 2004:17 on urban waste). However in this case, the original intention had been to concentrate on the waste from hotels and restaurants, in which the proportion of recycleable materials is much 'richer'. This is the basis of another smaller, but commercially successful recycling plant in Jimbaran, at the heart of the upmarket resort-hotel district (Atmojo 2008). In the case of Bali, an additional element boosting the organic component is the daily offerings composed mainly of leaves, flowers and foodstuffs.

of high-quality compost for sale to the growing local market for hotel gardens and public parks. They had already begun research and development to improve the quality of their compost and the site and waste stream were available. To expand the facility however, they needed significant development capital ($126,000). They sought funding through the usual aid/development channels and found some, but it was not sufficient and it tended to have awkward strings attached. One of the less awkward conditions of the funding was that they work with a local organisation, especially on community development aspects of the project. By this time their association with Bali Fokus had ended and they began to work with another NGO, Yayasan Gelombang Udara Segar (usually abbreviated Gus) whose background was in beach cleanup projects (www.gus-bali.org).

It was also around this time that 'climate change' began to play a increasing part in the story. From the start David had been aware of the advantages of aerobic composting in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) production, but it was around this time that he began to seriously consider the possibility of obtaining carbon credit funding through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).CDM is part of the post-Kyoto global system of climate change measures developed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Central among these measures was the establishment of a global system of so-called 'carbon' markets, in which emissions of GHGs carry costs, while reductions of such emissions have a corresponding positive monetary value.[4] CDM is based on the belief that it is generally cheaper (up to15 times cheaper according to UN estimates) to achieve emission reductions in southern countries (LDCs) than in northern ones. CDM is an international bureaucratic mechanism, within the UNFCCC, to enable emission-reducing projects in LDCs to sell their carbon credits to net emitters in the north who are unwilling or unable reduce their own emissions.[5]

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[4]   The use of 'carbon' as the key term in this system is somewhat misleading. It is not literally about carbon at all, but about GHGs. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is the most common GHG and it is used as the basic measure of GHGs and 'currency' of the market. Quantities of other GHGs are converted into tonnes of CO_2 having the equivalent greenhouse effect. It is worth noting however that the basis of industrial and post-industrial economies on carbon-based fossil fuels does justify the use of 'carbon' as a broader metaphor for the whole system.

[5]   For the official version of what CDM is about see http://cdm. unfccc.int/index.html. For a more critical view see Vidal (2008).

The Temesi project seemed to qualify because it reduces emissions by taking organic material out of the waste stream entering the landfill, where it would otherwise decompose anaerobically (without oxygen) producing methane (CH_4), a very powerful GHG. By composting it aerobically (with oxygen) instead, it produces only carbon dioxide (CO_2), a much less powerful GHG, leading to a net reduction of emissions. David was already convinced of the superiority of aerobic compost in nutritional and hygienic terms, and his research and development was focused on optimising this quality by forcing air through the material during the composting process. The new knowledge about CDM simply added a potential funding source, technical logic and public relations bonus to the existing direction of the project.

In response to this emerging awareness, the project was gradually reconceptualised and repackaged as a CC project. The expansion of the facility included a plan to transform the site from a rather malodorous tropical landfill dump into a landscaped 'Climate Change Theme Park' for the edification and education of visitors, especially school groups.

However, to access this funding via the CDM system they needed to quantify and certify their reductions, make an application to UNFCCC, obtain approval from the appropriate government agencies in both host and sponsoring countries, and find businesses to buy their reductions. These are complex processes, even using the 'simplified' methods allowed for 'small projects', which require sophisticated scientific, technical and legal skills. Such skills simply do not exist in villages like Temesi, for which, ironically, the CDM was ostensibly designed. While David was able to understand the process involved, much of the detailed work was beyond even his capacity and indeed beyond that of anyone else in Bali, or perhaps even Indonesia. So they had to hire specialist consultants in Europe to do most of the measurement, calculation, certification, applications, brokering etc. This all cost some \$33,000 which was paid for out of donor funding.

Eventually all these pieces came together and in November 2008 the project was certified as removing methane equivalent to some 77,000 tonnes of CO_2 out of the atmosphere over the next 10 years, for which they expect to earn an income of over \$1.5m, depending on the going rate.[6] A chance meeting with a

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6   The market establishes the rate in much the same way as markets for stocks and shares. At the time of writing (January 2009) the going rate is slightly under \$20/tonne.

Swiss visitor in an Ubud café, alerted David to the possibility
of cooperation with Kuoni, a Swiss based international travel
operator, who later also became a major donor and purchaser of
their carbon credits to offset the emissions caused by all the plane
flights they booked.[7] They are also pursuing Verified Emission
Reductions (VER) of a further 60,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent
which they estimate will be avoided after the expiry of the ten-
year period of the Certified Reductions.[8]

Year	CO2 Equivalents (tons / year)	Carbon Credits (USD 20.00 / ton)
2008	1,972	39,440
2009	3,855	77,100
2010	5,436	108,720
2011	6,766	135,320
2012	7,887	157,740
2013	8,834	176,680
2014	9,635	192,700
2015	10,312	206,240
2016	10,887	217,740
2017	11,375	227,500
Total	76,959	1,539,180
Annual average	7,696	153,918

Fig. 4 Estimated Carbon Credits over the 10 year CDM
crediting period. Source: Project documents

Funding is, however, contingent on maintaining the predicted
level of production and to achieve this level, they still needed to
expand the facility. Fortunately there was sufficient donor funding
(from IDRC, the Canadian government aid agency) to begin this
process in mid-2007. Construction of this and the first stage
of the theme park were fast-tracked in order to hold an official
opening to coincide with the UN Climate Change Conference
which was, serendipitously held in Bali in December 2007.

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[7]   See http://www.kuoni-group.com/Corporate+Responsibility/
       Climate+Change/Bali.htm

[8]   Verified Reductions are less certain, less rigorously assessed and
       less highly valued than Certified reductions.

In mid-2008 an advance CDM payment had been received, but they were still struggling to achieve their production targets because of difficulties finding sufficient local labour for the critical process of manual sorting. An alternative plan to bring dozens of experienced Javanese scavengers onto the site was complicated and delayed by the local cultural politics of migration.[9] A year later, the labour bottleneck had been cleared but the new obstacle was a need for more covered workspace for the additional workers. Funding was in place and they were awaiting the necessary permits to proceed. At the time of writing the new 4800 sq.m. building is approaching completion and a total of 150 people were employed.

Fig 5. The Parties Involved

Thus, briefly, from origins in attempts to clean up the streets of Ubud, over a period of fifteen years emerged a waste management project, then a recycling project, a compost project, and finally a CC project. The following diagram presents a (very simplified) map of the main parties and processes involved.

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9   For discussion of tensions between Balinese and immigrant Javanese and the politics of ethnicity in Bali see MacRae 2006.

What is climate change in this story?

There is much more that could be added to and said about this story, but for the present purpose the main question is, what is going on with CC in this story? How does CC work here? What does it mean? Whatever the answers, CC in this story seems to bear little resemblance to the CC that all the science-talk, politics-talk,economics-talk or media-talk is about. What it seems to me is going on includes:

1.   Firstly, CC is an idea, a concept that appeared, quite accidentally from somewhere (nobody is quite sure where) and entered into the project, transformed the way its creators thought about it and eventually transformed its funding base, its public profile and even its material form.

2.   In this story CC takes the specific institutional form of CDM – a rigorous regime of rules, practices and resources that were conceived by a global institution and are dispersed among a global network of organisations, and require globally distributed resources to access, address and mobilise them.

3.   CC is not just an idea or a system, it also has concrete, material effects. It enables money to flow into a very small out-of-the-way place, both because it has the magical power to mobilise aid and development funds, but also in the form of carbon credits, which once again flow into Temesi from places unknown to local people. It enables buildings to be built and people to be employed. It attracts visitors of all kinds and puts Temesi on the map in ways that it had never been before. When it looks like attracting hordes of Javanese/Muslim scavengers, it also becomes a matter of concern for the local Balinese/Hindu community.

4. And, finally, in this story CC is, from a local point of view, not just the usual alarming prospect of rising temperatures, drought, crop failures, disturbed weather and rising sea-levels, but the bearer of new things, some of them good, some of them potentially not so good.

Seen in these ways, CC starts to look like a fairly strange and mysterious beast, as are many social facts when we look closely at them and which anthropologists have a long tradition of rendering both strange and familiar. But it also looks like a lot of the phenomena we gloss, often too loosely, under the label of 'globalisation' - it comes from goodness knows where and when it arrives it takes on local meanings and uses. One of the central theoretical and methodological challenges to anthropology over the past

couple of decades has been to develop a range of conceptual tools and ethnographically-informed approaches to the conditions of globalisation, and there is now a growing corpus of examples.[10] One of the most creative and distinctively ethnographic and in my opinion, most useful of these, is Anna Tsing's innovative book Friction: an ethnography of global connection (2005). It begins with the sadness and anger of local people in Borneo at the destruction of their rainforest and community. Tsing's dilemma as an ethnographer, 'How does one speak out against injustice and the destruction of life', is resolved by the advice of a local friend who advises her to write critically and to become like 'a hair in the flour' (2005:205-6). She does this by working her way back along the various 'chains of global connection' (2005:x) that converge to bring about this destruction, looking not for their systematic wholeness, but for the 'gaps' (2005:172), (sorry - nothing!) and other points of 'friction' where the wheels of universal progress do not turn smoothly and things unfold according to unlikely and contradictory logics. Although our story here is substantively rather different, I find her approach 'good to think with' about it, especially about the way in which CC works. While this is not the place to review Tsing's argument in detail, two of her ideas especially resonate with this story:'allegorical packages' and 'zones of awkward engagement'.

Allegorical packages are 'globally circulating terms, theories, and stories…utopian visions …political models' (2005:215) which can 'travel when they are unmoored from the contexts of culture and politics from which they emerged and (are) re-attached as allegories within the culture and politics of (others)… (2005:234) where they are 'translated to become interventions in new scenes where they gather local meanings … (2005:238). Tsing is talking about stories and ideas that have come to inform the practice of Indonesian environmental activists. But I think this kind of process is a not-always-visible dimension informing many other activities in the processes called globalisation.

In the case of CC, it may be useful to shift images of 'it' from one of monolithic, mono-directional global environmental juggernaut, economic problem and political challenge, to one of a set of 'packages', scientific, political, economic, bureaucratic as well as allegorical. They originated in such places as scientific laboratories and environmental organisations, moved to the UN, Al Gore and the global media, but have now gone out into the world, either sent deliberately, or just escaping, and travel around

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[10]   See, for example Gupta and Ferguson (1997).

until they come home to roost in places intended or unintended, where they take on meanings and are put to uses according to local interpretations and needs.

For example, in a famous local-but-global village in Bali, a retired Swiss engineer overhears a visitor talking Swiss-accented German in a café and takes him to a smelly rubbish dump in an obscure village, where some other travelling packages about waste and recycling had already come home to roost – then the idea of CC, and the practicalities of CDM ricochet back and forth between Europe, Jakarta, Geneva and Temesi until they eventually transform the whole project. Now others - local schoolchildren, Government officials, Jakarta environmentalists, foreign anthropologists, all come to Temesi, make their own interpretations of it and take them away to tell other people in other places. The project has itself become a travelling allegorical package that I and no doubt others launch on further travels around the world.

The other concept I find apposite here is that of 'zones of awkward engagement' that refer to the social and political places where strange bedfellows meet: unlikely partners with seemingly incompatible agendas who find themselves in relationships of collaboration, because 'they find divergent means and meanings in the cause'. 'This is collaboration with a difference: collaboration with friction at its heart', 'bring[ing] misunderstandings into the core of the alliance' (2005:245-7). Such partners get together and despite the fact that they may not even be aware of their lack of fit, they work together and something comes out of it anyway: often 'not consensus making, but rather an opening for productive confusion …' [which is in turn] sometimes the most creative and successful form of collaborative production … (2005: 247). This, she suggests is the kind of process which lies behind the making of much real change in the world.

These seem to me very insightful observations (albeit not entirely without precedent in anthropology) and they provide useful tools for making sense of things that defy the making of more common sense. In the case of our story here, if we return to the map of parties and processes above, it begins to look like a tangled web of traveling allegorical packages and zones of awkward engagement. The first point to note about this map is that it spans across several concentric spatial zones, as 'global' processes are well known to do. But in this case the 'centre', where they all converge is not a centre of metropolitan power, but an out-of-the-way village. The dramatis personae of the story are located at various points across the range of spatial zones. The

key ideas driving the project, as well as the funding and technical knowledge enabling it, all originate in places far from Temesi where they have their own everyday business to go about. But circumstances have uprooted them and made them available in other places according to the whims of tourism, information technology and the aid industry. They have come home to roost in Temesi, not by design, but because aspects of them seemed to suit the perceived needs of the project at the time. 'Balinese culture', tourism, 'rubbish', clean streets, recycling, composting, climate change – they are all packages of knowledge and meaning that have come from afar, intersected with and been adapted to local meanings and uses, and in the process become the agents of economic, social and environmental change.[11]

The relationships between the cast of characters involved in the series of collaborations over the years may likewise be seen as nodes in a web of 'awkward engagements'. Bina Wisata, the Ubud community council, and Yayasan Wisnu all had their own agendas and priorities as well as a common interest in a cleaner Ubud, but in the end the confusion was not productive or creative enough – their 'engagement' was just too 'awkward'. Likewise with the subsequent collaborations between the series of local NGOs, Rotary, various international donors and the district government and of course the community of Temesi. But eventually, since the present project began, the creativity and productiveness of their confusion has been sufficient to at least counter-balance the obvious tensions and conflicts of interest and priority between them. Perhaps the less these are spelt out here the better, because ironically, while the local community is broadly supportive of the project, their engagement is perhaps most awkward of all in that among all the parties to the project, they are probably least aware of the larger picture and the most sceptical of its yet-to-be-fully-realised benefits to their community.

There may be little benefit in further labouring these applications of Tsing's ideas to this case, but my point is that her (anti-)model of global process helps me, and hopefully you, to see local/global processes of development and change, specifically 'climate change' in terms that undermine any assumptions of monolithic, mono-directional, mono-causal process. CC may then, I suggest, be usefully approached in the same way that we

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[11]   Should we be tempted to assume that 'rubbish', 'cleanliness' and 'recycling' are unproblematic universals, we need only refer to Drakner (2005) or Korom (1998) for a reminder of how culturally specific they are.

are learning to approach processes of globalisation generally.More specifically, Tsing's model of globalisation reveals the complexities and contradictions of CC in ways that may help us make sense of some its less obvious or predictable effects.

An anthropology of climate change

Given the rather perplexing and to date not very fruitful engagement of the world's social, cultural and political systems with the overwhelming scientific consensus about climate change, it seems that what we are dealing with may indeed be usefully seen as 'zones of awkward engagement', 'gaps' between knowledge and action, 'frictions' between wheels not quite engaging with each other and not especially amenable to analyses based on implicit positivist, rational-choice models.It seems also that this may really be how CC works globally – not unfolding with a systematic global logic, but in a confusion of meanings, interests and agendas. Rather than becoming frustrated with the endless scientific debate about the reality and extent of CC, the empty rhetoric and prevarications of politicians and the perverse distortions and manipulations of the carbon markets, it may be more useful and ultimately more productive, academically as well as practically, to simply enter into whatever 'zones of engagement' however 'awkwardly' they may present themselves, and to trust that the confusion will eventually be productive.

An anthropology of climate change, especially in the south where many of the real consequences seem likely to come home to roost, [does not need to add to the fairly monolithic scientific, political and economic conversations, but to bring the conversation back to where CC is actually worked out in practice, in the 'zones of awkward engagement' of everyday life. These will not tell us all there is to know about CC, but they may not be a bad place to start, especially for anthropologists.

So what…?

Some of you, having read this far, may be wondering 'so what?' – a nice story, some clever theory-talk, but if climate change is real and we want to do something about it, we need to get past nice stories and clever theory. For a start I would reiterate that I do not think it is productive for anthropologists to enter into the debates about the reality or the extent of CC. If however we relocate 'CC' into the larger historical context of economic, environmental and social change of which globalisation is but the

latest phase, then CC also may be seen as but the latest and maybe the biggest/scariest side-effect of this history. Hans Baer (2008) is not wrong in locating the source of CC in the capitalist/industrial/military complex and his call for fundamental change of this system is also justified. Likewise Thomas Reuter (in this issue) presents a cultural counterpart of Baer's argument - for a psychological/moral critique of the same system. I can find no fault in either of their diagnoses, nor in their prescriptions, but neither am I convinced that we can rely on their recommendations becoming policy in the foreseeable future, as the Copenhagen experience should remind us. This is not reason to abandon such global-level approaches but it is reason to be working simultaneously from the grass-roots level upward. However, as soon as we shift our focus to this level however (as the story above shows), the complexities, ironies and contradictions become visible and before we know it, the global juggernaut of CC blurs into a mass of local effects, interpretations and political/economic interests.

However one thing the story above shows us is that CC is not always what we think it is. I would like to suggest further that it may not even be necessary for us to believe literally in CC at all, to do something useful about it. Human societies have always tended to conceptualise threats, dangers and evil in terms of metaphors: Black Death, Grim Reaper, Infidel Hordes, Yellow Peril, etc. The growing awareness of environmental risks of the past half-century have likewise been understood in terms of a series of dominant images – from Rachel Carson's chilling image of a 'Silent Spring' (1965), the 'oil crashes' of the 1970s, 'ozone holes' of the 1980s, 'peak oil' and 'global warming' of the 1990s. While these have referred directly to specific material problems, environmentalists have long recognised that all environmental problems are interlinked and these images have also functioned in wider public imaginations as metaphors for environmental destruction and crisis more generally. I would suggest that 'climate change' is (whatever else it may also be) another such image – referring to a particular set of meteorological conditions, but also functioning as an unprecedentedly powerful metaphor for human ecological irresponsibility and its environmental consequences generally. At the level of culture, or public knowledge, the 'point' about CC is not its status as scientific truth, but its function as a compelling metaphor for the global consequences of environmental mismanagement.

Anna Tsing's notion of 'allegorical packages' helps me can help us to understand how this global metaphor works in practice – travelling and eventually arriving at local places in locally

specific forms. When these packages of knowledge (already laden with complex and ironic histories) meet the specificities of local cultural, political, economic and social interests, structures and processes, the sometimes surprising results are less surprising when I think of them as 'awkward engagements'.

So, while it remains the business of scientists to explore the reality and extent of CC, and of engineers, economists and politicians to search for solutions, the business of anthropologists is somewhat different. On the one hand it is to show how these things work out on the ground, in real local contexts, but it is also to relocate them into larger historical and cultural frames of reference. At both levels it is also to reveal the complex interplays of technological, ecological and political-economic processes as well as cultural understandings and motivations that constitute 'climate change'. This may not put us in the forefront of designing 'solutions' but it may help us to avoid deluding ourselves about what is really going on.

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Reimagining Technology: Anthropology, Geographic Information Systems, and the integration of diverse knowledges

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Abstract

The integration of scientific and local or indigenous knowledges has become a central issue for the management and development of natural resources This paper problematises the integration of scientific and local and indigenous knowledges through an analysis of the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) by natural and social science researchers. In particular, the explicit claim for GIS as a technology to facilitate the integration of diverse knowledges will be examined. However, rather than pursue a more conventional focus on participatory GIS research methodologies, this article develops a theoretical framework to investigate the ontological boundaries and epistemological privilege implicit in the use of GIS that may actually undermine the claim for GIS as an integration domain. Latour's concept of 'a symmetrical anthropology', developed in conjunction with notions of 'knowledge making', is applied to three case studies illustrative of the use of GIS as an integration domain. It is argued that a symmetrical anthropology is a particularly useful theoretical approach that not only reveals the implicit assumptions that undermine the use of GIS as an integration domain, but also provides a vantage from which to explain GIS technology as a network of social and technical interactions. In conjunction with other research concerned with interactions between diverse knowledges and digital technologies, such an approach paves the way for re-imagining GIS as an integration domain.

Since the 1990s there has been increasing awareness of the relevance of indigenous and local knowledges to the management and development of natural resources (Agrawal 1995: 413-414; Nader 1996:7). This has led to an escalation in the number and intensity of interactions between scientists and local and indigenous peoples, and attempts to integrate local or indigenous knowledges into the predominantly scientific realm of natural resource management. Both natural and social science researchers increasingly rely on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to integrate diverse knowledge, prompting an explicit claim for GIS as an integration domain (Aswani and Lauer 2006:81; Payton et al. 2003:355). Significantly, this claim is reinforced through the volume of environmental research work that prioritises GIS as a research and decision-making tool (e.g. Robiglio 2003; McCall and Minang 2005; Newman and LeDrew 2005), and the actual design of the technology itself that aligns strongly with scientific knowledge and yet simultaneously prioritises the merging of disparate information sources.

GIS are database management systems that focus on spatial analysis and the cartographic display of spatially referenced information[1]. Datasets take the form of separate layers that relate to specific natural or cultural variables that describe the environment of interest in a particular research project (Campbell 2002:190). The correlation between datasets can be analysed, and multiple datasets can be overlayed to produce a visual representation or thematic map covering various issues. Significantly, GIS manage large amounts of information and provide the tools to merge information from different sources. Thus, satellite data, aerial photography, and spatially referenced data on, for example, demographics, land and sea ownership, land and sea resource use, infrastructure, government divisional boundaries, sacred sites, vegetation, land forms, archaeological findings and so on can be overlayed and analysed to reveal various and often previously unacknowledged socio-spatial relationship patterns. Indeed, according to Dorling and Fairbairn, "GIS can be viewed as a new technology [that] makes visible a previously unseen perspective, opening up new worlds to our eyes" (1997:123). Consequently,

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[1]   In contrast to knowledge (social, contextual, performative, located), information is variably defined as 'about facts', 'devoid of meaning', anything that can be digitised, and data that serves some purpose (Pickles 1999:51, Longley et al 2005:12). In the early 1990s, critics of GIS within the discipline of geography highlighted the retreat from knowledge to information ensconced within GIS use (Taylor 1990, Taylor and Overton 1991).

researchers and decision makers from many diverse disciplines increasingly rely on GIS to manage and resolve environmental problems, governance issues, health crises, business questions, sustainable development, natural disaster responses, and public safety situations.[2]

As GIS is a powerful technology with potentially 'world-making' consequences, the claim for GIS as an 'integration domain' necessitates a critical analysis of the processes and assumptions embedded within such research. The approach generally taken by researchers who recognise the relevance of local or indigenous knowledge is to focus on participatory research methods that assume 'by participating in the research process, [indigenous] people are in control of their contribution' (Williams 2005:27). Whilst there is an intention to maximise the participation of local and indigenous peoples, this approach fails to problematise GIS as a technology of integration. Rather than focus on the participatory aspect of GIS methodology, about which there is an abundance of literature (Gambold 2001, Robiglio et al 2003, Chapin et al 2005, McCall and Minang 2005), this article draws attention to ontological boundaries and epistemological differences often implicit in research that seriously compromises the potential for GIS as an 'integration domain'.

Symmetrical Anthropology

The nature-culture dichotomy constructs ontological boundaries that are deeply embedded within modernist epistemologies (Descola and Palsson 1996:12). Latour (1993:99), in his critique of modernity, identifies the dichotomy as the 'First Great Divide' – the one that defines 'Us' as modern, and that also accounts for the 'Second Great Divide' between 'Us' and 'Them'. He argues that the absolute differentiation between 'western' cultures and all other cultures results from the 'exportation' of the internal nature-culture divide that is fundamental to 'western' thought and being. According to Latour, this is played out in the 'West' through a belief that 'we [westerners] do not mobilize an image or a symbolic representation of Nature, the way the other societies do, but Nature as it is, or at least as it is known to the sciences – which remain in the background, unstudied, unstudiable, miraculously conflated with Nature itself' (1993:97).

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[2]   Many examples of GIS use can be found in Sappington 2003 and Campagna 2006.

However, Latour proposes that the divide between nature and culture, rather than defining reality, defines the 'particular way Westerners had of establishing their relations with others as long as they felt modern' (1993:103 [my emphasis]). In order to sustain this sense of being 'truly modern' the practices of 'translation' that create hybrids of nature and culture must be kept separate from the practices of 'purification' that create the distinct ontological realms of 'human' and 'non-human', 'culture' and 'nature' (Latour 1993: 10-11). Latour (1993: 41) argues that whilst 'moderns' simultaneously bracket off and ignore the practices of translation, and credit only the practices of purification for their success, it is the link between these two sets of practices that has allowed 'us' to be modern.

The hybrids identified by Latour link 'imbroglios' of sciences, technologies, strategies, politics, economics, anxieties, fiction and so on, such that the AIDS virus and aerosols (Latour 1993: 2), the Gulf Stream (Latour 1998: 209), a door closer (Latour 1988), land titles (Verran1998: 250), and the human modified cell (Strathern 1996: 525) are all hybrid objects that trace 'delicate' networks of humans and non-humans[3]. However these networks remain invisible, severed into segments where there is only science (objects of external reality) and only sociality (subjects of society) (Latour 1993:4, 95). Latour (1993:41-42) argues that by not thinking about the connections between nature and culture and thus the consequences of hybrids for the social order, 'moderns' have been able to innovate in the mass production of multiple combinations of humans and non-humans. He contrasts this with 'premoderns' whose incessant preoccupation with the connections between nature and culture works to limit the expansion of these connections because every hybrid becomes 'visible and thinkable' and a dilemma for the social order.

Whilst the terms 'modern' and 'premodern' are problematic, Latour pursues his argument to where the relations between 'us' and 'them' are transformed and a comparative anthropology becomes possible. To focus attention on the networks of humans and non-humans that proliferate beneath the 'Great Divides', that is to apply symmetry, reveals that nature and culture are not distinguished, and that 'we have never been modern' (1993:11,

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[3]   Haraway (1991: 150) suggests we are all hybrid objects, 'cyborgs' that signal a breach of the supposed boundaries between humans and non-humans. She argues that cyborg imagery can express a responsibility for the social relations of science and technology, and 'suggest a way out of the maze of dualism in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves' (1991: 181).

103). As Latour suggests, 'Cultures – different or universal – do not exist, any more than Nature does. There are only natures-cultures, and these offer the only possible basis for comparison' (1993:104). The principle of symmetry requires that both 'objective truth' and 'subjective belief' are treated equally, traced as natures-cultures rather than understood through the 'Great Divides' that assume a distinction between or overlap of nature and society. As a result, an anthropologist 'in the field' could no longer rely on a universal 'nature' upon which to interpret mere 'cultural representations', and 'symmetrically' an anthropologist of scientists 'at home' could no longer simply reveal the subjectivity of scientific claims to Nature (1993:101-102). Instead, 'culture' and 'nature' must always be problematised, leaving only natures-cultures for comparison (1993: 101).

It is important to recognise that, as Pickering highlights, 'the foundations of modern thought are at stake here' (1992:22). As Descola and Palsson (1996:2) state, the nature-culture dichotomy has provided analytical tools that have been central to the discipline of anthropology since the 1950s. Whilst developed and applied differently by materialists, cultural ecologists, structuralists, and symbolic anthropologists, what was actually understood as 'nature' and 'culture' 'always referred implicitly to the ontological domains covered by these notions in western culture' (Descola and Palsson 1996:3). The dichotomy was taken for granted, and as such, left unexamined. However, despite its 'taken-for-grantedness', which continues to permeate 'western' commonsense understandings and scientific practice (Descola 1996:88), the epistemological implications of a nature-culture dichotomy are now being addressed within the discipline of anthropology. As a result, anthropologists and other social theorists have revealed that the nature-culture dichotomy fails to adequately explain the ways people talk about and interact with their environments (Cruikshank 2001; Hviding 1996; Povinelli 1995), and indeed 'hinders true ecological understanding' (Descola and Palsson 1996:3).

A number of anthropologists working within Australia have pointed out that, contrary to western epistemology, many different Aboriginal peoples attribute subjective intentionality not only to humans, but also to animals, land, objects and Dreamings, and that this constitutes very different human-environment relations (Bradley 2001:298; Meyers 1986; Povinelli 1995; Rose 1992:90-91; Strang 2000:282-283 and 2005:369-370). In her paper, Do Rocks Listen, Povinelli (1995) relays the description by a Belyuen woman, made to the land commissioner during the Kenbi Land Claim, of

how Old Man Rock 'listened to and smelled the sweat of Aboriginal people as they passed by hunting, gathering, camping, or just mucking about' (1995:505). Povinelli then draws attention to a related comment offered by another Belyuen woman about the land commissioner - 'He can't believe, eh Beth?' (1995:505).

Povinelli (1995:505) reveals that 'matters of belief' plague the interactions that Belyuen people have with anthropologists, ecologists, environmentalists, legal people, and tourists. In these situations, the human-environment interactions described by Belyuen women are positioned within a Western framework that distinguishes between 'nature' and 'culture' and that subsequently upholds 'commonsense' notions of human action in the natural world (1995:507). Within this framework, Belyuen understandings of human-environment interactions are, according to Povinelli, problematically 'represented as beliefs rather than a method for ascertaining truth' (1995:506). This is an example of Descola's point that boundaries that define 'human' and 'non-human' relations that are different from western epistemological and ontological boundaries appear as 'intellectually interesting but false representations, mere symbolic manipulations of that specific and circumscribed field of phenomena that we call nature' (Descola 1996:88). Povinelli argues that this reflects the 'deep disbelief' within western epistemologies that non-human entities can be intentional subjects, and contributes to the problem of how to integrate or represent local non-western knowledge of the environment (1995:506).

Likewise, Cruikshank (2001) discusses the sentient glacial landscapes in the narratives of the indigenous people in north-western North America and the problems associated with incorporating these understandings into global debates on climate change. As she suggests, 'glaciers that are equipped with senses of smell and hearing, alert to the behaviour of humans and quick to respond to human indiscretion, sound wholly unlike glacier field sites where scientists can 'sieve' for reductive moments that allow measurement of variables involved in climate change' (2001:389). In relation to the incorporation of indigenous understandings into global debates, Cruikshank (2001:389) points out that local knowledge is often problematically reified as 'traditional ecological knowledge' (TEK). In order to incorporate TEK into various natural resource management plans, diverse indigenous knowledges are made bridgeable through a scientific framework of 'biodiversity', 'sustainability', and 'co-management'. As a result, the sentient landscapes of the indigenous people in north-western

North America are transformed into 'land and resources' that are devoid of social content (2001:389).

Hviding (1996:168) argues that the study of indigenous ecological knowledge often produces information on local taxonomic representations of 'nature' rather than understandings of the interactions and relations between people and their environments. This is supported by Scoones' (1999) review of ecological thinking in the social sciences. Scoones suggests that whilst there is a vast literature on indigenous ecological knowledge, 'the consequence has been the collection of much data – classically in the form of lists and classifications – that remain poorly situated in the complexities of environmental and social processes' (1999:485). Therefore the conventional study of indigenous ecological knowledge establishes a platform that can potentially be used to test the 'validity' of indigenous knowledge against the objective 'reality' of scientific knowledge (see Hviding 1996:169). Indeed, Watson-Verran and Turnbull reveal that 'by and large, past cross-cultural work has taken Western 'rationality' and 'scientificity' as the bench mark criteria by which other culture's knowledges should be evaluated' (1994:115). As a result, the privileged access to 'nature' afforded by scientific knowledge has reinforced notions of 'rationality' and 'objectivity' that, linked with non-indigenous systems of power and authority, has constructed a divide between scientific and indigenous knowledges.

However, the divide between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge is being dismantled through a critical examination of the concept of 'indigenous knowledge' (Agrawal 1995) and the revelation of science as a social activity (Turnbull 1997:553; see also Latour 1998). The concept of indigenous knowledge and its distinction from scientific knowledge has long been associated with the field of development studies and the discipline of anthropology, and more recently with environmental conservation (Agrawal 2002). Indeed, whilst 'indigenous knowledge' has been transformed from something 'inefficient, inferior, and an obstacle to development' in the 1950s into something that held value for sustainable development and natural resource management issues in the 1990s, the distinction between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge has generally remained fundamental to the understanding of 'indigenous knowledge' (Agrawal 1995:413). This is an important distinction because an increased awareness of the relevance of indigenous knowledge has not only revealed a space of intersection between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge, but has also flavoured that space with notions of opposition.

Agrawal (1995) offers a critique of the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge through an analysis of what he defines as the major themes of division (1995:418). These themes establish indigenous knowledge as intimately engaged with the activities associated with the everyday lives of people rather than being concerned with abstract ideas and philosophies; as closed, non-systematic and devoid of notions of objectivity or rigorous analysis; and as contextually bound by a particular people living in a particular place. In contrast, scientific knowledge is identified as separate from everyday livelihoods, as abstract, analytical, objective, and universal (Agrawal 1995:422-425). Agrawal argues for a multiplicity of knowledges to challenge this dichotomy between indigenous and scientific knowledge (1995:433). He presents evidence for both the context of science and the abstraction of indigenous knowledge, and suggests that 'the same knowledge can be classified one way or the other depending on the interests it serves, the purposes for which it is harnessed, or the manner in which it is generated' (1995:433). Attending to both the sameness and the difference of 'knowledges', as revealed by Agrawal, establishes a basis from which to bridge the constructed chasm between indigenous and scientific knowledge (1995:433).

Knowledge assemblages

In order to consider this 'bridge' it is necessary to examine notions of sameness and difference as they relate to the assemblage of knowledge. Turnbull questions the view of 'science as specially privileged knowledge', and instead recognises science as a local knowledge system assembled through a set of local practices (1997:553). He argues that all knowledge is both performative and representational, and that knowledge is assembled in particular ways to produce a 'knowledge space' made up of people, skills, local knowledge and equipment (1997:553, 560). Various social strategies and technical devices enable the components of knowledge spaces to be connected. Turnbull (1997:553) argues:

> because all knowledge systems from no matter what culture or period, have localness in common, many of the small but significant differences between knowledge systems can be explained in terms of the differing kinds of work involved in creating 'assemblages' from the 'motley' collection of practices, instrumentation, theories and people.

Turnbull (2000) examines specific 'knowledge assemblages' of different groups of people: premodern European masons, cartographers, Polynesian navigators, medical research scientists, and aerospace engineers. The various social strategies and technical devices for the movement and assemblage of knowledge are examined, and in all cases he demonstrates that 'knowledge is necessarily a social product; it is the messy, contingent, and situated outcome of group activity' (2000:215). Turnbull's approach to 'knowledge' reveals both the 'situated messiness' of scientific practice and the collective work involved in assembling scientific knowledge from otherwise heterogeneous knowledges. His examination of particular scientific research projects in the fields of malariology and turbulence engineering show that scientific knowledge is produced 'at specific organised sites by people in face-to-face circumstances and results from contingent chains of negotiated judgements and concrete practices' (Turnbull 2000:184). Turnbull reveals that whilst scientific practice and results can be messy and controversial, and intimately local and discrete, still an assemblage can be achieved that moves knowledge beyond the local.

Turnbull's analysis of knowledge as both practice and collective work not only challenges understandings of science as (true) representational knowledge, but also recognises the mobility of local indigenous knowledge. Such recognition challenges assumptions that indigenous knowledge is somehow bound or limited by locality and subsistence anxiety, and subsequently is unable to transcend the here and now. In particular, Turnbull focuses on the knowledge of Polynesian navigators that is assembled through various social strategies and technical devices that enable deliberate journeys across a vast ocean (Turnbull 2000:153). Of importance here is Turnbull's insistence that oral traditions (generally associated with local indigenous knowledge) engage processes to assemble and move knowledge beyond its local production.

The fundamental role of narratives to structure and transmit knowledge associated with all aspects of Australian Aboriginal life is well documented in the literature (Klapproth 2004; Meyers 1986; Rose 1992; Strang 2000; Watson 1993). Watson (1993:28) considers the 'knowledge network' of Yolngu people of northeast Arnhemland. She argues that 'Yolngu knowledge is coincident with the creative activity of the Ancestral Beings', and that subsequently, 'knowledge and landscape structure and constitute each other' (1993:30). As the 'whole country' is constituted by an already established network of tracks made by the ancestors,

the specific knowledge held by specific people and clans about specific country resides in the landscape and transcends the 'local' through its 'place' in the network.

In the context of Aboriginal claims to land, Strang (2000) explores the transcendental landscape of Aboriginal people in Kowanyama in North Queensland, and in particular its relationship with other technologies and strategies of knowledge mobilisation. Whilst travelling through their country, local knowledge from each place is recorded in 'Western' artefacts (e.g. maps, databases, film) for the political and social gain of Kunjen people in the land claim process (Strang 2000:289). The complex of land-people-knowledge is represented through the 'showing and telling' of each place, a performative strategy used by people in Kowanyama to establish their knowledge and ownership in various interactions with scientists, tourists, anthropologists, government officials, and so on (Strang 2000:280, 289). Concurrently, 'alien representational forms' such as maps, databases, and other technical devices are used to record their knowledge in order to assert an Aboriginal reality within a contentious political arena (Strang 2000:278-279). It is important that Strang's focus on the agency of Kunjen people in land claim processes reveals the particular social strategies and technical devices engaged by them to 'move' their local knowledge into a broader political and legal debate on land ownership.

Indigenous knowledge, conventional databases, and digital technologies

Whilst in agreement with Strang that many Aboriginal people in northern Australia are using digital technologies to promote their own interests, Christie (2005a, 2005b) explores the compatibility between the conventional production of databases as a repository of objective knowledge (as in the production of a GIS database) and Aboriginal knowledge production[4]. Christie (2005a:6) recognises that significant aspects of Aboriginal knowledge are lost through the process of abstraction which removes the particularities and localities of knowledge production in order to record within a database the 'factual' knowledge. Christie's (2005a: 10, 12) analysis of the use of digital technologies by Yolngu people highlights the tension between scientific and Aboriginal metaphysics, and contributes to the realisation that rather than

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[4]   See Bartolo and Hill (2001) as an example of the conventional use of GIS databases within northern Australia.

being neutral objects, conventional databases prioritise a Western objectivist ontology. That is, within a conventional database, the sequestration of metadata into predetermined fields enforces a priori ontological relationalities that reflect a scientific metaphysics and stifle the power of Aboriginal knowledge production (2005b:56).

Rather than accept the necessity of metadata fields, Christie (2005b:60) works with a recognised connection between Aboriginal and computer ontologies to pursue an 'ontologically flat and epistemologically innocent database' (see also Glowczewski 2005). Through problematising the processes of use and design of digital technologies (distinct processes in Western knowledge practices), Christie attends to the multiple connections of and between people, knowledge, place, and technology, and in so doing invokes Turnbull's 'knowledge assemblages' and Latour's 'natures-cultures'. The challenge of a symmetrical anthropology is to pursue a similar tracing of these connections 'at home', in a state where culture and technoscience are deemed never to overlap.

Integrating soil knowledges in East Africa and Bangladesh

Payton et al (2003:357), in a paper based on East Africa and Bangladesh, support the widely accepted view that sustainable land management is most effectively derived from the synergy of local and scientific knowledge, and argue that more attention needs to be given to integration methodologies (see also Sillitoe 1998a; WinklerPrins 1999:156). The authors investigate two research projects that apply different methodologies for the integration of scientific and local knowledge of soil and land resources within GIS. The research projects were based in the lake region on the border between Tanzania and Uganda in East Africa and on the floodplain regions in Bangladesh. Both of the research projects involved interdisciplinary teams of natural scientists, anthropologists and other social scientists, the participation of local farmers, the collection of scientific and local knowledge about soils, and the use of GIS as an 'integration domain' for scientific and local knowledge (2003:358). Both projects also employed conventional scientific soil survey methods that involved transect surveys, geo-referenced representative soil samplings, laboratory analysis, and the recording of soil properties and site details according to internationally accepted methods (2003:361).

Despite these shared themes, the projects differed in their methodology in terms of the 'collection' and assessment of local knowledge and the integration of local and scientific knowledge within a GIS (Payton et al 2003:358). In the East Africa project, local knowledge research focussed on the production of a geographically accurate local knowledge soil map and the development of a meaningful local knowledge map legend. Field methods included participatory mapping, semi-structured interviews, farmer-led transect walks, household interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Participatory mapping began with farmers drawing cognitive maps of local soil types, and following group discussion of soil categories and boundaries; a local knowledge soil map was produced. In order to achieve the 'geographical accuracy' suitable for GIS work, the farmers were then asked to transfer this information onto aerial photographs (2003:363-364). The overall study involved interviews with individual farmers in their fields in order to explore 'criteria for soil and land classification in more depth' and to geo-reference soil boundaries using a global positioning system (GPS) (Payton et al 2003:364). Focus group discussions were used to cross-check the information from individual farmer interviews and to produce a final 'consensus' local knowledge soil map. According to Payton et al, the 'focus group discussions were useful for further refining and contextualising the information and were used to develop consensus [local knowledge] map legends' (2003:364).

In the Bangladesh project, local knowledge research was not specific for soils, and instead focussed on 'all aspects of natural resource management' (Payton et al 2003:365). The project relied on ethnographic research carried out by two anthropologists resident in the field for 18 months. Research methods included open-ended discussions, some participant observation, and plot-by-plot interviews with land-owners in 600 rice paddies (2003:365). Local soil names were included in the GIS by plot location rather than by GPS, made possible through the use of a detailed base map that showed individual rice paddies (2003:361).

The integration of local and scientific knowledge within the GIS was also approached differently by each project. This difference related specifically to the integration of local soil knowledge rather than to the entry of data from the scientific soil surveys (Payton et al 2003:365). In the East Africa project, the various farmer drawn maps, supported by the 'consensus' local knowledge map legend, and the geo-referenced interview data were entered into the GIS (2003:365-366). Integration analysis involved the use of scientific and local knowledge map overlays

to examine the degree of correspondence between scientific and local knowledge soil maps (2003:366-367). In the Bangladesh project, geo-referenced local knowledge of soil classification and soil boundaries were entered into the GIS. However, in an attempt to avoid the extensive 'filtering' of local knowledge prior to the integration with scientific knowledge, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package was used to store, sort and code interview transcripts (Payton et al. 2003:367). Whilst this process made local knowledge accessible to soil scientists, much of the ethnographic research was not extensively geo-referenced and subsequently it was difficult to integrate local knowledge with the scientific soil maps in the GIS (2003:380). In their critical assessment of the use of GIS as an 'integration domain', Payton et al reflect on a number of issues. Firstly, as the assessment of 'soil spatial variability' was a fundamental aspect of the scientific soil research (2003:357), the authors had to contend with 'the issue of defining boundaries that result from the variable density and elastic scales of farmer's personally constructed [local knowledge]' (2003:380). They recognise that the spatial cognition of farmers is not equivalent to the scientific representation of space, and acknowledge that 'asking farmers to create a cartographically faithful cognitive map from memory is flawed' (2003:380). Whilst Payton et al suggest that this problem is somewhat overcome through the use of GPS in the East Africa project and through the use of cadastral maps in the Bangladesh project, the translation of local knowledge soil boundaries onto maps remains problematic for spatial analysis (2003:383).

Secondly, the development of a 'consensus local view' was identified as an important process in the use of GIS as an integration domain. The authors note that whilst Bangladeshi farmers name soils according to the soils' feel, and that these names relate closely to scientific concepts of soil texture and consistency, 'unlike the scientific approach, they are not consistently applied using objective and repeatable criteria to all soils by all farmers' (Payton et al 2003:378). Likewise, the East African project showed that whilst farmers use criteria to classify soils that 'parallel' scientific soil classification, 'these criteria are not assessed or applied systematically or quantitatively as in scientific approaches … and they vary in their application between individual farmers' (2003:376). Subsequently, Payton et al argue that, as local soil knowledge is experientially based and farmers have a better knowledge of the soil that they farm, the integration of local knowledge into a GIS requires the aggregation of farmers' knowledge (2003:380, 382). However they also recognise that 'the

distillation of [local knowledge] to provide tabular information for the GIS involved in this process inevitably results in loss of detail and context' (2003:383).

Finally, Payton et al highlight the importance of 'context' in relation to farmers' local knowledge of soils (2003:383), and the need to facilitate the comparison of local and scientific knowledge conceptually as well as spatially (2003:379), stressing that 'It is crucial to recognize that farmer's knowledge is not neutral or static but is developed through communication, interpretation and action and is sensitive to particular contexts' (2003:377). The authors suggest that an ethnographic approach is necessary to ensure that the context of local knowledge is 'properly appreciated', and that the use of GIS in conjunction with CAQDAS could 'provide an integrated analysis that is socially contextualised and yet detailed and spatially reliable' (2003:383). In terms of an integrative methodology, the authors advocate initial intradisciplinary studies focussed on either local knowledge or scientific knowledge, followed by a process of knowledge sharing, and proceeding to in-depth studies based on the need for iteration between the two knowledge systems. They conclude that 'more substantial synergy can then be achieved through the joint interrogation of interdisciplinary databases' (2003:383).

Designing Marine Protected Areas in the Solomon Islands

Aswani and Lauer (2006a, 2006b) incorporate scientific knowledge and local ecological knowledge and behaviour into a GIS for the design of marine protected areas in the Roviana and Vonavona Lagoons, Solomon Islands. Their research projects involved a combination of spatial tools, anthropological fieldwork, and social and natural science methods to study artisanal fisheries (2006a: 83) and benthic knowledge (2006b:263). The research reported in these papers, along with social assessments and an understanding of customary marine tenure systems contributed to the final selection of marine protected area locations of ecological and social significance (2006a:85, 2006b:264).

Aswani and Lauer (2006a) outline biological objectives to 'protect vulnerable species and habitats' and social objectives to encompass local practices to 'enhance community well-being throughout the region' (2006a:84-85). Subsequently, in order to identify vulnerable habitats and susceptible species, local ecological knowledge of habitats and biological events were coupled with scientific knowledge within the GIS, along with spatial and

temporal patterns of various human fishing activities. In their paper focussing on knowledge of the marine benthos, Aswani and Lauer (2006b) support the accepted view within resource management literature that benthic mapping is the 'crucial first step' in characterising the marine environment for the design of protected areas (2006b:263). Through their work they recognise that local ecological knowledge of habitat classification distinguishes between abiotic benthic substrates, biotic communities, and occupant species in a similar way to scientific classifications of marine habitats, and subsequently these distinctions were used in the initial phase of the mapping project (2006b:264).

The methods outlined in both papers are interrelated in terms of the overall project of establishing marine protected areas in the lagoons. Participant observation and interviews conducted over a 12 year' period were used to record local ecological knowledge. Digitised and geo-rectified aerial photographs formed the 'real-world backdrop' onto which selected 'knowledgeable' local informants drew the boundaries of habitats, abiotic and biotic substrates, and other areas. According to Aswani and Lauer, the digitised 'base map' of aerial photographs 'served as an important cartographic tool for researchers and local informants when collecting spatial data in the region' (2006a:85). In addition, researchers travelled in boats with local fishermen to map boundaries and locate biological characteristics using a GPS (2006a:85, 2006b:264-265). Local ecological knowledge was represented in the GIS by separate layers associated with locally defined bio-physical areas, fishing areas, floating sites, biological events and marine habitats (Aswani and Lauer 2006a:87). Fishing behaviour, incorporating named fishing ground, paddling times, habitat type and fish yield, was represented by linking foraging data collected during the past 12 years with more recent geo-referenced data through the shared usage of locally named fishing grounds (2006a:86). The GIS was then used to reveal spatial and temporal patterns of local fishermen's ecological knowledge and behaviour.

Conventional marine ecological surveys were employed 'for ground-truthing the accuracy of local habitat identification' (Aswani and Lauer 2006a:85), and to 'test the correspondence' between local knowledge of the benthos and the 'actual distribution of abiotic and biotic substrates in the area' (2006b:266). Aswani and Lauer report results that show a high correspondence between local ecological knowledge data and the ground-truthed field dive surveys (2006b:267). They suggest that 'such correspondence is promising, given that it corroborates an intuitive

prediction that indigenous ecological knowledge as a form of inductive science is not ontologically incongruent with Western scientific knowledge' (2006a:96). Aswani and Lauer argue their results and methodology demonstrate that the participation of local people produces 'scientifically acceptable data', and that such local participation contributes to bridging the divide between local and scientific environmental knowledge (2006b:271).

Despite some conceptual limitations and a possible trade-off between scientific rigour and local participation (Aswani and Lauer 2006b:271), the authors highlight the 'great potential' of GIS as an integration domain for local and scientific knowledge (2006a:99). They argue that public participation GIS 'integrates as equivalents indigenous and Western forms of knowledge' and that the visual display capability of a GIS 'bridges the divide' between local and scientific knowledge (2006a:99). Aswani and Lauer conclude that 'the ability of a GIS to store, retrieve, analyse, and display spatial characteristics of complex systems makes it an excellent spatial analytical tool for deepening our knowledge of the socio-ecological dimensions of a system' (2006a:99).

Mapping cultural and natural resources on Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, Australia

The video, 'Call of the Country' (Guiney 1992), follows a group of anthropologists, geographers, and Aboriginal traditional owners as they map the cultural and natural resources of the Pormpuraaw community on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula (Monaghan and Taylor 1995:2-1 – 2-2). The narrator highlights the use of advanced technology in the project and that 'a union between custom and science is taking place in far North Queensland'[5]. The video begins with images of the land, local development, and the community, and establishes the mapping project as an initiative of the Pormpuraaw Community Council to assist them with future management and development decisions and to preserve traditional knowledge. An elder asserts his knowledge of the land, and laments that 'the young generation, they don't know'. Then the researchers from James Cook University arrive in Pormpuraaw with their equipment – computers, maps, personal luggage, notebooks, GPS receivers, recorders, cameras and so on. The geographers do not have time to examine all of the community area and subsequently divide the country into sample areas that

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[5]   A similar sentiment is expressed in projects by WWF (2001) and Bartolo and Hill (2002).

serve to represent larger habitat areas. The anthropologists and geographers are seen in a room huddled around multiple maps and satellite and aerial photographs of the community area, discussing and planning their movements over the coming days. Elders are kept informed of this process. Then equipment and people are loaded into vehicles and we follow the researchers and traditional owners on a number of field visits through country.

On field visits to the sample areas the researchers document the physical features of the landscape, the vegetation and soil types, ground and canopy coverage, and Aboriginal names and usages. Traditional owners accompany the researchers and act as guides and guardians, introducing the researchers to country and providing knowledge of where to camp and where to access safe water. During his introduction to country, a traditional owner emphasises that the researchers want to look at the places and that they come with 'camera and all that and John Taylor ways', referring to the project leader, an anthropologist with a long association with the Pormpuraaw community and local cultural mapping programmes (Taylor 1984:52; Monaghan and Taylor 1995:2-1). In the field, researchers use a GPS to identify the 'exact location', voice recorders are used to document Aboriginal names and the stories, songs and histories of each place, and cameras are used to photograph 'markers' that identify Aboriginal places. Geographers carry notebooks and pens, standardised forms for recording vegetation and soil type, ribbons to mark particular vegetation, tags to identify Aboriginal names and usages of particular plant samples, and bags to take plant and soil samples back to the laboratory at the university. They 'pace' the country, counting, measuring, sampling, and recording information, feeling the soil and looking up at the canopy. Anthropologists conduct semi-structured interviews with traditional owners, asking about names and usage, stories and histories. Indeed, throughout the field visits to the sample areas, traditional owners are generally seen responding to questions and providing information to the researchers.

In contrast, the video also follows a field trip along the trail of the crocodile story. On this 'field trip' traditional owners are animated and engaged, confident and in control of the process. For many it is their first visit 'home' in many years and an opportunity to re-live the stories. The traditional owners sit on the ground around the official maps that do not reflect their local knowledge of the land. One man says 'They've muddled the map. Maps not true, it's a lie. We've got to put the map straight'. Here John Taylor responds, 'We've got to put the proper Murri

names on the map'. The narrator suggests the mapping journey is an opportunity to 'revive the old ways, and at least on paper, breathe some life back into the country'. Except for the images of John Taylor sitting around a fire with his notebook and pen and researchers driving vehicles, the researchers are generally absent from this part of the video. As well as older Aboriginal men, older Aboriginal women and children are present on this 'field trip'. The everyday 'business of just living' is emphasised as an intimate part of the mapping journey, and images of eating, camping and washing are incorporated in the video, along with those of spear making and fishing, firing practices, and night-time rehearsals of the crocodile story songs. Indeed the narrator reminds us of the mapping project when he points out that these everyday living practices highlight what the land has to offer and that these will be marked on the map.

The video concludes by following the researchers back to the university where the geographers identify any unknown samples, complete the resource lists, and enter the information into a GIS. The anthropologists incorporate Aboriginal story places, songlines, sacred sites, poison places and clan bounda-ries to produce 'one complete map', an 'Aboriginal picture of the country'. The map is shown in the video, a multi-coloured shape that transforms itself at the touch of a computer key to reveal different aspects of the land. As a final comment, the narrator suggests that the mapping project means many things; 'the renewing of old and intimate relationships with the land, the bringing together of ancient understandings and modern methods, and the preservation of the past for the protection of the future'.

An argument for symmetry

Agricultural development in East Africa and Bangladesh, the crea-tion of Marine Protected Areas in the Solomon Islands, and the management of natural and cultural resources on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula are all circumstances identified as bene-fiting from the integration of scientific and local or indigenous knowledge within a GIS. However, whilst the research projects engage with GIS as an integration domain, several aspects of the work reveal limitations in this engagement. These limitations relate specifically to the ontological divide between 'nature' and 'culture' embedded within the research and expressed variously as an emphasis on knowledge as representation, an assumed association between local or indigenous knowledge and 'belief', a

forced process of generalisation, a failure to recognise science as a social activity, and the presentation of GIS technology as a neutral artefact. The research projects all focus on the classification, characteristics, and usages of such things as marine biophysical areas and habitat, soil types, and vegetation areas that are particular aspects of a supposedly already existing nature. Indeed a prominent objective of the research projects is to record local or indigenous knowledge representations of these particular aspects of the natural world and incorporate them into a GIS database. This is in accordance with Sillitoe's 'we' assumption that whilst there are obvious differences between natural scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge, indigenous knowledge and practice still relates 'to the same world 'out there', albeit expressed in quite different idioms revealing concerns for somewhat different issues' (1998b:226). In this sense the knowledge pursued is representative knowledge; how local or indigenous people classify and use the same world 'out there' that ontologically exists for natural scientists and that is not only assumed to be universal, but is also assumed to be uniquely accessed by scientific knowledge.

Local or indigenous ecological knowledge is interpreted as a cultural grid imposed upon an objective, a priori 'nature' (Hviding 1996:168). This results in an attempt to translate local ecological knowledge, embedded as it is within social and historical contexts and practices that recognise diverse human-nonhuman relationships, into a classificatory system that mirrors that used by the natural and social scientists involved in the research. The aim is to produce 'useful' information that can be readily incorporated into a GIS. According to Taylor (1990:212), information is about facts separated from an integrated system of knowledge and recorded as an autonomous observation. It is knowledge made useful through a process of decontextualisation. Whilst both Aswani and Lauer, and Payton et al recognise that knowledge is embedded within everyday practices such as fishing and soil cultivation respectively, and in particular Aswani and Lauer place an emphasis on fishing practice within their research framework, the information deemed useful for GIS is that which is both observable and measurable. Therefore, total fish yield, species of fish harvested, and time spent at each fishing site are the types of variables incorporated into the GIS (Aswani and Lauer 2006a:87). However as Curry argues 'the reduction of the world to information … limits the ability of geographic information systems to represent the broad range of activities and elements that make up the world' (1998:56). This is particularly evident in the video 'Call of the Country' where 'John Taylor ways' of knowing and repre-

senting the landscape contrast sharply with the 'crocodile story' of the Pormpuraaw Traditional Owners. It is telling that despite this contrast in ways of knowing, the emphasis in the project remains focussed on getting Murri (local indigenous) names onto the map, classifying vegetation and recording usages (also Monaghan and Taylor 1995:2-21). Whilst stories and histories are also recorded, the entanglement of land, people and knowledge expressed and practiced by Traditional Owners in the 'crocodile story' section of the video does not translate into representative knowledge or information necessary for the GIS database. As Turnbull points out, in the Pormpuraaw mapping project 'there seems to be no recognition of the complexities of the translation process' (1999:8). The outcome is that the indigenous knowledge included in the GIS database is that which can be made to most closely model scientific ways of knowing 'nature'.

There is a similar outcome in the work by both Payton et al (2003) and Aswani and Lauer (2006a, 2006b), as local knowledge is translated into a classificatory system similar to that used by soil scientists and marine biologists respectively. Whilst Payton et al, in contrast to Aswani and Lauer, do recognise the complexities of the translation process and attempt to reflectively reconcile local and scientific knowledge about soils (Campbell 2002:200), the translation process in both research projects and in the video 'Call of the Country' is controlled by the researchers and determined by the objectives of the research. Despite the reflexivity of Payton et al, the failure of the researchers to acknowledge and investigate the translation process suggests that rather than being solely linked to issues of control and determination on the part of the researchers, this process is 'taken for granted' because of the ontological boundaries foundational to scientific knowledge that make 'nature' a reality, and the associated epistemological privileging of scientific knowledge as a means to access the truth about 'nature'.

The epistemological privileging of science is explicit in the research through the notion of 'ground truth'. According to Raper (1999:63), 'ground truth' assumes a universal conceptualisation of the world whereby a 'real' world (nature) exists independently of culture. Raper argues that this reflects the metaphysical positioning of science, which is revealed through Aswani and Lauer's (2006a:85, 2006b:266) suggestion that the accuracy of local knowledge can be 'ground truthed' or validated scientifically. Similarly, Aswani and Lauer and the Pormpuraaw mapping project rely on GPS technology to represent 'exact location'. As a result, other ways of knowing 'place', for example through

kinship, Dreaming stories, relatedness and responsibilities, are positioned as cultural representations of, or beliefs about the 'exact location'. Therefore, whilst local knowledge is prioritised by Aswani and Lauer and is a major focus for the Pormpuraaw mapping project, science remains as the ultimate explanatory methodology that subsequently denies the 'real' explanatory value of local knowledge. Similarly, all of the research projects engage particular processes of generalisation that further privilege scientific knowledge. Generalisation processes mobilise local knowledge so it can be used or understood more widely; they are the specific relationalities that can stand in for various local knowledge understandings (Agrawal 2002:291, Verran 2002:749). Verran (2002:748-749) highlights in her analysis of the alternative firing regimes of scientists and Aboriginal landowners that all knowledge communities have their own ways of generalising, their own relationalities. It is not surprising that the research projects under investigation incorporate scientific forms of generalising. For example, the reliance on 'habitat' expresses a scientific form of generalising whereby all of the various characteristics that are recorded from smaller field-sites and sample areas are generalised as a single entity that takes precedence, that being a 'habitat' (Verran 2005:7-8). Subsequently for the researchers, the local and indigenous knowledge of interest is that which can be made to relate to the particular habitat under investigation. This results in the necessary production of a 'consensus local view' by both Payton et al (2003) and Aswani and Lauer (2006a, 2006b), and is achieved by establishing agreements amongst local informants on what constitutes local knowledge about soils or marine habitats respectively. In this way, 'contradictions' in knowledge are eliminated, and 'properties' are agreed upon to represent the scientifically defined habitat or particular area of interest[6]. Thus ontological boundaries and epistemological privilege underpin the methodology and result in the construction of a database of indigenous or local knowledge that 'makes sense' within a scientific understanding of the world. Further investigation of the research projects reveals an asymmetry based on the embedded assumption that nature and culture are radically distinguished for scientific knowledge and totally overlap for all other knowledges. Whilst the taken-for-grantedness of asymmetry is challenged by an increasing number of social studies of science and technology

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[6]   Heckler (2007), in her work with Piaroa, points to the criticism she received from other scientists for choosing to work with 'contradictions'. She states that her inclusion of a complex and fluid plant nomenclature was criticised 'as 'ad hoc', thereby implying that [her] findings were not valid'(2007: 96).

(Star and Griesemer 1989; Latour 1987; Turnbull 2000), the underlying principle of asymmetry remains deeply entrenched in much of the social and natural science research. This asymmetry is prevalent in the research by Payton et al (2003) and Aswani and Lauer (2006a, 2006b), expressed through the invisibility of science as a knowledge making practice and the constitution of GIS as a neutral technology. Both of these expressions are implicit in the research and reinforce Latour's (1993:97) assertion that science remains somehow 'unstudiable' as a 'true' representation of nature.

Whilst the processes of local knowledge making are recognised in both projects, the practices of scientific knowledge making are unacknowledged. In particular, Payton et al realise the importance of cultural factors involved in local decision making and highlight that 'farmers' knowledge is not neutral or static but is developed through communication, interpretation and action and is sensitive to particular contexts' (2003:377). However, there is no similar recognition of the need to encompass the broader context of scientific knowledge or to acknowledge the cultural factors embedded within notions of 'development' and 'resource management'. Indeed, the 'messiness' and 'localness' of scientific knowledge making is absent from the research project, as is any revelation of the social context of science. Instead, the scientific research in both Payton et al (2003) and Aswani and Lauer (2006a, 2006b) rely on well-established 'universal' conventions that erase its complexity, contradictions and negotiated character, and contribute to its invisibility and to its authority (Turnbull 1999:3). This process of erasure is even more apparent in the Pormpuraaw mapping project where the 'messiness', 'localness' and negotiated character of scientific knowledge making is visible in the video documentation of the project and yet absent from the textual report (Monaghan and Taylor 1995). The discussions and negotiations between scientists and anthropologists, and with Traditional Owners, to determine the research aims and methodology, and to organise the logistics of equipment, accommodation, and field-site visits are all social practices that impact on the research. The investment of authority in John Taylor is also social, based on his long term association with the people of Pormpuraaw, and on his position within an academic community. The field research happens 'in place', walking on and driving through particular country, recording information about a particular tree or ground coverage or a particular handful of soil. Aspects of the research that are revealed in the video are not detected in the report by Monaghan and Taylor (1995), resulting

in the 'written report' becoming an accepted and standardised way of presenting scientific knowledge, and therefore contributing to the invisibility of science as a social activity.

Whilst the actual translation of local or indigenous knowledge into information to be included in a GIS is not really examined by Payton et al (2003) or Aswani and Lauer (2006a, 2006b), the rigmarole associated with producing 'useful' local knowledge is apparent in their research. Indeed, in his brief examination of Payton et al (2003), Campbell (2002:200) points to the 'clear lack of fit' associated with the incorporation of local knowledge into a GIS. In contrast, the relative ease with which scientific knowledge is incorporated into a GIS is made clear through the assumed absence of any need to translate the scientific knowledge into useful knowledge. As the social practice of scientific knowledge making is invisible in the research, subsequently the 'fit' between scientific knowledge and GIS is also left unexamined. As a result, GIS as a technology of knowledge representation is incorporated into the research as a neutral artefact (Turnbull 1999:4). This establishes scientific knowledge as somehow ontologically prior to the cultural overlay of a subjective local knowledge.

Despite stating the obvious, Pickles' comment that 'GIS is far better at incorporating certain types of variable than others' (1999:57) inadvertently maintains the invisibility of scientific knowledge making and the supposed neutrality of the technology. Certainly within the context of asymmetry explored above, it is 'taken for granted' that the researchers only incorporate 'useful' knowledge into the GIS. Consequently, aspects of knowledge embedded within such statements as, 'I own the land I burn', made by a Pormpuraaw Traditional Owner, do not appear in that project's GIS. Similarly, the subjective intentionality attributed to non-human entities by Belyuen women (Povinelli 1995:509), the sentient glacial landscapes of the indigenous people of northwestern North America (Cruikshank 2001:389), and the collective memory knowledge work of Yolngu (Verran and Christie 2007) would struggle to find a place in a GIS. Indeed, relationalities that correspond to those expressed above are not incorporated into the GIS created by the research case studies because the natural world is always and already objectively structured within the database. This results in there being no possibilities for non-human agency, and subsequently no toleration of the 'inconsistencies' and 'contradictions' of local or indigenous knowledge. Therefore within the context of asymmetry, the use of GIS to analyse information results in particular patterns of causal effect relationships that preclude the full complexity of people-environ-

ment relationships, specifically those relationships that are not encompassed within a nature-culture dichotomy.

Conclusions

Those aspects of other knowledge traditions precluded from GIS are precisely those relationalities ignored within science that could instigate ecological understanding and indeed contribute to global debates relating to climate change, natural resource use and environmental conservation[7] (Cruikshank 2001:378; Rose 2005:302-303). Whilst collecting 'others' knowledge as classificatory information may 'set the map straight', it also produces more of the same knowledge, representative knowledge, which maintains a separation between nature and culture and situates humans as autonomous actors in the world. However, the relationalities of local or indigenous knowledge traditions often entangle people and things in assertions of agency and responsibility (Cruikshank 2001, Hviding 1996, Povinelli 1995, Rose 2005, Strang 2000). These relationalities situate humans very differently from those within science, prioritising the connections between humans and non-humans. Subsequently, these connections demand a quality of attentiveness that, whilst missing from science, may contribute extensively to ecological understandings.

That GIS technology seriously compromises the integration of diverse knowledges only perpetuates an asymmetry that continues to limit the possibilities for working together diverse knowledges. Instead, the entanglements of humans and non-humans embedded within many local or indigenous knowledge traditions calls forth Latour's concept of natures-cultures. It posits the usefulness of a symmetrical anthropology to reconcile the absence of local and indigenous knowledge traditions from natural resource management and broader scientific ecological debates, and more specifically to consider GIS as an integration domain for diverse knowledges. A symmetrical anthropology takes seriously both the networks of humans and non-humans attended to by many indigenous and local peoples, and the networks of humans and non-humans that proliferate beneath the scientific 'Great Divide'.

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[7]   This is not about perpetuating the romantic notions attached to indigenous peoples and their relationships to the environment. Rather it is about taking seriously the ways indigenous and local peoples construct humans and non-humans so that it may contribute to a better tracing of science and subsequently to a comparative anthropology.

Whilst not explicitly stated by Christie (2005a, 2005b) and Verran and Christie (2007), their approach to knowledge making and database technology can be examined within the guise of a symmetrical anthropology, an approach that facilitates the working together of diverse relationalities. Rather than assume a distinction between sociality and technology, they trace the networks of connections between people, place, knowledge and technology as they are enacted within the context of knowledge making. In this sense, digital technologies are no longer the neutral artefacts as presented within the research case studies of Payton et al (2003) and Aswani and Lauer (2006a, 2006b). Rather, the technologies have agency as they are incorporated within a Yolngu knowledge making tradition. The metaphysical reality of both Yolngu and scientific knowledge traditions are examined symmetrically; the relationalities between sociality and technology are traced. This results in both the revelation of scientific ontological privilege within conventional databases (technology, no longer neutral, has agency), and the subsequent potential to create ontological fluidity within the database that accommodates diverse knowledge traditions.

A symmetrical anthropology would recognise the agency of technology and enable the networks of sociality and technology gathered into a GIS to be traced. Importantly, within a symmetrical anthropology the alignment of technology and sociality becomes problematic. This contrasts with the approach taken in the research case studies whereby the ontological domains of nature and culture implicit in the research predetermine the unquestionable neutrality of the GIS technology on the one hand, and the intense subjectivity of local or indigenous knowledges on the other. The 'taken-for-grantedness' of a non-agential technology (nature) is directly associated with the absence of the relationalities between human and non-human agents embedded within many local or indigenous knowledge traditions, and subsequently limits the potential of GIS as an integration domain for diverse knowledges. Within this context, Christie (2005) and Verran and Christie (2007) demonstrate how to trace the networks gathered into digital technologies, and reveal that an explanation of such networks provides a bases for comparison and subsequently the possibilities for working together diverse knowledges. The ontologically fluid database created by Christie (2005) is an example of how technology could be involved in the working together of diverse knowledges; a potential 'boundary object' creating coherence between diverse knowledge traditions. It is possible that an analysis of GIS focussed on an explanation

of the networks embedded within the technology may realise
the potential for GIS as an integration domain for the diverse
relationalities that constitute human-environment interactions.
Therefore, rather than reprimand research scientists for their
inability to integrate local and indigenous knowledges within
GIS, it is concluded that within a symmetrical anthropology the
case studies represent an example of how a scientific community
produces networks of natures-cultures, and that the future tracing
of the social and technical interactions gathered into GIS may
instigate a re-imagining of GIS as an integration domain for
diverse knowledges.

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Reflections on the flow of emotion in environmental research

Nor Azlin Tajuddin

Abstract

In this article I provide a reflexive account of my emotions both prior to and during fieldwork. I begin with a personal narrative that explores my motivations for conducting a study on a pertinent environmental issue – river pollution. My comparative ethnographic fieldwork in two different socio-cultural and environmental settings, that of the Klang River in Kuala Lumpur and the Torrens River in Adelaide, yielded stories, pictures, and/or a spectrum of emotions about people's interactions with the rivers, some of which resonated with my own. On the one hand, positive emotions during fieldwork were triggered, for example, when I observed colourful flora and fauna in certain section of the rivers. On the other hand, I experienced negative feelings when I observed floating rubbish and trash racks installed across the rivers. I describe these personal field-work experiences, alongside a discussion about my own reflections. Finally, and in light of my fieldwork experience, I briefly suggest implications for ethnographic research and methodological practice.

> I do not think that effective ethnographic research can be done without emotional engagement, and the pursuit of a methodology that ignores what we learn from our emotions is undermining the validity of the resulting information .… In fieldwork as in all of life, sensation, emotion, and intellect operate simultaneously to structure and interpret our experience of the world (Gearing 1995, p. 209) .

The above quote suggests the significance of emotions in ethnographic research. Much of the writing about reflections of the 'ethnographic self' (Coffey 1999) and emotion are discussed by way of a researcher's emotional engagements with their participants, for example, with participants who are experiencing a terminal illness (see Rager 2005), bereavement (see Rosaldo 2007), or stressful life events (see Owens 1996). Similarly, in many ways the narratives and practices of my participants in relation to the subject matter of my study roused my own emotions. This article[1] takes a different turn, however, as I examine my own emotional reactions to my research setting, that of two river systems in very different socio-cultural settings. The sites I explore simultaneously serve as a background to my research about human relationships to the consequences and flows of polluted waters. In particular, I consider how a river as an environmental place and space in and of itself can evoke deep emotional responses that, in turn, can enrich fieldwork experiences and ethnographic research. First, I provide a contextual background of my PhD topic and research settings. I then turn to an exploration of my motivations to conduct research on human-water interactions. Thirdly, I discuss my various feelings during fieldwork. Embedded in the discussion is how the environmental setting enabled me to understand the complexities of my participants' relationships with local rivers. I conclude with a brief post-fieldwork insight into concepts of place in ethnographic research methods and emphases.

Contextual background

Initially, my PhD research was aimed at unpacking the meanings of pollution by comparing people's responses to two urban rivers − the Klang River in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and the Torrens River in Adelaide, South Australia. I conducted seven months of fieldwork in Kuala Lumpur and eight months in Adelaide, employing participant observation and in-depth open-ended interviews. Almost all of my participants lived in the catchments that included local communities in close proximity to the rivers. Government officials, environmental activists and academics were also included. My participant-observation activities included walking

along the river systems and observing how local women and men made use of the river, as well as the way in which various types of pollutant discharged into the river, and cleaning-up operations. I also participated in various environmental workshops and seminars, and river restoration activities. Upon completion of my data collection, interview transcription, and now being at the writing stage, I gradually came to realize meanings embedded in the river-data, as well as how the ethnographic vignettes I had so carefully stored started to evolve into coherent socio-cultural insights. I began to see how reliance on concepts of place could help me to interpret my data. I became especially concerned to describe and analyze the interactions people had with the rivers, and how and to what extent dirt and pollution affected people's attachment to river-inspired environmental places.

The tale of two rivers

The Klang River catchment is located on the west coast of Penin-sular Malaysia, encompassing two states. The river originates in the state of Selangor and then flows through the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur before re-entering Selangor. The 120-km-long Klang River begins at the Main Range in the upper basin; it then meanders in a south-westerly direction, passing through Kuala Lumpur city centre, and finally discharges into the Straits of Malacca. It is the most densely populated region in Malaysia with its heavy concentration of industries and population. The Torrens River, on the other hand, originates in Mount Lofty Ranges, 55 km north-east of Adelaide, Australia. It flows 85 km from its headwater through a few small towns in the upper reaches, and meanders through Adelaide city centre before it drains into Gulf of St. Vincent at Henley Beach. The Klang and the Torrens rivers drain a total area of 1278 km2 and 620 km2 respectively. Historically, both rivers were significant as one of the reasons for the siting and development of the Kuala Lumpur and Adelaide into capital cities of Malaysia and South Australia. Like many other rivers around the world, the Klang and the Torrens and their catchment areas have been highly modified to meet human needs such dam construction, transportation, flood mitigation control, and other land use practices. Such rampant land use practices combined with population growth put a strain on the catchments' eco-system, thus contribute to the declining river health. In this regards, both rivers have been identified as polluted rivers reported in the local official documents as well as popular media.

Water places, motivation and emotions

A number of tensions continue to exist about the relationship between 'nature' and 'culture'. In more recent times, discussion has turned to how these influence (and are influenced by) emotions. I draw in this article on a common definition of emotions from psychology whereby emotions are described as a combination of three components involving '(1) physiological arousal, (2) expressive behaviour, and (3) conscious experience, including thoughts and feelings' (Myers 2007, p. 513), such as happiness, anger and surprise. It should be noted that the three components are not necessarily expressed similarly for each emotion. For instance, certain emotions, such as regret or gratitude, may not necessarily demonstrate any behaviour or bodily change (Gergen et al. 1989).

Reflecting on my fieldwork, I observed the different emotions that have occurred for me over the years, including as a young woman in Malaysia. These greatly influenced the choice of my research topic. My interest in the natural environment began during my childhood years when I lived in a housing area (a military camp as my father was an army) that was surrounded by nature: tropical bush, streams, and beaches were my common playgrounds. I vividly remember my own good feelings as I enjoyed the gifts of nature: the freshness of air, the smell of leaves, the warm, nurturing temperature, the cold water of a stream, and the sound of beach waves. One of my favourite places was a small stream located less than a kilometer at the back of my house. The water was crystal clear. I could see my feet firmly submerged in the riverbed and colorful fishes swam gracefully in the river water. As I grew up I continued to remain connected to my neighborhood and occasionally dreamt of its natural environment, the stream and beaches.

In recent years, two emotionally charged events influenced my choice of research topic. The first happened in my work place at the International Islamic University, Malaysia when I was teaching a Sociology course that included a chapter on 'Environment and Society'. I began the class by taking my students to the bank of the Pusu River that flows through the University campus (the Pusu River is a tributary of the Gombak River which eventually feeds into the Klang River). I delivered the lecture there with a view of capturing the interests of my students, as well as instilling awareness about the importance of environmental protection. The outing to the riverbank had tremendous impact on some of my students. This was, evident a few weeks later, when, to

my horror, I saw hundreds of dead, floating fish through a wide glass window of my office that happened to overlook the Pusu River, and several of my students visited my office to express their concerns. I was very touched by their concern, especially as it was so depressing to see the dead, floating fish in various stretches of the river for days after the incident. These images, combined with the concern of my students, strengthened my desire to actively protect our river systems.

The second event occurred in December 2004 when the world was shocked by a great force of nature: the Tsunami's wave that killed almost 300,000 people throughout Asia. I volunteered to be part of the Tsunami Support Relief Team focused on rendering psychological and emotional support to the victims. We went to the affected area at Kota Kuala Muda (a small fishing village located at the mouth of Muda River, Kedah) where I witnessed the impact of the force of nature on the destruction of human life and people's possessions. A great sense of fear, sadness, shock, and terror among the victims was obvious, especially through their facial expressions and trembling voices as they narrated their 'massive black waves' stories. Some of the victims reported having recurring nightmares about the wave and the tragedy. Listening to their stories and observing their very distinct behavioural reactions evoked mixed feelings of fear, sadness, and terror for me. I stepped into demolished houses and spotted the black muddy floors and walls, my body shivered as I tried to visualize the waves rising high and crashing hard on housing structures and occupants, living plants, and humans' possessions alike, demolishing them into the devastating forms evidenced. The calmness of the sea, the slow breeze of the wind at the time of my visit certainly helped to diminish the ferocity of the seawater when the incident happened. Taken together, the sweetness of my childhood memories, the images of dead fish, and the fear look of the Tsunami victims affected me emotionally and galvanized my interest to study one of the most powerful natural elements known to humankind – water.

Emotions during Fieldwork

Gathering data as a core activity in the PhD process involved a great deal of time and energy. A whirl of conflicting emotions marked the whole process of my fieldwork journey. This myriad of emotions, including positive feelings (such as joy, energy, motivation), and the negative ones (anger, disguise, helplessness, and guilt) were experienced as I walked, sailed, and drove along

different stretches of both rivers; and as I listened to the narratives of my participants and observed their behaviours and activities. Both my participants' and my own emotional experiences reinforced each other, often providing for me rich sources of reflective insights to start building an ethnographic account of human-water interactions. An influential work by anthropologist Kay Milton (2002) on emotions and environmental protection helped me to understand my own emotional responses, as well as those of the people among whom I worked.

Positive feelings such as joy and energy obviously refreshed me during fieldwork. These emotions were experienced generally in areas of the rivers I studied that were considered 'clean', and therefore not 'polluted'. I borrow the notion of a 'clean river' here from many of my participants who used it to refer to when the water was crystal clear and no rubbish was visible. On these occasions, my body muscles felt relaxed and my spirit was uplifted as my feet touched the crystal-clear-cold water in the upstream of the Klang River where is the water remains in a pristine condition. Similarly, I felt a sense of serenity and accomplishment as I walked along the Torrens through its 35-km Linear Park (a multi-function park servicing as a flood mitigation control, recreation and transportation corridor was constructed along both sides of the riverbanks linking the foothills with the coast). Feeling a strong sense of environmental place with my body and heart, as well as my brain, helped me to comprehend the heartfelt connection people regularly sustain towards their rivers. For instance, one of my Adelaide participants has walked along the Torrens River Linear Park religiously for the past 45 years. He revealed his emotional connections and sense of wonder with the river in the following way: 'If you can hear water running, it gives you a really deep sense of hope, sense of serenity, and [sense] of life .... For me, that's one of the beauties of the Torrens − is just to be able to walk along the running water, to sit down right by the water, and to hear water running' (Interview. Adelaide, 2008).

Walking along or near a river where a certain intimacy is experienced is also something many people reported, as well as describing a feeling that resonated with me. When I had no interview appointments, for instance, I walked along and sat down by the rivers during the day. As I walked and traced the meandering of both rivers, my senses were stimulated by different shades of colour of the flora and fauna, the smell of fresh air and the sound of flowing water. I marveled at God's creation of different colours of waterbirds along the Torrens. I was excited and surprised to see purple swamp hens in some stretches of

the Torrens as my favourite colour is purple. It was an equally defining experience to observe long-legged waterscrappers and dragonflies skim about on the water surface at the upstream of the Klang River.

Obviously working with the subject matter of pollution, I was focused on a topic that attracts negative connotations, a quality that impacted my emotions during daily execution of my fieldwork. There were moments of deeply negative feelings such as frustration, sadness and helplessness about the state of these 'wounded rivers' – to borrow Brian Wattchow's (2008) evocative phrase. I felt disgusted and angry when I saw hundreds of bottled water, styrofoam food containers, tin cans, plastic bags and other visible rubbish floating in the rivers. My list of items polluting the Klang River reveals that plastic bottled water containers topped the list. Indeed it is an irony that as people buy bottled water for a higher potable water quality, that the containers, in turn, are thrown into the river thereby polluting it. Observing trash racks – a device installed by city councils across both rivers to trap the visible rubbish, were equally upsetting experiences. In these cases, images of a healthy river are threatened when material objects intermingle with nature. Rivers should have rocks, pebbles, and sands instead of trash racks and rubbish. The rubbish and trash racks, to quote anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966), are really 'a matter out of place' (p. 35).

Apart from visible pollutants, there is also the threat of invisible pollutants that pose significant health risks to the public. For example, the impact of invisible pollutants coming from agricultural pesticides and urban runoff led to the outbreaks of the blue-green algae in both rivers. Blue-green algae outbreaks refer to an explosive and sudden growth of this aquatic plant, induced by high temperatures, large amounts of chemicals, and untreated stagnant water. The water quality of the Torrens was seriously affected by the highly toxic blue-green algae. Subsequently, the Torrens Lake (the river has been dredged to create an ornamental lake) was closed for up to eight weeks during summer for the past seven years consecutively (see Figure 1). While the safety of the public was ensured as the paddle boating and rowing were banned during the closure, it was heartening to see wildlife such as pacific black ducks struggling for survival as they skimmed through the slimy blue-green algae bloom.

Figure 1. The closing of the Torrens Lake during summer 2008 due to the water quality problem of blue-green algae bloom. Photograph by Nor Azlin.

A significant portion of my ethnographic fieldwork in Kuala Lumpur was conducted at Kampung Datuk Keramat – a residential area located approximately ten kilometers downstream from the source and three kilometers from Kuala Lumpur's city centre. There were two reasons why this section of the river was selected as the main research setting. Firstly, there are two trash racks installed in that section of the river. I observed types of rubbish trapped at the trash traps as well as trash racks-cleaning operations conducted by the city council. Secondly, Kampung Datuk Keramat marked the beginning of physical transformation of the Klang River from a 'natural' into a concrete river. Specifically, the river has been transformed into a transportation corridor. As if the river and its bank offering a space, a modern public transportation system – an elevated highway and a Light Railway Transit (LRT) line - was constructed along and above it (see Figure 2). The riverbanks were concreted about ten metres wide and two meters thick on each side. Cylindrical concrete columns (about two meters in diameter and ten meters in height) were erected approximately five meters apart from each other to support the highway. Subsequently, a meandering river has disappeared. An aerial view would reveal that the Klang River in

this section now looks like a water highway. Indeed, the Klang was transformed from a natural river entity into a 'humanature's' river – a term used by an art photographer Peter Goin (1997) to describe the process of modifications of the Kissimmee River into a canal for flood control, and then later, turning the canal back into a 'natural' river under its intensive restoration program. The trash racks (both as a technical and cultural response to pollution), and the transformation of the Klang from a natural into a cultural riverscape, made Kampung Datuk Keramat an interesting ethnographic setting.

Figure 2. The construction of a highway and light railway trans-forming the Klang River in kampong Datuk Keramat as a longkang besar. Photograph by Nor Azlin.

I was unprepared for the contradictory feelings that permeated my research at Kampung Datuk Keramat. As I walked along the river, I felt so insignificant and helpless under the towering concrete columns. In my view, the river has been 'caged' and 'straightened', as if it has been punished for a crime it did not commit. I felt the need to give 'voice' to the river. I was deeply 'responsive' to the concrete riverscape as well. I sometimes found myself reluctant to start my day, as opposed to the energetic feelings I experienced during my visits to the upper section of the Klang River that is in a much healthier condition. Contrary to

the positive emotions discussed earlier, my body muscles tensed when I walked along the straightened river as I felt trapped and alienated in the concrete riverscape. Unsurprisingly, many of my participants referred to this poor river as a longkang besar, the Malay word for 'a big drain'. In fact a few participants uttered the word longkang besar with a cynical and demeaning voice tone. While I was upset with such negative labeling and voice tone, my own 'ethnographic presence' by walking under the massive concrete structure of the Klang's embankment allowed me to comprehend, and share resonance with, such animosity.

By contrast, prior to my ethnographic research, I was happy and relieved whenever I was above the river, especially when I travelled by train, something I have done like millions of passengers for almost a decade. I felt relieved as the train helped me to travel to the city centre faster and without having to go through the hassle of traffic congestion. However, my fieldwork induced feelings of guilt. As the train moved and I looked downward to the river, I felt guilty because I have benefited from the construction of the railway at the expense of the poor river. Seven months of walking experiences under the massive engineering structure evoked an interplay of guilt and relief. Indeed, being on the same place – exactly on the same coordinates, but at different gradients - helped me to conceptually as well as emotionally frame many aspects of my research.

Conclusions

Emotional engagement with water places, and how this engagement significantly influences the direction and depth of ethnographic inquiry, sits at the heart of this article. As I have shown, river places yielded a considerable array of emotional consequences: from elation to despair and despondency, especially with regard to the declining health of river systems, and human manipulation of a river system's ecology and sociality. Both positive and negative feelings guided what I paid attention to, and how I interpreted the significance of my participants' perceptions and emotions. These obviously intertwined with my own observations, emotions and experience in regard to explanations of river-places and pollution.

Fifteen-months of riverscape experience also led to a 'prolonged fieldwork effect'. I have reflectively noticed that I am now more sensitive to the mix of environmental messages that around me. For instance, I was very much overwhelmed to the extent of openly crying when I watched two documentaries,

Blowpipes and Bulldozers: The Story of the Penan Tribe and Bruno Manser (1988) and Drowned Out (2002) (focused on resistance to the Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River in western India), both of which were shown in my 'Environmental Issues in Asia' class. In addition, I now avoid buying bottled water, an outcome of observing thousands of them floating in the rivers.

My fieldwork experience indicates one of the hallmarks of ethnographic research – the presence of the 'ethnographic self' and the impact of long-term engagement in a particular research setting. Implicitly, my fieldwork also indicates the potential of place as a central concept rather than merely as a backdrop in anthropological research. As anthropologist Margaret Rodman (2003) has argued, 'The physical emotional, and experiential realities place holds for their inhabitants at particular times need to be understood apart from their creation as the locales of ethnography' (p. 205). More substantive work on the interrelated role of place and emotions in anthropology and the social sciences more generally is clearly needed, perhaps with a view to contributing to the solving of the pressing and complex problem of environmental degradation.

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THE FIGURE OF THE 'FIL-WHATEVER': FILIPINO AMERICAN TRANS-PACIFIC SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE RISE OF RADICAL COSMOPOLITANISM

Marco Cuevas-Hewitt

Abstract

In this article I focus on diasporic social movements – sites where the cultural becomes political. Drawing upon the specific case study of Filipino American activists in the San Francisco Bay Area, with whom I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in 2007, I will examine contending practices of transnational activism vis-à-vis the Philippine 'homeland' and will endeavour to bring to light the ways in which these practices (and the epistemologies informing them) have been changing in line with the rise of globalisation. I will identify, in particular, three principal cultural-political imaginaries which have emerged at different points in time within the changing global context: 'diasporic pan-nationalism', 'diasporic internationalism' and 'diasporic cosmopolitanism'. I will suggest that the former two were understandable responses to the changing global context, but that only diasporic cosmopolitanism has succeeded in becoming an imaginary wholly contingent in contemporary realities. After establishing this argument, I will take a more philosophical tack and zoom in a little closer on the question of radical cosmopolitan identity. In particular, I will examine the possibility of new forms of belonging that do not hinge on sameness; that is to say, on reductive, nationalistic essences. Here I will theorise the figure of the 'Fil-Whatever', drawing upon Giorgio Agamben's (1993, pp. 18-19) philosophical concept of 'whatever', which he uses to denote an'inessential commonality'; that is, 'a solidarity that in no way concerns an essence'. My contention is that diasporic Filipinos need not be condemned to static identity formulations such as 'Filipino Australian' or 'Filipino American', nor need they see themselves as merely inauthentic copies of their 'authentic' counterparts in the homeland, but can converge instead in new forms of non-

absolutist, anti-essentialist, cosmopolitan belonging.

Globalising processes have radically altered the terrain on which forces of contestation operate. Social movements, once confined to national territories, are now expanding globally in line with the mass emigration of peoples outside of their home countries, as well as in recognition of the hyper-extension of capital beyond nation-state borders. Wherever people move, new webs of affect are woven and new emotional geographies are created. People's political affinities become transformed and reconfigured accordingly. Many migrants stay involved in the politics of their country of origin, even at a distance, while others choose to involve themselves in the politics of their new host societies instead. Others, meanwhile, find ways to balance both, seeing the interconnectedness of national polities within the new globalised environment - a fact which dovetails with their own life experiences as migrants straddling both worlds, constructing new solidarities across oceans through their everyday practices.

My interest here, then, is in diasporic social movements – sites where the *cultural becomes political*; where the complex cultural identities that emerge out of the diasporic experience come to inform activist epistemologies and modes of political engagement in the world. In this article, I draw upon the specific case study of Filipino American activists in the San Francisco Bay Area of the United States (with whom I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in 2007) to examine their contending practices of transnational activism vis-à-vis the 'homeland'; namely, the Philippines. I will endeavour to bring to light the ways in which their epistemologies have been changing in line with the rise of globalisation, identifying, in particular, three principal cultural-political imaginaries which have emerged at different points in time within the changing global context: 'diasporic pan-nationalism'[1], 'diasporic internationalism' and 'diasporic cosmopolitanism'. Each of these will be elaborated upon through the course of this article, but it will first of all be necessary to elucidate the way in which I understand the notion of the imaginary[2].

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[1]   This has alternatively been theorised as 'transnational nationalism' (Kastoryano cited in Dufoix 2008, p. 94) or as 'long-distance nationalism' (Anderson 1998, pp. 58-74).

[2]   It must be noted that my use of this term has nothing to do with the manner in which it is employed in Lacanian psychoanalysis. Rather, it is derived in part from Édouard Glissant's (1997) usage, coupled with insights gleaned from Murray Gell-Mann's (1994) theory of 'complex adaptive systems'.

Imaginaries are schemata or lenses through which the world is understood. They are selective interpretations of reality, distilled from the wider context of which they are a part. Once formed, however, they significantly impact the ways in which people act in and upon the world, with distinct practices flowing on from each. Thus, imaginaries are both 'context-driven' and 'context-generative' (Appadurai 1996, pp. 182-188). They arise out of particular contexts at particular spatio-temporal junctures, with activists drawing upon them to serve specific needs immanent to the context. When the context changes, however (as it always does), some imaginaries become rendered redundant. This does not mean that they cease to exist or to wield significant influence. Nevertheless, a disconnect arises between ideology and lived experience. The world becomes moulded to fit the theory, rather than theory being moulded to fit the world. I will argue in this article that, in the context of Filipino American trans-Pacific activism, diasporic pan-nationalism has become anachronistic in precisely the sense articulated here. I will hence proceed to look at the new imaginaries that have emerged to challenge it (ones more consonant with their times): diasporic internationalism in the mid-1970s and diasporic cosmopolitanism in the late 1990s. Each has arisen not at the expense of older epistemologies, but alongside them, creating an enriched, more polyphonous activist milieu, full of tensions and contradictions that are still working themselves out. The objects of my inquiry are precisely these multiple, intersecting, and contending forces, all of which have an endlessly shifting relationship with each other.

After examining each of the three cultural-political imaginaries discussed above, I will conclude on a somewhat philosophical note, zooming in on the diasporic cosmopolitan imaginary and drawing upon aspects of my fieldwork to theorise radical cosmo-politan identity. In particular, I will seek to address the following questions, each of which underlie the article as a whole: Should diasporans be seen as merely 'derivative'; that is, as inauthentic copies of their 'authentic' counterparts in the homeland? What would a diasporic Filipino identity not based on 'lack' look like? What possibilities might there be for diasporans to achieve a sense of belonging that does not hinge on sameness; that is to say, on reductive, nationalistic essences? Should 'belonging' always necessarily imply homogeneity? In addressing these questions I will theorise the figure of the 'Fil-Whatever', arguing that diasporic Filipinos need not be condemned to static identity formulations such as 'Filipino Australian' or 'Filipino American', nor need they see themselves as derivative or deficient vis-à-vis

the homeland, but can converge instead in new forms of non-absolutist, anti-essentialist, cosmopolitan belonging. Here I will draw upon Giorgio Agamben's (1993, pp. 18-19) notion of 'whatever', which he uses as a philosophical concept to denote 'inessential commonality'; that is, 'a solidarity that in no way concerns an essence'.

Diasporic Pan-Nationalism

The tradition of Philippine revolutionary nationalism is as old as the Philippine nation-state itself, becoming as it did a galvanising force in the struggle for independence against Spanish rule. As Eduardo Gonzalez (2000, p. 1) writes, 'the nationalist agenda has provided Filipinos of various social classes and ethnic backgrounds with a positive sense of collective identity and belonging.' Filipino activists again called upon the revolutionary nationalist mythology that arose out of, and in resistance to, the historical experiences of colonialism, in the postcolonial period; most notably during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. Largely in response to an insurgent civil society that was everywhere threatening his power, Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972 and maintained an iron grip on the Philippines right up until he was deposed in the People Power Revolution of 1986. During the period of Martial Law, Marcos abolished congress, took over the media, monopolised military power, and imprisoned thousand of dissenters without charge or trial, many of whom were tortured and murdered (Gaerlan 1999). All the while, his regime enjoyed the unwavering support of the United States (US).

Very early on, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) – and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA) – became the backbone of the popular struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. It was guided by a distinctly Marxist-Leninist-Maoist brand of revolutionary nationalism, adapted by Amado Guerrero[3] to the Philippine context in his seminal *Philippine Society and Revolution* (2005 [1970]). 'As a school of revolutionary theory which served to successfully seize state power', writes Helen Toribio (2000, p. 41), 'Maoism was a model that Third World liberation movements could emulate'. It was Mao Zedong who first radically revised Marxism so that it became defined not only by the contradictions between proletarian and bourgeois *classes*, but also by those between proletarian and bourgeois *nations* (Zizek 2007, p. 2). A space for nationalist struggle, and not just class struggle,

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[3]   This is the *nom de plume* of Jose Maria Sison who founded the CPP in 1968.

was hence carved out[4]. Maoism was thus readily received in the Philippine context, with the anti-Marcos movement characterised as much by its opposition to Marcos' imperialist backers (the US), as by its opposition to Marcos himself. The struggle was therefore carried out, not solely in the name of the Philippine proletariat or peasantry, but also in the name of the Filipino people as a whole[5].

Overseas Filipinos played no small part in this struggle, with San Francisco, California emerging as one of the most important nodes in the diaspora. The Filipino presence in California has a long history; one inextricably tied up with the story of US imperialism. The US annexed the Philippine Islands from Spanish control in 1898, beginning an almost fifty-year long colonial occupation. As early as 1906, even in the midst of the Philippine-American War, the US began recruiting and transporting thousands upon thousands of indentured Filipino labourers to work on plantations in Hawaii and California. Later, the Great Depression of the 1930s sparked a wave of xenophobic reforms in the US. In 1934, the Tidings-McDuffie Act was passed, slowing all further immigration from Asia to but a trickle, as well as precluding those Asian immigrants who stayed from ever being able to attain citizenship. This was the beginning of a period of isolation and exclusion for Filipino American communities, which did not end until thirty years later with the passing of the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act which overturned all past restrictions on Asians (Dufoix 2008, p. 47).

After 1965, Filipinos began migrating to the US on a large scale once again, including a significant number of political exiles escaping persecution under Marcos, both in the lead up to, and following, the declaration of Martial Law[6]. One of those to flee the repression in the early stages was Cynthia Maglaya

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[4]   What became buried in this new formulation was Marx and Engel's earlier assertion in *The Communist Manifesto* (1992 [1848], p. 23) that '[t]he working men have no country'.

[5]   For an astute critical analysis of the concept of 'the people', see Hardt and Negri (2006, pp. 79-91, 99-102).

[6]   Filipino exiles in the US are reported to have totalled around 15,000 over the fifteen-year period of the dictatorship (Gaerlan 1999, p. 95). Benito Vergara (1999, p. 136) has sagely pointed out the contradictory nature of this state of affairs: the fact that these activists-in-exile rightly railed against US complicity with the Marcos regime on the one hand, yet simultaneously sought protection from the US on the other.

– a young, energetic organiser who had cut her activist teeth in the *Kabataang Makabayan* (Patriotic Youth), a Maoist student organisation formed in 1964 which later merged into the CPP. In the US, Maglaya subsequently went on to become one of the founders of what Toribio (2000, p. 31) called 'the most organized leftist institution in the history of the Filipino American community'; namely, the *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino* (KDP), or, Union of Democratic Filipinos[7]. According to one of her former comrades,

> Cynthia's greatest influence and contribution within the KDP was her ability to bridge the political and cultural differences between recent immigrants and Filipino Americans. She laid the cornerstone that allowed us to build a truly integrated organization of Filipino immigrants and Filipino Americans (Habal 2000, pp. 201-202).

The KDP, founded in 1973 and headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area, was thus formed out of the merging of two currents from either side of the Pacific: immigrants from the Philippines and Filipino Americans who were born and raised in the US, but who nevertheless became drawn into the struggle through an ongoing emotional connection with what they considered to be their homeland (Gaerlan 1999; Toribio 2000; Choy 2005). Upon its formation, the KDP's overriding priority was to organise the local US opposition to the Marcos regime in the Philippines. In these early years, according to Barbara Gaerlan (1999, p. 83), the KDP not only shared the CPP's revolutionary nationalist orientation, but was even mandated by the CPP to be its de facto representative in the US. Up until the mid-1970s, the KDP looked to the Party as its principal source of political analysis. Reading groups proliferated up and down the West Coast of the United States, in which the canonical works of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism were collectively studied and reflected upon, along with the writings of CPP founder, Jose Maria Sison.

Although nationalist in character, the KDP's location in the diaspora rendered its politics a curious form of 'transnational nationalism' or what I refer to in this article as 'diasporic pan-

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7   In what is perhaps testament to the KDP's strength, Ferdinand Marcos even went so far as to contract out the assassination of two KDP-affiliated labour leaders, Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo. '[A] Seattle court found in 1989 [that] the Marcos regime was directly responsible [for these murders]' (Gaerlan 1999, p. 89).

nationalism'. According to this perspective (one very much promoted by the CPP), diasporans did not have an independent identity of their own, but were peninsular extensions of the greater Philippine nation. The Party, in this way, was able to reinscribe émigrés and second- and third-generation Filipino Americans back into the national fold, thereby demanding their allegiance to the nationalist revolution. This was precisely how the CPP was able to reconcile its nationalist ideology with emergent globalising tendencies that posed a threat to nationalist thought and practice. The KDP's role, as far as the CPP was concerned, was solely to act as a support organisation for the revolutionary struggle in the Philippines. The issues affecting the lives of diasporic Filipinos in the US context did not matter. What was required instead was that diasporans suspend their own local political concerns (for education, for affordable housing, against racial discrimination and the like), so as to completely dedicate themselves to the struggle in the homeland.

Inevitably, contradictions began to emerge in the ranks of the KDP as the pan-nationalist imaginary that the CPP had imposed upon it was increasingly unable to account for its member's own lived experiences. Carol Ojeda-Kimbrough (cited in Choy 2005, p. 295), for example, was forced to reflect: 'Am I a Filipino first or a Filipino American? Where do my loyalties reside – in my country of birth or in the country of my residence?' Although in the early years 'the Philippine work did dominate KDP's organizing' (Toribio 2000, p. 38), Filipino American activists within the organisation soon began to take up issues of relevance to their own subject positions as marginalised diasporic people within the United States. A new imaginary was stirring – or, rather, an imaginary which had lain latent due to the immediate and pressing concerns around the dictatorship in the Philippines, was beginning to come to the fore.

Diasporic Internationalism

Through the course of the 1970s, the uneasy relationship between KDP activists' lived realities and the epistemological perspective that had been demanded of them by the CPP grew more and more untenable. No longer content with mere 'support work' for the struggle in the homeland, the KDP attempted to adjust its practice to more adequately address their own concerns within the US, *in addition* to their concern with toppling the Marcos regime in the Philippines. In Gaerlan's (1999, p. 80) words, it combined a 'concern for the Philippines with a domestic agenda of anti-racist

and eventually pro-socialist domestic organizing'. This strategy of support for both the Philippine nationalist revolution and the US proletarian revolution was known in the KDP as the 'dual line' programme (Toribio 2000; Habal 2000; Choy 2005). The KDP's dual allegiances were perfectly reflected in its newspaper, *Ang Katipunan*, the pages of which were filled with headlines from both the Philippines and the US: news about the progress of the revolutionary struggle in the homeland, as well as around the domestic issues that KDP were involved in – struggles for low-income housing, educational reform, immigrant rights, labour rights, affirmative action, and so on (Vergara 1999; Choy 2005).

In truth, the KDP's dual allegiances were more or less implicit in its imaginary from the beginning, but local concerns had been subsumed in the early years by the urgent demands of organising support against the dictatorship. By the mid-1970s, however, the KDP leadership was beginning to assert the dual line anew, a position which put them at odds with both CPP cadres in the Philippines as well as with many of their own members in the US. Debates raged within the organisation around the question of whether or not Philippine work should have primacy. Helen Toribio (2000, p. 38), herself a participant in these debates at the time, recalls some of the points of contention that were raised:

> Having a dual program meant objectively parti-cipating in two separate revolutions, the Philip-pines and the US. Could a "revolutionary mass organization" like the KDP realistically consider itself as a part of two revolutions? Shouldn't one revolution take precedence over the other? And since the Philippine revolution was more advanced (i.e. having a vanguard party in the Communist Party of the Philippines and a strategy), compared to the US (having no singular vanguard and no unified strategy), then shouldn't Philippine work have primacy within the KDP?... If the Philippine work had priority, then how should the KDP view the fast-growing Filipino community in the US? Given the increasing influx of immigrants from the Philippines, should the KDP view the community as an "overseas" constituent of the Philippines? Or, did an immigrant population settling into American communities and integrating into the workforce mean it was principally a US constituency?

In essence, what was at stake were two contending imaginaries: A *pan-nationalist perspective* which held that diasporic Filipinos

were merely overseas constituents of the Philippines, and an *internationalist* perspective which asserted that diasporic Filipinos were constituents of both the US *and* the Philippines. In 1975, in the midst of the debates over the dual line, the Chicago chapter of the KDP (mostly made up of recent immigrants from the Philippines) actually split with the rest of the organisation, over its disagreement with the leadership that local issues should be afforded any equivalence with Philippine issues. According to Gaerlan (1999, p. 85), '[t]hey objected to being asked to do organizing around domestic labor or other social issues in the United States', seeing themselves not so much as part of the US working class, but rather, as overseas nationals of the Philippines. After some intense discussions, however, 'the chapter was reintegrated – with the dual line in tact' (Toribio 2000, p. 38).

Although the KDP was able to reconcile internal differences within its ranks, it was increasingly unable to reconcile its differences with the CPP. In contravention of Party dictates, the KDP insisted on its dual line strategy and became more and more involved in issues that focussed on the rights and livelihoods of Filipino Americans within the US. In this, KDP members were inspired by the insurgent cultural nationalisms that surrounded them, such as those associated with the Chicano and Black Power movements. As Estella Habal (2000, p. 199) writes,

> the ideas of Black Power had influenced many of us who were willing to listen. We owe a debt to black people in this country who opened the doors for us. Minority peoples became empowered... We began to understand the role of racism and the inferiorization of Third World peoples.

Hence, no longer did diasporans only see themselves as overseas Filipinos but, increasingly, also as racialised minorities within the US. The question of race was incorporated into KDP's class analysis becoming one of the core issues of its socialist programme (Choy 2005, p. 299). This shift represented yet another significant departure from CPP ideology.

International developments also created further schisms between the CPP and KDP. The revolutionary war of independence in Angola, supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba, was opposed by both the US and apartheid South Africa. The US, concerned with containing the spread of communism within the context of the Cold War, lent material support to anti-independence forces. China's animosity towards the Soviet

Union after the Sino-Soviet split forced it into the paradoxical position of being a strange bedfellow of the US. For the KDP, what was imperative was to oppose US imperialism. For the CPP, in contrast, what was important was to back Maoist China no matter what. In 1978-79, the KDP was further alienated from the CPP over the issue of China's support for the genocidal Pol Pot regime in Cambodia (Toribio 2000, pp. 42-43). Owing to these and other events, the KDP gradually came to a complete rejection of its Maoist origins.

The ideological schism between the KDP and CPP that first emerged in the mid-1970s over the question of the dual line, eventually became an unbridgeable chasm. By the early 1980s, the two organisations had severed ties completely. After the split, the CPP was left without a support organisation in the US. As such, Party representatives were sent to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1983 to help re-establish a Maoist presence, loyal to the CPP. There was no question of being a part of two revolutions or of choosing between one and the other. Instead, Filipino Americans were urged to fully dedicate themselves to the People's War in, and for, the homeland. The Alliance for Philippine Concerns was eventually established as a result of these efforts in 1986 (Gaerlan 1999).

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Pacific, the Marcos regime was fast coming to an end. A military mutiny that was accompanied by a popular albeit bloodless uprising managed to topple the dictatorship in 1986. The CPP and NPA, despite having mobilised thousands of people on countless fronts for over a decade, were largely absent from these developments. This came as a surprise to many, not least of all to CPP members themselves, who had long seen themselves as the vanguard of the movement. In adherence with Maoist orthodoxy, the CPP-NPA's focus was guerrilla war in the countryside, and yet the popular uprising that had finally swept Marcos from power had taken place in urban Manila. The KDP viewed the CPP's absence in the midst of the People Power revolution 'as the consummate error of [its] adherence to Maoism' (Toribio 2000, p. 43).

The history of the relationship between the KDP and the CPP is extremely revealing. Amongst other things, it is a history of the tension between two imaginaries; between a nationalism that attempted to reconcile itself with emergent globalising tendencies in a way that left its fundamental epistemological assumptions in tact (thereby simply morphing into a nationalism-writ-large), and a new *diasporic internationalism* that was making some tentative,

first attempts to grapple with the new challenges posed by the shifting global context. KDP activists were forced to critically reflect upon their own subject positions and to revise their cultural identities and political frameworks accordingly. The intensifying interconnectedness of the world meant that sedentarist notions of belonging became increasingly untenable, along with all nationalist political projects based on such notions. An internationalist vision was what made the most sense to the majority of KDP activists at the time. It was an imaginary distilled from their lived experiences as transnational actors.

However, while the KDP's dual line was no doubt an extremely important innovation, representing as it did an early intimation towards a renewed cultural politics unmoored from rigid and anachronistic notions of belonging, it is important to point out its limitations. KDP activists had 'rejected the "overseas" characterization of the Filipino American community as an indication of [the CPP's] narrow nationalism' (Toribio 2000, p. 38), but nevertheless left the modernist global imaginary unchallenged; one which saw the world only in terms of a patchwork of discrete nation-states. Thus, either way, the limiting factor remained what Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller (2002) have called 'methodological nationalism' and what Paul Gilroy (1993, p. 5) has equivalently described as 'the unthinking assumption that cultures always flow into patterns congruent with the borders of essentially homogenous nation states'. The KDP's solution to the diasporic dilemma was to demand the right to multiple allegiances, but what they failed to do, however, was to more fundamentally call into question the very nation-state framework that processes of globalisation were radically reconfiguring before their eyes. To be fair though, this was back when the phenomenon of 'globalisation' was as yet unnamed, with tendencies towards global integration still only in their incipient phases. The continuing proliferation of supranational social ties since the 1970s, however, has since rendered the modernist idea of the world increasingly redundant. The contradictions between ever-shifting material realities and received cultural-political imaginaries that KDP activists were forced to grapple with in the 1970s, have only further intensified in the present era. This intensification has prompted Filipino nationalist scholars like Eduardo Gonzalez (2000, p. 2) to ask the tough questions: 'In the wake of the seemingly unstoppable advance of globalization, is the nationalist project dead? Is Filipino nationalism in a tailspin, going into a deep intellectual slump?' While both pan-nationalist and internationalist politics remain influential for many activists in

the Filipino diaspora, there are new imaginaries emerging which go well beyond modernist commitments to the nation, regardless of whether these are to one, two, or many nations.

Diasporic Cosmopolitanism

While processes of globalisation do not necessarily guarantee the emergence of cosmopolitan dispositions, they do constitute much of the raw material for their possibility. Hence, while globalisation has elicited in some activist groups a fundamentalist response (the CPP, for example, continues to affirm its classical ideology in the face of new constellations of power, insisting that nothing has changed[8]), it has prompted other groups to seriously grapple with the changing world-historical context and to formulate new imaginaries more in consonance with the times. The KDP's dual line represented an early attempt to do just this. With the intensification of globalisation since the 1970s, however, even internationalist imaginaries have become somewhat anachronistic. The KDP ran out of steam after Marcos was deposed, and with members exhausted after a long struggle, the organisation decided

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[8]   By the early 1990s, the CPP was in a serious crisis. Domestically, it had become a marginal force after failing to participate in the 1986 insurrection that toppled Marcos. This precipitated a number of internal debates around strategy. The immediate post-Marcos period also saw tragic purges of dissident Party members, under the pretence of weeding out 'deep penetration agents' of the state (Garcia 2001). Internationally, the end of the Cold War and the intensification of globalisation stoked further debates about the way forward for the Party. In the midst of all of this internal disarray, CPP chairman Jose Maria Sison, writing under the pseudonym of Armando Liwanag (1992), intervened with an internal position paper in which he proclaimed that the reason the Party was in crisis was because it had deviated too far from the original principles upon which the CPP was founded in 1968. For Sison, what was needed was not to update Party ideology and strategy to more adequately deal with new circumstances (which is what many members were calling for), but instead to reaffirm the original principles of 1968. This now-infamous document directly led to mass splits, with a reported two-thirds of the membership choosing to leave the Party, rejecting both Sison's leadership and Maoist ideology as a whole. Those who stayed became known as 'reaffirmists' (RAs) and those who left became known as 'rejectionists' (RJs). This split has forever altered the landscape of the Philippine Left, with animosities between RAs and RJs still evident everywhere today – animosities which have since been reproduced in the diaspora.

to disband itself in 1987. New social movement organisations have since emerged within the Filipino diaspora, with one such group being the Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES). During my ethnographic research visit to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2007, FACES emerged as one of the key organisations in my work. I spent much time participating in their various activities – meetings, rallies and the like – as well as simply having coffee and chatting with individual members on an informal basis. What impressed me about FACES was the theoretical framework which guided its practice; one which was evidently both post-nationalist – evidenced by its slogan 'Building environmental justice across borders' (Carlos & Tilos 2007) – as well as post-*internationalist*. Before elaborating upon FACES' novel imaginary, however, some historical background will first of all be required.

FACES was launched in February of 2000, with its founding objective being to support the environmental justice struggles of communities in the Philippines affected by toxic waste left behind at former US military bases in Pampanga and Zambales provinces. These bases had first been established in the early 1900s, during the period of US colonial rule. With the signing of the Treaty of Manila in 1946, the Philippines was granted formal independence from its American colonisers, albeit not without a number of strings attached. One of these was the right for the US to retain use of its military bases, which were of vital strategic importance in the Cold War context with the US seeking to contain Soviet influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Amongst other things, the bases played a key role in the United States' wars in Indochina throughout the 1970s. Ferdinand Marcos remained a key ally of the US throughout this period. After the demise of the Marcos dictatorship, however, a spirit of reform was in the air. Many Filipinos resented the US presence in the Philippines, not to mention the fact that the US had backed a brutal dictator under whom they had suffered immeasurably. As such, lawmakers that took office after the restoration of democracy were charged with a new mandate. In 1991, the Philippine Senate voted to reject the US-Philippines bases agreement, and in 1992 US forces formally withdrew.

By an accident of history, the massive 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo that had devastated surrounding communities, also caused extensive damage to US military facilities. This devastating event occurred just three months before the historic Senate decision to oust the bases took place, and no doubt contributed to the US military's eventual willingness to close down its Philippine

operations. In fact, the US left in haste, neglecting even to clean up hazardous waste from their facilities. Jorge Emmanuel (1997, p. 3), himself a member of FACES, writes of the dangerous by-products produced by US military activity:

> Most people associate toxic waste solely with industry. However, military facilities and operations also generate large quantities of hazardous waste from production, testing, cleaning, maintenance, and use of weapons, explosives, aircraft, naval vessels, land transport, etc... Toxic solvents, oils, greases, corrosives, fuels, heavy metals, PCBs, dioxins, unexploded ordnance, and radioactive material are some of the hazardous wastes emitted or discharged directly into soil, air, or water by the military.

Not long after the US withdrew from their bases, nearby residents began to complain of a whole series of health problems, including gastrointestinal disorders and skin rashes (Emmanuel 1997). What followed revealed multiplying instances of cancer and children born with deformities. These illnesses were found to be connected with toxic military waste which had contaminated the local water supply (Tritten 2010). Not only were the local people victims of Pinatubo, but also of a new human-made disaster. In the years following the surfacing of these issues, the People's Task Force for Bases Clean-up (PTF) was formed in the Philippines, along with the United States Working Group for Philippine Bases Clean-Up (USWG) on the other side of the Pacific. Many of the activists who became involved in the campaign had come directly out of the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. As such, old trans-Pacific networks were mobilised. What was new, though, was that it was now the environment that was on the agenda. Of course, it was an environmentalism inextricably tied up with issues of social justice, not least of all, human health and liveable communities. The USWG was the kernel that eventually grew into FACES.

In the early 2000s, not long after FACES' founding, the PTF, for all intents and purposes, collapsed, with the bases cleanup campaign as a whole soon following suit. A full explanation of the complex set of circumstances that led to this occurrence is unfortunately beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that, the campaign had already been facing flagging fortunes for some time before PTF members decided to turn on each other. With the implosion of the PTF, FACES were left without a partner organisation in the Philippines with whom to work. This

thrust FACES members into a period of deep reflection around their work. In 2004, a 'comprehensive assessment process' was launched 'that employed participatory methods for building capacity and strategy around FACES' potential future direction' (FACES 2005). It was hoped that the reassessment process would reinvigorate the organisation and charge it with a new sense of purpose. Most of all, participants in the process wanted to make sure in their own minds that FACES still had reason to exist. They wanted to be clear about the specific role they could play as diasporic Filipinos, and were weary about not reproducing the shortcomings of other attempts at trans-Pacific organising. Although keen to draw lessons from the past, FACES members were not content with received ideas about the world. Instead, they set out to collectively forge their own imaginary, actively grappling with the new challenges of the changing world-historical context and its implications for their work.

A period of reassessment took place over the course of two years, during which time many in-depth discussions were held. FACES' members started with very personal questions about their own identity and positionality as Filipino Americans: How was the Filipino American community to be understood? What role could or should the Filipino American community play as far as in issues in the Philippines were concerned, if any? If Filipino Americans had their own unique identity and were not just peninsular extensions of the homeland, how could they go beyond mere support for struggles in the Philippines and also become their own constituents; participants, that is, in their own liberation, and not just that of others? Was it ethical to claim oneself as a representative of another's struggle in the first place? What was the connection between issues that Filipino Americans faced and issues that Filipinos in the Philippines faced? Indeed, these were questions that often came up in Filipino American activism, but FACES felt it was necessary to revisit them and to probe them in a deeper and more systematic way.

From there, FACES members then began to reflect upon bigger questions surrounding the nature of the global present. What is different about today's context that requires a rethinking of past imaginaries? Exactly what has changed since the 1970s? In a presentation on the notion of 'transnational environmental justice' that I recorded at the 2007 FACES National Conference

in Oakland, Miguel[9], a veteran of the anti-martial law movement, reflected on the profound shifts he has seen over his lifetime:

> I've been now engaged in Philippine support and solidarity work for about twenty-four years... So part of it is trying to reflect on, you know, where I've been in this work, and trying to reflect on what's different now from twenty-four or twenty-five years ago... How, in fact, are experiences of our communities different from twenty-four years ago till now, that will have some impact and some bearing on that type of work that we try to do?... What are some of the trends that have happened that have in fact accelerated in the past twenty-five years?... The income gap between countries has accelerated dramatically... Debt has been a part of the strategy of accelerating and maintaining the disparity between communities and between countries... migration has exploded... globalization[10] has allowed companies and governments to rule over the world... Advances in technology and communications really strengthens communications between communities and allows for more meaningful exchanges... The ability to have a phone thing and a video thing was unheard of twenty years ago. We were still waiting for the fax to spit out paper, and we were lucky to get the fax to spit out paper; that in fact this technology makes, truthfully, kind of the distance come closer... And for an organization like FACES we should, I think, kind of really embrace that and try to maximize the impact of that in our work, much more than we've currently done...

The reflections of movement veterans like Miguel of course came into play during FACES' long period of reassessment. In fact, valuable lessons were drawn from their experiences in the anti-martial law movement and other struggles, with FACES now even defining itself as an 'intergenerational' organisation – an explicit valorisation of the sense of continuity and historicity

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[9]   Note that interlocutors in my research are only referred to here by pseudonyms, not by their real names.

[10]   I have transcribed the recorded speech of my research informants in the US with standard US spelling, in line with particular variety of English used by the speakers themselves. Elsewhere I have retained Australian spelling.

that veterans have brought to the group.

The first thing that I would like to pick up on from what Miguel said in his presentation is that communities on both sides of the Pacific are now much more interconnected than in the past. Advances in communications technology have meant that people are now able to maintain ongoing connections across vast distances as never before. In the past, a letter may have taken many weeks to arrive at its destination, but now a text message or e-mail can be sent and received pretty much instantaneously. Both 'snail mail' and e-mail involve a hyper-extension of social relationships across global space, but the difference is that, today, there is a relative *compression* of space, since the temporal lag through which two parties are able to communicate with each other has been all but eliminated (Harvey 1990; Estévez 2009). This may in fact be seen as one of the key features of the contemporary world: the possibility of the presence of 'absences', or, the simultaneous co-presence of 'here' and 'there' (Dufoix 2008, p. 100). This is a phenomenon which is having enormous impacts on all aspects of everyday life, and is allowing for the construction of what Steven Flusty (2004) refers to as 'everyday globalities'.

The very terrain on which diasporic activists operate is being radically transformed as a result of globalisation. But what exactly is meant by the term 'globalisation' in the first place? Principally, I use it here as shorthand to denote a whole range of processes, all serving to effect *global integration*. Far from being some kind of amorphous, monolithic juggernaut, then, globalisation is *multiple and plural*. Indeed, it can take infinite forms. Anytime you or I chat over webcam with a friend in Brazil or text a friend in Thailand or call a friend in Italy, we effect a globalisation of sorts; a hyper-extended social relationship compressed into a space of 'simultaneity' (Estévez 2009). From this perspective, it is not as if diasporans are simply actors on a stage that they had no part in making. On the contrary, they themselves are powerful world-making agents who have been central in catalysing global integration. Wherever people move, long-distance social ties proliferate and new emotional geographies are thus created – geographies that are later mobilised by diasporic social movements.

One crucial question remains to be asked: Where does Miguel's assertion that 'globalisation has allowed companies and governments to rule over the world' come into all of this? While globalisation is often treated as a synonym for global capitalism, I argue that it cannot simply be reduced to its economic dimension. Nevertheless, this dimension cannot be ignored. National economies are today becoming completely interdependent and

enmeshed with one another, engendering what Félix Guattari (2008 [1989]) has called 'integrated world capitalism'. In a related manner, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) have famously theorised that since the early 1970s, sovereign power, which was traditionally tied to the nation-state, is now transmuting into a new *supra*-national form of sovereignty, which they dub 'Empire'. This is seen as a global network comprising new supranational institutions (such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization), as well as transnational corporations and reconfigured nation-states, all 'united under a single logic of rule' (Hardt & Negri 2000, p. xii). No longer do we have a jigsaw puzzle of contiguous nation-states (as in the internationalist imaginary), but rather, a single global regime of sovereignty. This regime is, regulated not in the interests of this or that nation-state, but in the interests of global capitalism as a whole. Additionally, there is now a *global* economic elite, not simply a series of separate national bourgeoisies. Indeed, old distinctions between 'inside' and 'outside' are everywhere collapsing, with everything now seemingly interpenetrating everything else. The state of the contemporary world might be conceptualised therefore as one of 'complex entanglement'.

Importantly, through its collective reassessment process, FACES did eventually come to recognise the supranational character of contemporary capitalism. It set out to understand the nature of our present, surveyed the shifts that had been taking place globally since the days of the KDP, and took stock. In this manner, FACES members reached the realisation that not only should they take issue with individual governments, but must also begin to target transnational corporations – the 'biggest monster of our times' according to one of my research informants, Pedro. Corporations are indeed a core element of the new global landscape, with many having become quasi-empires in their own right[11].

While the nature of the global present was one theme around which FACES' reassessment revolved, the process also involved a second core theme: that concerning Filipino American identity and positionality. What is remarkable is that, when FACES' members put these two questions together, they realised that they actually mapped together perfectly. One need only look as far as FACES' current campaign against Chevron – a multinational oil

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[11]   For an extremely interesting take on the rise of corporate power and the specific modalities by which it operates, see Ferguson (2005).

company with its headquarters located in the San Francisco Bay Area, but which also happens to be responsible for environmental and social injustices in the community of Pandacan in the Philippines[12]. Given these two facts, FACES – as a Filipino American organisation based in the San Francisco Bay Area albeit with emotional links to the Philippines – has seen an opportunity for itself to work in solidarity with local community groups fighting Chevron in Pandacan, as well as to simultaneously mobilise against Chevron in the Bay Area. The struggle at each end is local, but together, FACES and its allies in the Philippines are collaborating transnationally around an issue and a corporation that is equally transnational.

As Christine Cordero (in FACES 2006, p. 1), a long-time FACES member, has articulated:

> Our families live here and there. Chevron is a US-based company and we, as US citizens, have the opportunity and obligation to hold them accountable to their actions. The health problems and issues affect all of our families and communities. The movement must be transnational because Chevron corporation is transnational.

Here, and this is my crucial point, *the hyper-extension of social solidarities through the diasporic experience (and the mobilisation of these solidarities through transnational activism) becomes the means with which to challenge the hyper-extension and transnationalisation of capital.* Indeed, this is the key insight arrived at by FACES after its two-year period of collective reflection: it is not enough for transnational activism to simply take the form of an abstract solidarity floating around in the ether of the World Wide Web. Instead, what is required are concrete, localised forms of action which can then be articulated together into a more meaningful, practical form of solidarity.

Perhaps 'transnational' is not even the right word in this context. The term 'translocal' seems much more fitting. As FACES states on its website, its concern is to address issues of

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[12]   To give the specifics, Chevron operates a large oil depot located in Pandacan, with little buffer between what is an extremely hazardous facility and the densely-populated residential areas surrounding it. Local residents suffer 'chronic exposure to toxic emissions' and face the constant 'threat of catastrophic spills, fires, and explosions', according to a recent press release (FACES 2009). As such, FACES, in collaboration with its Pandacan partners, is advocating for the closure and clean-up of the depot site.
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'environmental justice that impact Filipino communities in both the United States and the Philippines' (FACES 2005). Crucially, when it becomes about local communities, all of a sudden the national takes a backseat. For instance, take Miguel's emphasis of community-based over national struggles (once again, I am drawing here from his presentation to the 2007 FACES National Conference):

> We've moved from advancing a national liberation struggle - and this was, kind of how I got into this, was, you know, I joined the anti-dictatorship movement to have national liberation for the Philippines... National liberation started its focus on seizing state power; that was kind of the thing in the Seventies and Eighties... [But] I feel that you don't necessarily have to have that as a central part of your activity, of your strategy. It could be kind of what we're doing, which is working with communities, issues that those communities confront... [The national is] still important, I don't want to minimise this, but I don't think it's the central organizing principle in making this kind of transnational link...

The innovation of diasporic internationalism was to do away with pan-nationalism's single-minded emphasis on the homeland, instead expanding its affinities to encompass two national territories. It articulated a dual allegiance to what were deemed to be two separate revolutions. The innovation of *diasporic cosmopolitanism*, however, is to do away with rigid notions of nationhood altogether. 'It's no longer bi-national', asserts Miguel. In other words, it is not just about the Philippine national context and the US national context anymore. Rather, it is about concrete localities, caught up in one another's destinies within the new global context of complex entanglement. And what is the global, after all, if not a vast network of interconnected *localities*, woven together into innumerable everyday globalities? From this perspective, the supranational, paradoxically enough, actually consists of the *subnational*. Thus, while on the one hand, FACES' campaign against Chevron highlighted the need for the struggle to be as global as capitalism; it also highlighted the need for the struggle to be grounded locally on the other. The global and the local are not in contradiction here (as counter-intuitive as this may seem for anyone schooled in categorical, as opposed to relational, modes of thought), but rather, are held in dynamic tension in a common translocal framework.

The fact that Filipino Americans' global lives dovetail perfectly with the increasingly global nature of sovereignty is, as discussed above, of enormous significance. It means that for FACES members, cultural identity can serve as a valuable tool or vehicle with which to engage in activist work. One young FACES activist, Pilar, expressed sentiments along these exact lines in the lively discussion from the floor which followed Miguel's conference presentation:

> [I've been] thinking about being a hybrid identity; being Filipino and also being American, because I grew up here, and using those identities as strategic, to build alliances... That's what's so amazing... that diaspora is a strategic framework... As us who are very hybridized and multiculturalized we have that leverage.

If cultural identity can serve as a means with which to engage in political work, then the converse is also the case: activism can become an important means for Filipino Americans to explore their own cultural identities. In fact, a number of FACES members recounted to me, both in interviews and in casual conversations, that one reason they chose to get involved in the organisation in the first place was precisely so that they could deal with the identity issues that inevitably came up for them as young people growing up in the diaspora. They wanted to figure out for themselves what it meant to be Filipino American; what it meant to be both rooted locally but also to have affinities elsewhere.

Importantly, FACES provides a space for their members to engage in this kind of exploration and reflection. This is evident, in fact, in the group's very name: Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity. The slash in 'Filipino/American' here is quite intentional: it allows FACES to opt out of prioritising either 'Filipino' or 'American', not to mention the conjunction 'Filipino American'. Instead, FACES has made a conscious decision to leave the question of identity open and unfinalised. Not only are FACES members cognisant of their own ambiguous positionality as Filipino Americans; they also actively embrace this ambiguity and refuse all nationalistic reductions of their complex, hybrid subjectivities (which, in the manner of the pan-nationalist imaginary, would posit them simply as Filipinos in exile from their 'true' homeland, even if they were born and raised in the US).

Diasporic internationalism took initial steps to free itself from monolithic pan-nationalist notions of identity, but still ended up finalising Filipino American identity into a rigid bi-national

framework. Unlike with pan-nationalist and internationalist imaginaries, however, diasporic cosmopolitanism does not require that Filipino Americans conform to any crystallised notions of identity as a pre-requisite for meaningful action. Instead, identity became unmoored from all constants and freed of all fixity. For today's cosmopolitans, cultural identity is not something to be merely 'fulfilled' (as if there were such a thing as a timeless, transcendental identity out there that needed only to be learned), but rather, is something that must be constantly invented and reinvented, activated and reactivated.

'Fil-Whatever' subjectivity

The three distinct cultural-political imaginaries that have emerged in Filipino American diasporic activism over time (pan-nationalism, internationalism, and cosmopolitanism), are one point of discussion. Others include the need to take a more philosophical tack and zoom in a little closer on the question of radical cosmopolitan identity. I am especially interested in the possibility of new forms of belonging that do not require conformity to rigid, homogenous notions of identity. Indeed, the concept of belonging has often been tied to sameness, but need this be the case? What are the prospects today for new forms of non-absolutist, post-nationalist belonging? Is it possible to construct communities on the very basis of diversity, rather than treating difference as being somehow an obstacle to community? These are questions pertinent not only to people in the diaspora, but also to those in the so-called homeland. The Philippines is an archipelago of immense diversity, with dozens of languages and cultures all jostling and inter-mingling with one another within and between its thousands of islands, as they have always done. In the homeland, as in the diaspora, a thousand small hybridities proliferate every day beyond the bounds of what is officially designated as 'truly' Filipino. Unfortunately, however, nationalists choose to blind themselves to this diversity, preoccupying themselves instead with 'finding' (or more accurately, *inventing*[13]) timeless essences

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[13]   If it is at all possible to discern some kind of unitary, national Philippine culture, it is not because such a thing exists 'naturally', or is somehow intrinsic to the land and peoples contained within the arbitrary borders of the Philippine nation-state, but rather, because *it has itself been produced by nationalist discourse*. The outcome is confused for the origin, and the effect for the essence. Just as Judith Butler (1990, p. 3) wrote of 'the fictive foundation of its own claim to legitimacy' with respect to the category of 'woman', so too might we consider the same to be the case with respect

that can somehow 'unite' the 'Filipino people'.

To address all of these questions, I focus the discussion on the nexus between diasporic pan-nationalism and diasporic cosmopolitanism in particular. The reason for this is that, during my six-month visit to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2007, the key epistemological tension that I witnessed there was precisely that between the pan-nationalist and cosmopolitan imaginaries. Diasporic internationalism, meanwhile, seems to have suffered a decline since the KDP's dissolution in 1987. How is it that pan-nationalism has been able, not only to survive, but also to continue thriving in the current context, in stark contrast to diasporic internationalism? I will not attempt to answer this very complex question in the limited space afforded to me here, but what I can do is to offer one example of an organisation in the Filipino diaspora that retains a pan-nationalist imaginary; that being, *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* USA (BAYAN-USA), or, the New Patriotic Alliance. BAYAN-USA is largely inspired by the CPP (now banned in both the Philippines and the US) and operates with an identical Maoist ideology. It considers itself as an overseas chapter of BAYAN in the Philippines, rather than as an organisation in its own right. As such, it sees its role as that of a 'support' organisation, clearly reflected in Article 5, Section 1 of BAYAN-USA's by-laws, formulated at its 2005 founding assembly in San Francisco:

> As an integral part of the national democratic movement of the Philippines, the mission and purpose of BAYAN-USA is to gather the broadest possible political, moral, material and sectoral support for BAYAN and the national democratic struggle of the Filipino people (BAYAN-USA 2005).

The organisation even goes so far as to argue that the problems that Filipino Americans face in the US are not their own, but rather, that they have their origins in injustices faced by their brothers and sisters in the homeland. Article 4, Section 1 of the by-laws, for example, states: 'the issues and struggles of Filipinos in the U.S. are rooted in the struggle for national democracy in the Philippines' (BAYAN-USA 2005). In this formulation, diasporic Filipinos are only ever seen as peninsular extensions of the Philippine nation-state. What follows on from this is that diasporic Filipinos are cast as somehow 'lacking', rendered but 'inauthentic' carbon copies of their compatriots in the homeland.

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to the category of 'The Philippines' or with any other modernist compartmentalisation of reality for that matter.

Diasporic cosmopolitanism intervenes here, insisting that the condition of the diasporan is not one of deficiency or lack, but one of overflowing possibilities.

At this point, I would like to proceed to illustrate this by way of a narrative. In August 2007, as a part of my fieldwork, I participated in a two-week solidarity tour of the Philippines that FACES runs annually as a way of reconnecting with its partner organisations. The programme aims to facilitate cultural exchange and the strengthening of political solidarities between Filipino and Filipino American activists in their common struggles, despite being from opposite sides of the Pacific. On the first day of the solidarity tour, we were addressed by Joel Rocamora, a prominent leftist intellectual in the Philippines and a veteran of the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. He argued that we needed to begin to think about ways to redefine Filipino nationality outside of territoriality; about how to conceive of culture across national borders and how to accommodate diverse expressions of being Filipino:

> In a situation of, sort of, a barrierless world… in a situation where I can talk to my friend in California for an hour without having to pay for it because we use Skype… it's like it's possible to create culture across national boundaries. And so effectively it becomes, what sorts of identity do we work out of, so that we create value, we create culture out of that identity, and we don't ask, you know, whether you're more Filipino than I am or I'm more Filipino than you are?

'This animal called the "Global Filipino"', Rocamora continued, 'actually really exists'. What this means is the proliferation of new identities and the constant redefinition and renegotiation of old ones. Cultural production and innovation are occurring everyday, both in the Philippines and in the diaspora. Thus, no longer is there only one way of being Filipino, but many. No longer are there just Filipinos, but also Fil-Ams[14], Fil-Canadians, Fil-Australians, Fil-Italians, '*Fil-Whatever*s'.

Although only used by Rocamora as a kind of throwaway turn-of-phrase, I believe there is much more to the idea of the 'Fil-Whatever' than is evident initially; in particular, when we connect it to Giorgio Agamben's (1993) use of the notion of 'whatever' as a philosophical concept. In order to explain this concept and its relevance for the discussion here, I will firstly need

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[14]   Colloquial term for 'Filipino American'

to explicate the new theory of difference that Agamben seeks to outline in *The Coming Community* (1993). Key to his argument is that we must reject the universal-particular binary of modernist thinking in favour of a new couplet of commonality-singularity. Whereas the former presupposes a structuralist ontology of discrete entities compartmentalised into wholes and parts of wholes, the latter rests instead on a poststructuralist ontological schema of expansive, distributed networks. These networks are comprised of singularities whose commonality, by virtue of being entangled in a common web, does not efface each singularity's irreducible difference. Commonality is achieved across difference, rather than at the expense of it. Here we can see how Agamben's ideas depart from the modernist binary between the universal and the particular, which are always deemed to be antithetical.

Agamben's project here recalls both Gottfried Liebniz's The Monadology (1925) as well as Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1994). In a vein similar to that of Agamben, Deleuze attempts to formulate a specifically non-Hegelian theory of difference; that when things come into existence, they do not do so only by virtue of that which they are not (that is, through the operation of dialectal negation). Instead, Deleuze (1994) invents a more positive conception of 'difference-in-itself', freeing difference from the negative. Andre Breton (1972 [1924], p. 9) too, in the *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924 intimated towards the kind of ideas that Agamben wrote about in *The Coming Community*, such as when he asked:

> If in a cluster of grapes there are no two alike, why do you want me to describe this grape by the other, by all the others, why do you want me to make a palatable grape? Our brains are dulled by the incurable mania of wanting to make the unknown known, classifiable.

Where Breton gives the example of grapes, Agamben (1993) gives the example of the human face: Each is irreducibly singular and unique, yet each is also recognisably human. Thus, we are always at once simultaneously singular and common, and it is precisely this emphasis that Agamben theorises as the ontology of 'whatever'. In Agamben's (1993, p. 20) words: 'Common and proper, genus and individual are only the two slopes dropping down from either side of the watershed of whatever'.

Re-casting Rocamora's throwaway usage of the term 'Fil-Whatever' in an entirely new light, let us imagine, for example, the Filipino diaspora as a network, or perhaps, a vast archipelago.

Each singularity or island within this archipelago constitutes a 'difference-in-itself' (Deleuze 1994) not reducible to any kind of averaged out, essentialised, generic whole. Together, these irreducible singularities comprise the *irreducible multiplicity* of the archipelago. Importantly, singularities can take any number of forms. Individual Filipinos, Fil-Australians and Fil-Ams, for example, could all be said to be irreducibly singular, but so too could each community organisation, political grouping, network of friends, extended family, event, or city within which diasporic Filipinos live, work and play. What is crucial is that the irreducible difference of each singularity in the ontological archipelago does not preclude its *commonality* with others. Conversely, their commonality does not at all efface their heterogeneity. Here, the isomorphism between Agambenian ontology and the *translocal* schema sketched earlier begins to reveal itself. In modernist thinking, difference is conceived in terms of the particular, which is always deemed to be at odds with the universal. As a consequence, modernist politics does violence to difference because it relies on departicularising the particular as a means to accommodating the universal. Nationalism, for example, destroys internal difference by enforcing homogeneity to a transcendental ideal of what it means to be an authentic member of the national community. Diasporic pan-nationalism, of the sort I have discussed in this article, operates in precisely this manner, constantly seeking to flatten out diasporic differences in order to reinscribe diasporic Filipinos back into a transcendental ideal of Filipino-ness.

Where diasporic pan-nationalism rests on a homogenous notion of nation-ness, the cosmopolitan imaginary, in contrast, allows for, and embraces, heterogeneity. It recognises that commonality can be built between singularities in ways which do not erase difference. Take my participation in the FACES solidarity tour, for example: I was a Fil-Australian amongst Fil-Americans interfacing with Filipinos; all of us simultaneously singular and common – singular albeit not at the expense of our commonality and common albeit not at the expense of our singularity. We were all able to work together as Fil-Whatevers, *through* our heterogeneity, rather than in spite of it; that is, we did not have to conform to a transcendental ideal of homogenised Filipino-ness as a pre-requisite for common action.

'Transcendent value', writes Felix Guattari (1995, p. 103) 'presents itself as immovable, always already there and thus always going to stay there. From its perspective, subjectivity remains in perpetual lack, guilty a priori'. Thus, to the nationalist, hybridised diasporic subjectivity remains deficient. Pan-nationalists thus

prescribe that Filipino Americans and other diasporans must overcome their confusion with their hybrid identities and get in touch with their 'true' identities as Filipinos. Too many diasporans internalise this kind of logic and become anxious about their perpetual condition of lack. Shifting from a nationalist to a cosmopolitan imaginary, as FACES has done, is thus a key manoeuvre, as it allows diasporans to reconceive themselves not as lacking, but as overdetermined; uncontainable within existing categories, and thus always spilling over into newness. As such, diasporic cosmopolitanism is facilitating the construction of new forms of belonging not based on essences, allowing diasporans to locate 'home' not just in the homeland, but also in the diaspora.

Conclusions

> 'Let where you are going, not where you come from, henceforth be your honour!... your nobility shall not gaze backward, but *outward*! You shall be fugitives from all fatherlands and fore-fatherlands! You shall love your *children's land*: let this love be your new nobility – the undiscovered land in the furthest sea! I bid your sails seek it and seek it!'
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> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (2003 [1885], pp. 220-221).

As I have hopefully demonstrated in this article, diasporic social movements constitute a privileged site for examining both the residual pasts and emergent futures that inhere in the global present. Social movements are where prevailing cultural-political imaginaries come to be contested and reinvented. These imaginaries are formed out of the substrate of their specific contexts, but also act back on them, transforming them in turn. In this article, I set out to identify three distinct imaginaries that have arisen in Filipino American diasporic activism in the past forty years, concomitant with the rise of globalisation.

To reiterate, diasporic internationalism first arose as an early attempt to counter the CPP's pan-nationalist imaginary or, alternatively, what often went by the name of 'narrow nationalism' (Toribio 2000, p. 38). Where pan-nationalism simply posited diasporans as 'overseas' Filipinos, KDP activists asserted an independent US-based identity *in addition* to their Filipino identity. In effect, the dual line formulation was a tentative first response to the new challenges posed by globalisation to old,

modernist modes of thought. Although these ways of thinking were perfectly capable of conceptualising stasis and unity, they remained blinded to mobility and multiplicity. The proponents of diasporic internationalism grappled with these problematics and tried their best to understand them, but their model was insufficient to the task. It was as static as the pan-nationalist imaginary that it had set out to challenge. Whereas the former prioritised one static national context, the latter simply tacked an extra nation-state on, seeing two instead of one.

What is important about diasporic cosmopolitanism is that it has been able to do what diasporic internationalism tried to but could not: that is, to adequately deal with mobility and multiplicity and to invent new values by which they could be embraced. It has been able to do this precisely by unmooring notions of identity from the nation – refusing 'all fatherlands and fore-fatherlands' as Nietzsche (2003 [1885], p. 221) puts it above, in one of his signature moments of cogent madness – and regrounding them instead in both local communities and translocal networks. Simultaneously, diasporic cosmopolitanism has liberated political thought from a methodological nationalism that had straight-jacketed the activist imagination for decades.

Pan-nationalism and internationalism were both understandable responses to the changing global context, but only diasporic cosmopolitanism seems to have succeeded in becoming an imaginary wholly contingent in contemporary realities. It is not that there are some imaginaries that are more 'correct' than others in particular circumstances. Rather, it is that some tools work better than others in certain situations. It is not about what is right, but about what works (Deleuze & Guattari 1994). Tools that might have served well in the past can often prove blunt today. The crucial point is that, if we continue to limit our cultural and political epistemologies within the bounds of methodological nationalism, we only become accomplices in our own subservience. Instead, we must take ownership of the global which we helped to precipitate in the first place; to continue constructing everyday, translocal globalities and asserting our autonomous mobility independent of the dictates of sovereignty.

In conclusion, I would like to conjecture that, today, perhaps all migration is *internal migration*. Removed from the 'inside' of homeland space, diasporans might be seen as constituting a vast swarm of outsiders, who, through their riotous mobility, are in fact weaving a new inside; *that of the world as a whole*. No longer mere exile, the diasporan thus becomes reconstituted as *global citizen*.

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Feeling extraordinary in 'ordinary' spaces: Betwixt and between gender and culture in an Australian context

Mandy Wilson

Abstract

I explore the lived experiences of transgender people in Perth, Western Australia, in this article. In particular, I focus on the barriers faced by those with a non-normative gender identity in a cultural locale that demands gendered coherence – often to the exclusion and disavowal of alternative expressions. I argue that the sustainability of a liminal gender status in Perth is problematic. For transgender people in Perth, a betwixt and between gender status is substantially imbued with danger. Despite recognition of the fluidity of gender possibilities, transgender participants described the price they paid for their gendered 'deviance'. Overall, the negative receptions to their transgender identity and behaviours made the appropriation of gendered 'normalcy' all the more seductive. Drawing on Victor Turner's theories of liminality and aggregation, and Mary Douglas's concepts of purity and danger, I explore how transgender people in Perth understood, accommodated and negotiated their perceived variance and anomaly.

> They [non-transgender people] probably think a variety of things [about transgender people]. They probably try to think the worst. They probably think we are all sex workers and they probably think that we're a bad influence on their kids and that we are on the whole a bad influence, we'll change people, we're very poisonous. I think they think we'll spread …
>
> ('Sarah', Perth, Australia, 2001)

In this article I explore how transgender people in an Australian

urban context conceptualise and enact their status in cultural locales that find gendered 'difference' threatening.[1] By way of Mary Douglas's (1966 [1984], 1970) theories on cultural anomaly, and especially Victor Turner's (1969, 1982) on liminality and aggregation, I adopt an analytical vantage point to foster an interpretation of public responses to private genders (and sexualities). Contemplating the view that expressions of the gendered 'self' take place within predominantly monogendered social and cultural spaces in Australia, the transgender individual (and other individuals of variant identity) often negotiate public spaces by modifying their behaviours – bodily, verbal and spatial – to present a coherent and readable gender. Bodies and symbolic cues are used often by transgender people to reflect, as closely as possible, a semblance of culturally-mediated gendered 'normalcy'. These processes have been consolidated through occupation of what Douglas (1966) and Turner (1969, 1982) refer to as 'liminal' spaces where people can explore gendered expressions. In these spaces, gender boundaries are temporarily lifted and the distinction between gendered bodies becomes considerably ambiguous. In the public sphere, however, the transitional body occupies a more precarious position. I focus on the ways that local constructions of gender identity may be affected by public and popular representations and expectations of bodies, and conclude that liminality did not represent (and was not represented as) a space invested with gender potential. When translated into everyday reality for transgender individuals in Perth, the phase is substantially imbued with danger.

Transgendering the Theoretical in public domains

Any exploration of the cultural anxieties provoked by the anomalous body requires an investigation of what makes a body 'ambiguous' in a certain culture and why. As I discuss below, limits in all ethnographic settings exist to ensure that the 'ambiguous' body remains outside dominant gender conceptualisations, persistently constructing liminal gender identities as socially dangerous and undesirable. Referring to the mechanisms identified by Douglas (1966, 1970), and theories of aggregation as conceptualised

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[1]   I would like to thank the people with whom I spent time and whose stories this article is based on; they generously entrusted me with their narratives and thoughts, allowing me access to sometimes intimate, difficult and painful memories. I also wish to thank Sandy Toussaint, my good friend and mentor, who continues to encourage my interest in the anthropology of sex and gender despite my career taking me in a different direction.

by Turner (1982), I argue with regard to an Australian urban context that various devices for dealing with 'ambiguity' and anomaly come into play at differing levels to constrain, define and condemn bodies considered anomalous by sectors of the broader, non-transgender society.

Mary Douglas (1966) argued that 'Culture, in the sense of the public, standardised values of a community, mediates the experience of individuals' (p. 38), a view that needs to be understood as involving a continual dialogical relationship between private and public spheres. Ekins (1997) points out that '[i]n making sense of self, identity and the world, there is constant interplay between private experiences and public knowledge' (p.20). He elaborates by emphasising interrelations between three meaning frames or, more specifically, three bodies of knowledge in so-called 'Western' settings: scientific or expert knowledge, member knowledge and lay or commonsense knowledge (1997: 20).

Cross-cultural research in this field has also revealed that explanations for, and understandings of, gender variance and transgression are culturally and historically specific (Herdt 1994; Morris 1994; Kulick 1998). These bodies of knowledge inform and shape how members of a particular culture perceive and interpret gender variance, as well as how individuals perceive and understand their *own* gender variance. Focusing on contrasting representations, discourses and contexts of transgender issues allows one to discern where particular ideas about bodies, genders and sexualities merge and emerge, and how these ideas influence not only the ways in which transgender people are regarded and understood by others, but also how they regard and understand themselves.

Halberstam's (1998) work is also useful here. She writes that in 'Western' cultures that embody a dichotomous gender system, masculinity and femininity are seemingly broad enough categories to allow a dimorphic gender system to remain intact through the seeming flexibility of these categories (p. 20). The research of Halberstam and others (Butler 1999; Bell & Binne 2004; Gamson 2002) indicates that there is growing recognition and acceptance that women and men come in different sizes, shapes and colours with gender boundaries continually re-defined and expanded. Despite these perspectives, it is evident that persistent socio-cultural signifiers continue to define notions of femaleness and maleness in Western-derived contexts. This emphasis means that 'there are very few people in any given public space who are completely unreadable in terms of their gender' (Halberstam

1998, p.20), and when gender is not automatically readable a sense of discomfort or anger may result (Tomsen and Mason 2001). How gender comes to be 'read' depends on gender texts circulating in a particular cultural locale. Cohen's (1994) discussion is especially apposite here. He claims cogently that expressions of identity are 'limited in their variability both by the finite number of texts and by the concepts with which their culture equips them to engage competently in the practice of interpretation' (1994: 135). Conflating the views of these theorists, it is clear that culturally-infused gender texts inform a culture's members of how far the gender categories can stretch before slipping over into an undetermined liminal space.

On Turner's use of liminality

The above discussion encourages appraisal of the work of Victor Turner (1969, 1982) a significant theorist of religion and ritual. Turner, influenced by the work of Van Gennep (1960), described liminality as 'neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere …' (Turner 1982, p. 97). Liminal beings are 'threshold' people, those that are interstructural, 'necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these people elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space' (Turner 1969, p. 95). They destabilise and threaten order by virtue of their darkness and wildness (Turner 1969, p. 95).

Turner described the state of liminality as being marked by three phases - separation, margin and aggregation (1982 p. 94). Separation marks the physical or symbolic removal of the initiate/s from normative society. The second phase, margin, sees the initiate/s enter a place where rules and constraints are temporarily suspended. Finally, aggregation symbolises the reintegration of the individual into normative society, often in an alternative form. My primary interest here is to explore the final phase of the rites — aggregation — in part because it helps to explain the space along Australian transgender paths where an individual physically re-engages with the ideas and practices of the 'dominant' monogendered, culture.

Liminality is usually concerned with transformation, or a coming into being, and as a process that is always in motion toward a certain end (Turner 1982: 94). Theorists such as Judith Butler believe that there is no 'end', arguing that gender is 'in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end' (1999: 274). Gender, Butler argues,

congeals over time on bodies and in practice to 'produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being' (1999: 275). Butler's argument resonates with others that have emerged in Queer Theory, where there 'is a plea for massive transgression of all conventional categorizations and analyses … a breaking of boundaries around the gender/the erotic/the interpersonal, and a plea for dissidence' (Stein & Plummer 1999: 134).

However, theorists such as Prosser challenge the queer notion of gender displacement and the fantasy of 'transgender as playful, subversive crossing' (1995: 497). Focusing on the liminal stage, Prosser suggests that rather than being a site of empowerment, for many transgender people it is often an uninhabitable and painful space: the subjective experience of existing in 'non-belonging' being quite contrary to ways in which queer translates into theory (1995: 489).

Despite the theoretical weight of arguments from Queer Theory, the sustainability of liminal identities in the city of Perth, Western Australia, appears to become difficult when the characteristics of liminality are transferred to (or become transparent in) a public setting; findings similar to those argued by Prosser (1995). Aggregation, as a contrast, is the final stage of the rite, the stage in which 'the passage is consummated' (Turner 1982: 94). It is where the individual or group is once again in a steady (although often different) position, is part of the social structure and once more subject to rights, obligations, norms and ethical standards of the given society (Turner 1982, p. 94). It is also the state that most transgender people I worked with strived to reach or believed that they should be striving to reach. On obtaining this state many people told me they believed that they had reached the end of their gendered journey and had therefore become their 'true' gendered selves. In some ways this emphasis accords with what Turner described as the expectation that accompanies aggregation, which is 'to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions' (1982: 95).

As Ekins (1997) has found, there is relief gained from existing within a defined (normative) category, a claim that resonates with my own understandings about transgender people, most of whom did not want to be perceived as an alternative gender. The majority of 'trannies' (a local term of self-identity, and one which is used elsewhere) I interviewed in Perth did not read their gender as having the potential to subvert or expand existing public gender categories. Consequently, the desire to re-incorporate themselves

into the wider community became a key determinant of identity. Most wanted to be accepted as 'normal' and felt as though they belonged *within* existing gender structures rather than *beyond*. The idea of reaching 'home', described by Prosser (1995) as being symbolically linked with 'very powerful notions of belonging' proved to be extremely seductive (485-6).

Those transgender bodies that remain anomalous, defying gendered and physical restrictions, however, are more often punished and disrespected. Many transgender people try to avoid public spaces altogether or endeavour to move through such spaces unnoticed and invisible. Communities of individuals who do not (or do not wish to) pass in monogendered spaces often converge in what have been described as 'safe spaces' (usually suburbs or neighbourhoods in urban areas) that are mainly occupied by people of alternative sexualities[2]. These spaces are often geographically bounded and insular, distinct and distant from neighbouring heterosexualised spaces, and members of these enclaves spend the majority of their time in and around these locations. Smaller 'safe spaces' that are marked off as 'queer' (usually indicated by the presence of the rainbow flag)[3] are also found within wider hetero-sexualised spaces.

Perth, Western Australia - A less than safe urban space and place

> 'I'm sick of people looking at me like I'm an extraordinary piece of machinery…'

There are few 'safe spaces' for transgender people in Perth. There is no bounded geographical suburb occupied exclusively by transgender people, and only a small collection of predominantly queer locations such as local nightclubs. Trannies in Perth spend the majority of their everyday lives moving through monogendered spaces and when the opportunity to retreat to the sanctity of 'safe spaces' is limited, they have little choice but to negotiate 'unsafe' public space. The following narratives — collected during

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[2]   Some theorists argue that these safe spaces – typically associated with gay cultures - also act to exclude certain 'unwanted' individuals, in particular those identities that have not been 'mainstreamed' and commoditised (Binnie 2004; Bell & Binne 2004).

[3]   The rainbow flag has been appropriated by the Queer Movement to symbolise the infinite number of hues sexuality and gender can take (*Sexing The Label*, 1995).

fieldwork[4] make plain this point by revealing that cross-gender behaviours often evoke strongly negative emotions among persons who encounter transgender individuals.

'Contagion'

'Belinda' told me that when she revealed to a close male friend that 'the person he thought was a he was actually a she', he reacted venomously. He told her to stay away from him and his children (having in her opinion) symbolically associated her transgenderism with notions of danger, deviance and contagion. Belinda also told me that she had recently reassured her eight years' old son that he would not 'catch' transsexualism from her. The need to reassure him was prompted by a phone call Belinda had with her parents. In relation to her gender reassignment surgery, her mother had said 'it's a despicable thing you've done'. Her father (who called her by her birth name 38 times during the conversation) told Belinda that her son was 'a very confused boy and I would not be surprised if he committed suicide by the time he was 18'.

'Wendy', another participant, confided that a male friend would no longer associate with her in case 'it was catchy'. Contagiousness emerged as a common theme in narratives. Contagiousness in Douglas's analysis has connotations of disease and illness. When something is contagious one common reaction is to avoid the source of contagion. The transgender person, therefore, becomes the source of danger and is associated with dangerous and undesirable elements. Efforts are made to avoid transgender people in case the non-transgender person becomes somehow sullied or 'dirty' through association.

'Deviance'

'Roberta', as further illustration, relayed that she felt her neighbours regarded her as an'object of peculiarity'. She put this down to the majority of people not knowing anything about transsexualism, and a tendency to view transsexuals as 'sick and disgusting'. She related an experience that brought to her attention the views of non-transgender people and what they perceived as her gender 'ambiguity'. One afternoon, Roberta had a visit from two police officers who were investigating the disappearance

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[4]   I undertook fieldwork in Perth, the capital city of Western Australia, between 1999-2004 as part of doctoral research (see Wilson 2002, 2003). I have continued to maintain contact with transgender people and issues since that time.

of a young boy in her area. Roberta told me that the media had openly speculated that it was the work of a paedophile and she was familiar with the case. They asked if they could come in and ask her some questions. She realised that it was not a routine door-knocking visit when, during the questioning, one of the police officers asked her if she had 'a thing for little boys'. Roberta believed that her neighbours had dobbed her in to the police because she was transsexual and they associated transsexuals with 'paedophiles and the like'.

'Loneliness'

People with whom I worked regularly expressed personal, social and emotional loss following their decision to transition.[5] As theorists such as Douglas and Turner show, cultural anomalies tend to result in those concerned being treated negatively by those who openly support, or are complicit in, constructs of 'normalcy'.

The first time I met Wendy she proudly showed me through her house; included in the tour was a viewing of her wardrobe, replete with dozens of dresses and high heels. I remember another afternoon a few months later when I went to visit Wendy, she greeted me at the door in her nightie, her hair was dishevelled, the curtains were drawn and the house was quiet. She felt depressed, cornered and believed that her neighbours were laughing at her. She told me she could not find any purpose in life and could not get herself out the hole she had found herself in. She explained that she just wanted someone to love and lamented that no one visits her since she transitioned; 'and this suburb is like a mortuary', she cried (FN 1999). On this occasion, Wendy also told me about her wife and children's reaction to her gender change. She observed:

> Anyone would think I was a murderer or a paedo-
> phile or a rapist … If I was, I could understand
> them not wanting to know but I've done no harm
> to anyone … at least I am now what I want to be
> but they will not accept it, you have to conform
> to society and if you don't conform to everybody
> else's way, they don't want to know. In fact I'm a far

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[5]   Some trannies told me that their families would accept their need to cross-dress but would not tolerate further consolidation of female/feminine gender identity. For others, they found family members demanding coherency. Wendy's daughter for example told her 'just be Wendy or Wayne, but for God's sake, don't be both' (FN, 1999).

better person than I've ever been because I don't have that person inside me trying to get out, I don't have that fight in me any more … I'm at peace with me but I've lost so much else because they won't have anything to do with me (IN, 1999).

After her operation, the situation with Wendy's family deteriorated further. Her former wife saw it as the 'straw that broke the camel's back' and her mother exclaimed:

"You've had your breasts done. I'm never going out with you now". And when she found out I had had my operation she snapped and her real feelings came out. "My God, you've castrated yourself, it's disgusting". It's no use me ringing her because she will just hang up.

Wendy stated simply, "I am the person I wanted to be now but what has it cost me to become her?"

'Policing the boundaries'

'Miranda's' wife caught her dressed in a frock. She was 'disgusted' by the sight and made her promise not to do it again.Miranda did not dress in women's clothing for a year or two, during which time she underwent a series of tattoos as a bid to consciously act and be seen as 'blokey'. But the lies were getting Miranda down so much that she approached her wife, confessing that she had been thinking about doing it again (in reality she admitted to me that she dresses whenever she achieves a private moment) to which her wife went wild. Miranda told me that her wife 'tried to make me promise not to do it again. She told me it revolted her and it was a turn off. She compared it to me coming home and finding her having sex with the dog. "That's how disgusting I find it", she said'.

Noticeable in the Perth-based accounts I recorded is that the reactions of family, friends and associates appeared to mirror closely those evident in the wider society. Belinda's experience makes plain the response that acts to disavow her discordant gender identity. She had endured a trying relationship with her parents since transitioning. She regularly attempted to reach out but found them unwillingly to listen or endeavour to understand her situation. On one occasion, she rang me, very upset. It was her

birthday and she had received a card in the mail from her parents. It had a vintage car on the cover and it said 'Happy Birthday Son'. They had heavily underlined the word 'Son', enclosed a $20 note, and a birthday message using Belinda's former male name. She was devastated.

Members with coherent gender expressions police the social and conceptual boundaries of (limited) gender possibilities making sure that those pushing or challenging them are pulled into line by the reactions of others – depending upon whether they succumb to the pressure to conform, the *outsiders* are either accepted back into gendered 'normalcy' or expelled. Wendy's experience is valuable here, in part because, in her words, being transgender was the most discriminated status in Perth:

> They'll accept a disability. They don't look at that, it's something you are born with; you are blameless. Whereas with us they reckon you can change this. If you just went in and had a big hit of testosterone you'd be alright and that's what I get from people. And if it was that simple and easy, that's what would happen for everyone who was transsexual. Others won't understand it. I don't understand someone who is a paedophile, I have no idea, they have something inside them that makes them want to do that but I have no idea why they do it. To me it's one of the last things I'd think of doing. I think the best thing you can do is to do your transitioning and disappear. There is always going to be someone, no matter how careful you are who will make it hard for you.

'Pandora's Box'

'Tamara', in parallel with Wendy, provides evidence regarding how such a discriminatory process occurs, one in keeping with the emphases fostered by Douglas and Turner:

> Gay, strange, weird, that's what they think of transgender people. It's like a Pandora's box, what people are going to think about it. I think it's strange that gays are tolerated a lot more than transgender or transvestites even though society is 100% heterosexual. Why? Part of it I suppose is more exposure to gay lifestyles and stuff and part of it is that gays dress very much like any other person but when a guy puts on a dress, that's just something some

people just seem not to be able to accept. And partly, yeah, a little bit of fear.

Belinda also associated wider concerns about the transgender body with inaccurate stereotyping, commenting that non-transgender people think that transgender people are:

> …drag queens and they think of all those stereotypes on TV. Stereotypical, sick, in your face. Some of the things I've seen on movies and TV, things like transgender people chatting to some guy next to them and then you realise they are in the toilets, standing up at the urinal. It gives a really bad misconception, not real. They don't realise that we can just blend into society. They don't think that is what we want to do.

She further elaborated on what she viewed as society's tendency to deal with 'difference' by lumping it all in the same basket. In this way, 'difference' is marked and removed from the formal, normative social structure and relegated to the margins, marginal beings associated with the 'bizarre and untrimmed' (Douglas 1970: 85):

> I think they clump everyone who doesn't fit into the 100 percent normal category into the gay community. They call it the gay community but they mean anything that's slightly alternative goes into that community. Even people who eat left-handed go into that group, that's what they do, that's our culture. There's right and wrong and it's white is right and that attitude is still really prevalent

That participants' discussed the ways in which societal expectations and rules of gender limited the potential for exploring gender in terms other than male or female was regularly highlighted. As Wendy put it:

> You're either male or female and nobody accepts nothing else. They will not accept that people are different whether they be transsexuals, cross-dressers, whether they are lesbians, homosexuals, people have got this thing that you are supposed to be one thing or the other. Thing is, things have been like that, things have been mixtures for thousands of years, even in Pharaoh times, the things they wore, a lot of them were cross-dressers or transsexuals.

> But people cannot accept it in Western societies, anybody that is not the norm as they call it but then what is the norm? People who call themselves normal, they've got more hang ups than anyone else. At least I know what I am. A lot of them don't know what they are and they call themselves normal and us not normal.

Sarah was the only individual I worked with who expressed the desire to possess both male and female genitals telling me:

> I am an androgyne and wanted to have a neo-vagina and retain male bit. I was refused. If there was a way that I could have a vagina without losing my male bit, I'd do it. But the doctor said no but wouldn't explain on what grounds but you can guess – they just think people should be male or female. The doctor just said 'no way'.

Sarah's desire to play with, mix and create genders was promptly circumvented. She believed that the operation was surgically possible, however, she noted the commitment of most practitioners to maintaining the binary gender system. Sarah's story was an unusual situation in Perth but may have parallels elsewhere.

Wanting to be 'normal'

Robert, a female to male transsexual in his late 30s had this to say about the 'normalised' gender system:

> Just male and female, that's all they are able to see but technically when you think about it there's about 10 to 11 different types of gender. You've got homosexuals who go with male partners. You've got bisexuals who are comfortable with both, you've got heterosexuals, you've got hermaphrodites, people born with two sets of organs, female and male. You have people like [named] who has XXY [chromosomes]. There's transsexuals, there's transvestites, drag queens, there's this, there's that and people don't get the full scope of the picture. They just see black and white, male, female. Whatever in between is freak or suffering some bad disease which is why people don't want to get too close in case it's contagious.

So powerful is the pull of normalcy, that despite his recognition of the fluidity of gender, Robert explained, 'I just want to stand up like any other normal man and take a leak … just waltz in and unzip the fly, stand there and do what I have to do, give it a bit of a shake, put it away, do it up and out. No big deal'.

The origins of these beliefs and understandings can be found in accounts given by individuals of their experiences of nego-tiating life as transgender in a largely monogendered context. Most of the participants I interviewed had experienced negative reactions to their transgender presence in non-transgender spaces. Reactions to gender variance when it is recognised in public spaces will vary in degree. Often it takes the form of a second glance, a snigger or abuse hurled from the car window. 'Lucinda' describes this process below, via an incident that occurred when she drove home late one night from a local hotel:

> I get abused occasionally. Last night, I was driving home and some . . . it was teeming with rain and I pulled up at the traffic lights and these boys yelled out, I had the window slightly open because it was a bit stuffy in the car, and they just hurled abuse at me. I'm not quite sure what it was all about. I mean their primary words of abuse were 'fuck', pretty limited abuse and they weren't content to just wind their windows down and shout it, they had to lean right out and shout it. It was teeming with rain and we followed the same route [down a Highway] and every time we came anywhere close to them, they were, all three of them, the driver wasn't but the other three, they were only kids, just were being abusive. I just thought 'drive on'. I usually ignore. I just didn't do anything to them and that upset them. That really got them going.

Such a description illustrates the anticipatory nature of trans-gender abuse. Lucinda described this incident in response to the question 'Have you ever experienced any sort of discrimination you felt was due to your transgender status?' However, this could have been a random event not directly linked to Lucinda's appearance - a non-transgender person could easily have been the victim. That she saw it as a response to her transgenderism indicates that transgender people are highly alert to the threat of violence, distrust and abuse.

Belinda related another story to me about an incident that occurred in a doctor's waiting room. Waiting for her appointment to be called and reading a magazine, she happened to look up and saw a woman was staring at her. She went back to reading but could feel the woman's eyes on her. Belinda started to panic, thinking that she had been 'read'[6]. She almost got up and ran away but instead she gathered the courage together to ask the woman, 'is everything okay?' To which the woman replied that she had been admiring Belinda's dress and wondered where she had bought it. Belinda told me she started laughing with relief as she told the woman that she had bought it in Thailand and they were not available in Perth.

In some instances, there is no doubt behind the motivation of an assault, a view that attests that the perceived threat of violence against transgender people is undoubtedly real. For example, one individual had been violently sexually assaulted in the mid-90s and the perpetrator told the police, 'I wanted to know what it was like to fuck a freak'.

A short story of kindness

Despite what so many stories reveal about the daily difficulties transgender persons face, some informants told me of situations and relationships where they had been treated with respect and kindness. 'Melanie' provides a wonderful illustration of this point. She had transitioned two years before I met her and readily told me about the reactions she had received from friends and family to her gender change:

> All my friends have been, they have been really good. I've been so gratified by it. Such a good experience. I have heard some pretty horrible stories about transsexuals. I know one Italian transsexual [named] and she's been totally ostracised by her family, they will not have anything to do with her ever again. So I can imagine that'd be pretty tough. My friends are really good, without exception everyone has been really cool about it. A lot of the guys, most of my friends are women anyway, a lot of the guys they're all cool about it they can deal

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6   Being 'read' or 'spotted' indicates to a transgender person that they have not successfully 'passed' as their preferred gender; the 'reader' has identified that the transgender person's appearance is at odds with their biological sex.

with it and everything, sometimes though they are
a bit taken aback, not really sure what to say or how
to act. But they all know me that I'm fairly normal
and pretty easygoing sort of type, so they generally
come around, it's no problem.

The all-encompassing acceptance Melanie received from her
family and friends is exceptional among those I interviewed.
Melanie and others like her are considered extremely fortunate
by other transgender people as most had experiences more like
"Rebecca", a male to female transsexual. Rebecca wrote an email
to me about the reactions to her decision to transition: 'I have had
two close female friends and one not-so-close say to me when I
came out, "You go girl", "I'm not surprised", and "Finally!" but
they were in the minority. 3/1000ish'.

Analytical implications

A noticeable fatalism towards what was seen as inevitable hostility
and rejection appeared to motivate individuals to avoid particular
spaces and people, to strive for normalcy and to choose certain
symbols of gender to wear or surround oneself with. This point
has been reiterated elsewhere. In a recent Australian and New
Zealand survey, for example, transgender participants expressed
the same anticipatory fear of retaliation, with almost two-thirds
of the 253 surveyed reporting that they modified their behaviour
in public spaces (Couch et al. 2007; see also Doan 2007). Most
trannies in Perth learned from other trannies where they could
go and be able to move in peace without the threat of violence,
and most made an effort not to 'flaunt' themselves in people's
faces – 'I don't rub people's noses in it, I just do minimal, nothing
outrageous' - and attempt to appear and present as fairly 'normal'.
They know places and situations to avoid in order to minimise
the possibility of negative reactions. As Tamara explained:

I suppose it's the acceptance thing or I suppose
you've got to get past people looking at you. I'm
six foot tall and I've got a reasonable physique,
so I stand out in a crowd for a start. I guess it's
insecurity and goes back to the public alarm stuff,
I'm worried about what the public thinks, what
reactions I'll get.

While some cultures provide the capacity for social, bodily and
linguistic expression of variant gendered identities, others do
not. Members of a culture will police the boundaries of excepted
expression by disallowing and reinterpreting anomalous identities

to a less threatening identity (Connell 2010, p. 42). As Bordo has argued, members of a culture perform what they feel is culturally and socially expected from them (1989 p. 17). In doing so, movement, values and behaviours of bodies reflect precious beliefs held by a society and bestowed upon its members. Those bodies that remain anomalous are defined by what they are not. For transgender people in so-called 'Western' or southern settings such as Australia, this has often been translated into 'abnormality', pathology, danger and contagion. Danger lies, in particular, in transitional states, where the body is at its most indefinable and, for transgender people, at its most vulnerable to the possibility of outside attack. Consequently, participants expressed that when their transgender identities were visible in public spaces, abuse and rejection were seen to be the inevitable outcomes - whether or not abuse actually occurred, and if it did, whether or not the incident was indisputably motivated by the perpetrator's recognition of the individual's transgender status[7]. Many of the experiences relayed by participants above tend to confirm Cromwell (1998), Blackwood's (1986), and Tomsen and Mason's (2001) assertions that displays of gender non-conformity are strongly linked to physical violence, verbal abuse and social ostracism. Those who 'do not affirm the primary categories of gender are feared, and consequently, they are ignored, disavowed, discounted, discredited and frequently accused of not being "real", that is, not a 'true' person (Cromwell 1998, p. 121).

Drawing, like Turner, on Van Gennep's *rites of passage* (1960) Douglas outlines how transitional ritual is marked by the symbolic death of the initiate's old way of life and the rebirth of the new. While waiting for the new life, the initiate becomes a social outcast, temporarily rejected and feared. During this phase, transgender individuals in Perth are aware of the anxieties their undefined gender creates. Transitioning involves a series of processes aimed at minimising and eliminating conflicting gender messages and for many people, gender reassignment marks the only completion of the passage and the only chance of finding acceptance. As Bolin, also informed by Turner's theories, argued, the resolution for the male to female transsexual 'is the rite of incorporation in which a "neovagina" is constructed and they conform to the

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[7]   Moran and Sharpe (2004) point out the need to be cautious against homogenising transgender experiences of violence, instead arguing that social exclusion and violence needs to be understood as an intersection between 'many different distinctions, of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and so forth, and different contexts' (p. 400).

cultural minimal requirement for claim to the female gender. *Their transformation is one of order out of disorder and normalcy out of stigma'* (1988 p. 71, emphasis mine). As Wendy encapsulates:

> Before the operation you are going through a transitioning period, you're transsexual, you're trans, you're in movement but once you've had the op you're a female, you can't be going through that because there is no going back … so after the op they're not trans, they're not passing anything because that's what it means, like the transatlantic railway, it's passing, you're not doing that, you've gone through that stage and onto the other … you've left that place.

The liminal space was seen to be a genderless phase, a point I pursue elsewhere (Wilson 2002).[8] Liminality was a space to pass through, and aggregation marked the return, occupying a different status, to normative society. On a cultural level, the individual is now expected 'to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions' (Turner 1982, p. 95). The concealment of 'difference' within a body that reflects a coherent gender may result in a sense of belonging and re-acceptance into public spaces. When the body is recognised as an unambiguous gender, it is removed from associations with contagion and deviance. The transgender individual can now assimilate *within* the margins and moves with anonymity. The desire to conceal difference in public spaces seems to override, for many, the option of playing with gender, especially when the categories of man and woman remain so culturally meaningful.

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[8]   Interestingly, a number of post-operative male to female trannies told me that they would rather people be unsure of their gender than to mistake them for or refer to them as a male. In this instance, liminality is seen as the preferred option.

Conclusions

The ethnographic description and cultural analysis I have presented here, most specifically by way of participant stories, shows clearly that most trannies I worked with in an Australian capital city experienced negative reactions to their desire to alter their gender. Often this came from family members and close friends, and resulted in ostracism from their partners and children, and the breakdown of relationships with friends. Many linked these reactions to wider societal discourses concerning contagion, disease and deviance, and recognised that it was the visible anomalous status of their bodies that appeared to inspire fear in the non-transgender population. Gender was described as being fluid and multiple in theory but limited to two genders only in reality. Participants expressed a fatalistic attitude about having to 'fit' within the existing dualistic gender system.

People who existed outside the margins could inevitably expect negative repercussions. The liminal phase was considered by most to be a temporary one, not a liveable gender option. The status is not supported socially in Western Australia, an emphasis reflected in the stories I have presented; stories focused on 'completing the journey' in the pursuit of a 'normalcy' that could only be reached through successful aggregation.

Transgender individuals in Perth had numerous motivations for desiring to reach the point of aggregation but motivations were guided by the recognition that their society demanded the completion and expression of an articulate and stable gender identity, and lacked alternative discourses. The choice was made between the benefits and privileges associated with performing the gender adequately and assimilating quietly into the existing gender system, and to the often hostile and violent reactions to the visible 'difference' of the liminal body. The desire among transgender people to reincorporate themselves into the wider community became the key determining motivation in transitional discourses. Aggregation becomes the main intention, 'the passage is consummated and the ritual subject … re-enters the social structure' (Turner 1974, p. 232).

As Robert so tellingly stated:

> I know I'm getting closer to my final goal which is the completion of my surgery. And from there, things are going to be fine; I'll just blend in and go my own little way.

I felicitously found this image of a transgender 'Redheads girl' on a box of Redheads matches in 2001. Redheads have been making matches in Australia since 1909, and the Redheads logo – a glamorous, heavily made up redheaded female - is a very well known image. In 2001, Redheads held a national competition to design an alternative representation of the classic Redheads image; for a limited time selected images were reproduced onto matchboxes. As I was lighting my stove one evening I did a double take when I realised, with much amusement, that the Redheads girl was sporting a three-day growth. What particularly resonated was the subtle way that transgender had managed to slip its way into households across Australia.

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Anthropology and multi-disciplinary agricultural research: Understanding rural advisory relationships

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Abstract

As multidisciplinary research teams funded by governments and private industries become more common, new spaces are opening up for the application of anthropological techniques and disciplines within these teams. This means that new opportunities have arisen for the engagement and re-engagement of anthropological perspectives in both mainstream scientific research and in the application of knowledge beyond the academy. This article explores the role of anthropology in a multidisciplinary research effort, called Project 3030, involving innovative forage production processes in the south-east of Australia. It describes my positioning within the project as a 'social researcher', the role of social research during the life of the project, and how I sought to fulfil this role by using experience and training from the discipline of anthropology. The key focus of the discussion is on the relationships between the various participants and the ways in which the different types of expertise they brought to the project as a whole were expressed, albeit through often competing forms of discourse. In trying to make sense of this discursive juxtaposition, I sought a conceptual framework that would bridge the power disparities between the different types of discourse at play within the project, and the different types of expertise these discourses represented.

In early 2007 I became involved with a large, multidisciplinary research project in south-eastern Australia for the Australian dairy industry known as Project 3030. The project derived its name from initial agronomic modelling that suggested that farmers could increase their overall profit by thirty percent if they increased the amount of forage they grew on their farms by thirty percent. Prior to this, I had been working in northern and central Australia with remote area Indigenous communities and was brought in to add an anthropological dimension (skills in participant observation and applied anthropological field work) to the component of the research known as 'social research'. Although I had not encountered it in this context before, I learned that 'social research' is an umbrella term for any kind of analytical investigation within agricultural research that deals with the way the people interact with each other and the different aspects of the research. In this particular case, my task (along with PhD candidate and colleague Barbara King) was to study and analyse a type of engagement between farmers and certain rural service providers known as the 'advisory relationship'.

The advisory relationship

The advisory relationship refers to the relationship between extension professionals (including on-farm consultants and other rural service providers) and the farmers with whom they work. The Project 3030 research structure contained three key examples of the advisory relationship and these were bounded by a new research methodology called the 'partner farm' (Crawford et al 2007, O'Kane et al 2008). These partner farms represented a collaboration between the research project and three successful commercial farmers in order to hasten the process by which research results were developed into 'products' or 'research outcomes' for both the Australian Dairy Industry and its farmers. Briefly, these partner farmers implemented promising forage practices identified by the scientific research team and participated in monitoring, adapting and assessing their efficacy on a whole-of-farm systems basis. Each partner farmer was assisted by a regional development group consisting of a number of local farmers, service providers and extensionists from the Department of Primary Industries, Victoria. Importantly, the partner farm methodology dictated that the partner farms did more than simply try to emulate the results achieved by the research team at an individual farm level.

In order to affect a true partnership between the research and the commercial farms, learnings from the on-farm application of the research findings were fed back to the research team in order to inform the present and future direction of the ongoing scientific investigation. Thus, the partner farms were an important aspect of the research in which scientific information from the 3030 research met with agronomic perspectives, experiential bias and all of the complexities involved in operating a high functioning farm system.

Studying the advisory relationships that developed within these three partner farms for a period of just over three years, from January 2007 to the time of writing (February 2010), I was able to discern that they developed from season to season. I was also able to reflect on the different types of approaches to, and conditions of, farming in each of the three regions they were positioned – the north-eastern, south-eastern and Gippsland regions of Victoria, in south-eastern Australia.

Structural concerns

Given the close proximity of the lives and farms involved, the Project 3030 partner farm regional development groups formed close-knit groups. This made them quite productive as far as discussing decisions concerning farm management and the growing of feed (known as the feed-base), yet this same closeness made for very hard work anthropologically speaking. In early 2007, I entered each of these groups as the Project 3030 'social researcher' – a role that, at that time, members of the group and I was unfamiliar with. I had not long taken up the position and was still trying to make sense of how I might bring an anthropological perspective to a research project seeking to affect significant, industry-wide, practice change through action research. At the first meeting I was asked to introduce myself and explain what I was there to research. As I explained my role in the project, I could see that the farmers and service providers within the group were struggling with the concept of having someone in their midst who was trying to understand how they learned about and adapted to new technology, and how they created new ways of managing new technologies on their farms. For those present (including attendant 'hard science' based researchers) this was simply something that occurred out of sight and was of a much lesser order of importance than the technical aspects of the research project. However, as I was new to this field of inquiry, I had neither the social capital nor the type of language

at my disposal that would allow me to explain (or even really fully understand) my task adequately. These skills could only be acquired through spending time with the people involved in the contexts and arenas through which they moved.

I became aware that I had entered a battleground of competing discourses that privileged biological and agronomic approaches to farming over all others. Having grown up in rural Victoria, I had felt confident that I would easily relate to the language used by these dairy farmers to describe their farming practices and experiences. However, at that, and many subsequent meetings at each of the Project 3030 partner farms, I discovered that phrases such as 'more dry matter per hectare', 'mega joules of energy versus fibre content', 'leaf emergence stages' and 'litre per cow production' were the discursive currency in which information about dairy farms and farming were traded. As I got to know the members of each partner farm better, I realised that, in an era of drought and climate variability/change, farmers in South-Eastern Australia have had to become expert mangers to survive and will these days more often than not refer to their farms as 'farm systems'. Therefore, the privileging of agronomic and biological discourse over other discursive paradigms (such as natural resource management, environmental sustainability and nationally popular idealisations of rurality) that might also hold and transfer meaning of a different nature seemed unremarkable. Furthermore, in order to better understand which aspects of this Cartesian discourse had power in the different contexts I found myself in, I was obliged to cover multiple sites of inquiry that were geographically distant and were peopled by literally hundreds of informants. Moreover, these informants were grouped into structures representing, not only regional and local identities, but also different types and combinations of expertise that all contributed to the project.

As illustrated in figure 1, at the level of the project structure, there were seven major groupings of participants representing combinations of necessary expertise that were clustered around specific tasks and functions within the project. Again, in the interests of brevity and building a focus on issues of discourse, I can offer only a cursory description of each of these structural groups in order to enhance the present discussion.

Figure 1: Project 3030 structure.

Research trials, modelling and financial data

Starting from the bottom right hand circle of figure 1 and proceeding anti-clockwise, the research work carried out on trials, modelling (agronomic and biological) and the analysis of financial data from the trial work (systems profitability) was all done at a research facility known as Demo Dairy in the south-west of Victoria. This facility consisted of a working dairy farm that had been sectioned into different areas dedicated to dairy focussed research ranging from animal health to feedbase issues. On the particular section dedicated to Project 3030, two different types of feeding regimes (one focussed solely on a rye-grass base and the other consisting of a rye grass foundation heavily dependent upon growing alternative types of forage to sustain milk production) existed. Each system ran a herd of 36 milking cows and was monitored closely for qualities such as growth levels of dry matter per hectare, quality and consumption of feed grown per cow, and overall levels of milk production. While quite small, the results from these farmlets were then scaled up using modelling techniques in order to estimate their performance on a large commercial farm.

The objective of these two trial farmlets was to research and develop an intensive kind of feedbase system called comple-mentary forage that promised to be able to consistently increase production levels and year-to-year profitability. In order to do this, two different systems, one traditional and the other experimental,

were needed in order to compare and contrast results. Unsur-
prisingly, operating these two systems to the level of precision
needed for this type of research required a great deal of time and
labour. Accordingly, both the Victorian Department of Primary
Industries (DPI) and the University of Melbourne employed
people in full-time and part-time capacities to ensure the success
of the trials. These people represented a wide-range of exper-
tise and occupations such as farm hands, vets, farm managers,
plant and animal scientists, agronomic modellers, rural financial
consultants and extensionists who were all engaged in running
these two contrasting systems with exacting precision.

Dairy Extension Centre

The Dairy Extension Centre (DEC) was a group of extensionists
within the DPI who specialised in the provision of extension
services to dairy farmers across Victoria. While the DEC
operated within all dairy contexts – irrigated and non-irrigated
land and high and low rainfall areas – Project 3030 was designed
to consider only non-irrigated farm systems in the three main
'dry-land' dairy farming regions in Victoria. Consequently, even
though the intent of the project design was to have a full and
productive engagement with the DEC, this was in fact limited
to those extensionists assigned to the project. This emphasis
proved to have major ramifications for the ability of the project
to make an impact on the industry as the DEC, a very influential
group within the industry, was not identified by farmers and
service providers as supporting the project and, thus, the project
struggled to influence practice change in feedbase management
as a direct result. Such a disconnect between the project and the
DEC also had serious implications for the social research work as
our focus was to support and enhance the advisory relationship
between extensionists, consultants and farmers.

The lack of a means to establish productive relationships,
beyond the four extensionists the social research team worked
closely with, proved the cause of much confusion and conflict as
the social research team was seen by the leadership of the DEC
as, on the one hand, in competition with the DEC extension
professionals over funding resources and the right to direct the
project's extension strategy and, on the other hand, as being
critical of traditional extension methods by dent of the fact that
we were theorising new methods and models. This problem
was exacerbated by the lack of common terminology and it was
not until the last 18 months of the project that sufficient depth

of shared experiences and history allowed for truly effective communication. Funnily enough, the experience mirrored my previous experiences in remote area indigenous communities – the main difference being that, in this situation, with English as everybody's first language, the gulf in communication was around the way we spoke about practice and practice change. Learning how to bridge this gap was to become a key outcome of the research and led the way to the development of a limited shared discourse concerning the research.

Project Management Group

The project management group (PMG) consisted of the principal scientists, extensionists and consultants (modellers and agronomists) involved in the project as well as the author and a PhD candidate (working with social network analysis – see King et al., 2009) as the social research team. For much of the life of the project, this body was the key decision-making structure within the project and met every two to three months to monitor progress and ensure that research milestones were being met on time and within budget. Additionally, the PMG made decisions concerning the direction of the research focus (what to plant, how to manage the farmlets, what aspects of the research to concentrate on at any given time, and how to collate the key learnings of the project for the greatest industry impact). During the course of these duties the PMG was also responsible for identifying any problems, existing or looming, within the project and formulating appropriate courses of action to alleviate these problems.

Unfortunately, because the members of the PMG were so grounded in agronomic and scientific discourse, they struggled to come to terms with the human dimensions of the project. For example, they often ignored or deflected criticism by farmers, extensionists and service providers that research goals at times seemed to have little applicability to 'real' farming contexts (such as farming in drought years and the realities of farming with limited time and labour resources). Furthermore, the prevalence and privileging of scientific discourse within the group meant that when the time came for making their results public, its messages to the rest of the project and the dairy industry in general were pitched well beyond the ability of all but the most formally educated farmers who were in a better position to understand them. This process served to confuse many within the dairy industry and heighten concerns of applicability. It also meant that the PMG increasingly looked to the social research team to

provide it with strategies to convey highly technical information effectively to populations of farmers and service providers.

The steering committee

The steering committee was made up of highly successful farmers, representatives of the peak industry funding body (dairy Australia) and key industry professionals. Its main function was to ensure that the research would translate into a benefit for the industry (either in terms of profit or stability) and that the research was being run efficiently and effectively. It was at this forum that much of the politics and conflicts at play within the higher echelons of the dairy industry were expressed to the leaders of the project in the questions and criticism of its direction and ultimate value. Although my access to steering group meetings was extremely limited, attendance at meetings proved fascinating as it was the arena within which the discourse of science met that of corporate business, and often clashed. Social research results were requested only three times during the research and, each time, the prevailing question was, 'how will we get value out from our investment in your work'? What was most frustrating about this was that, when an attempt to elucidate this 'value proposition' was made (which is really about (a) creating reflexivity in the project structure in order to generate shared meanings and a shared discourse throughout the project, and (b) providing an understanding of situated learning in a farming context that could be expressed in strategies for the creation of effective learning opportunities for farmers in both one-to-one and group situations) with regard to the terminology of anthropology and social theory. I was reprimanded for using 'jargon' and required to formulate complex ideas in a very simple language.

While in and of itself, this was quite a good exercise, the translation often oversimplified the message and I was constantly faced with remarks like 'so what' and 'that's obvious'. Conversely, the steering committee seemed to have a healthy respect for scientific terminology and much of the project reports consisted of either of the chief plant scientists discussing the scientific qualities of various species and cultivars of forage plants. Clearly, in this forum, scientific discourse was far more prestigious than that of social theory yet, like the PMG, the steering committee increasingly came to demand our input into the project to generate widespread uptake of a set of Project 3030 forage management principles and practices that had not yet crystallised. This delay was due to the lack of effective channels of communication

between groups within the project's structure and the development of an effective shared language within which to create consensus around project results.

Obviously, the social research team did not have the necessary technical background to analyse the results of the research and had, in any case, been engaged to enhance the ability of extensionists to perform this task. Accordingly, we determined to develop another group within the project structure within which to (a) create consensus concerning the key learnings and messages of the project and, (b) to package these messages in a discursive framework that allowed access to interested sections of the dairy industry from farmers, to consultants, to scientists. This group, supported by the social researchers instituted in the last 12 months of the research, became known as the technical coordinating committee (TCC). The TCC met every two to three months and consisted of the project's key extensionists, scientists and consultant, along with people external to the project such as high profile farmers and DEC representatives otherwise not involved in the research. It was in this group that the project began to achieve consensus around what were the important messages for the dairy industry stemming from the research and the principles and practices that needed to be applied on-farm in order to replicate the successes of the trial farmlets and partner farms. This was achieved through the interaction of the different types of expertise present within the project in forum that was dedicated to the identification of a set of robust, achievable forage options for dairy farmers. The creation of the arena for this interaction was motivated by the need within the project to find a shared voice and informed specifically by a combination of two theoretical approaches – the Interplay model (Gremmen 1993; Paine 1997; Kenny 2002) and the Communities of Practice approach (Wenger 1998; Wenger et al 2002; O'Kane 2008) discussed below.

Partner farms

The Project 3030 partner farms were characterised in each case by a very close relationship between the farmer, the on-farm consultant and the regional extension officer. The farmers, all agriculturists with generations of experience behind them, were very well respected in their areas for their ability to navigate the seasonal variations in rainfall successfully in order to produce large quantities of milk even in bad years. This level of respect within their respective communities was an important factor in

the success of each regional development group as the partner farm methodology hinges to a great extent upon the extent to which the other farmers in the group perceive the partner farmer to be a 'good operator' who understands the implications of using the new technologies stemming from the research results and is capable of providing insights into how to evolve appropriate management practices for their use. In other words, the partner farmers must have the kind of solidity and social capital that comes only from a multi-generational background in farming and a currently successful farm enterprise. Thus, the Project 3030 were locally admired for their farm management skills and quite influential in their farming communities.

The on-farm consultants were also well known throughout the Victorian dairy farming community from their one-on-one consulting activities, as well as regular work with groups of farmers in both irrigated and non-irrigated dairy farming contexts. All three private consultants working within the project were very experienced ex-government employed rural extension officers who had gone into private practice. As such, they prized and traded on their reputations as being on the cutting edge of dairy farming technology and management practice – reputations which had been built up over decades. Consequently, membership of the discussion groups run by them were highly sought after by both farmers and rural service providers as it was considered to be a good way to fast-track farming practice change, gain access to both the latest technology, and benefit from the considerable local knowledge and experience held by the consultant led groups. Hence, like the partner farmers themselves, the three Project 3030 consultants exercised great influence in farming circles and their opinion held much sway.

Finally, the regional extension officers provided the groups with information concerning the productivity of the partner farm system, as well as the performance of the various new forage options and management practices introduced on-farm from the research trials. Extension officers, also known as 'Extensionists' are rural service providers who provide expert advice concerning the technical and management aspects of a wide-range of farming and farm related topics for each farming industry. In the case of dairy farming, some of the more common areas covered are the qualities and accepted management practices of various rye-grass species and cultivars, feed consumption and feeding regimes, pasture cover and stocking rates, cow health and medical problems such as mastitis and infection, milking technology, milk storage and breeding.

However, in this instance the role of the extension officers was the least well defined of any in the partner farm regional development groups, as they would normally lead discussions concerning new technologies and practice change. Consequently, as leadership functions became within the purview of the consultants, the extension officers found themselves in unfamiliar territory. Each extension officer reacted differently to the situation. In the Gippsland partner farm regional development group the extension officer adjusted by becoming an assistant to the consultant and providing the group with any information they requested or was deemed necessary by the consultant. In the south-west, the extension officer became a vocal part of the group and a confidant of the husband and wife who managed the partner farm and, in the north-east, the extension officer, a young man in his early twenties, became a protégé of the consultant (the most senior consultant involved in the project) and increasingly took on what could best be described as an 'understudy' role.

Clearly, owing to constraints of time and space, the necessarily brief description I have provided does not begin to portray the true complexities of the interplay between expertise, social capital, discourse and individuals that occurred during the three year period of study. I have purposefully kept the details as generic as possible in order to provide a tight context for a discussion of my role within the project while allowing for a description of how I sought, and eventually found, a common denominator to engage the different types of expertise and discourse within the project without becoming bogged down in the intricacies of field research.

Social research duties and the anthropological imagination

One of the differences between traditional anthropological investigation and the role of an industry funded 'social researcher' is that the research direction pursued must be initially formulated to be attractive to the particular industry in question and must then, once conducted, be packaged into a format that allows for the presentation of results as 'objectives met' or even as 'products'. In this respect, my engagement with Project 3030 and the Australian dairy industry was no different. From the outset of my research, I was given two main objectives to meet and was expected to develop a number of products from the research for the industry to use to become, ultimately, more profitable. Simply put, these

objectives were to (a) to better understand how farmers adapt and use technologies with complex learning challenges to fit their specific intensive (non-irrigated) dairy farming situations and, (b) to identify principles for the design and evaluation of large development programs which can be used to support change within the industry. In meeting these objectives, I was also tasked with developing and describing a number of processes through which farmers might better understand and utilise the technological advances presented to them as a product of the industry's annual multi-million dollar investment in research, development and extension.

Project 3030 advisory tools

Briefly. the processes that became known as Project 3030 Advisory Tools, detailed elsewhere (O'Kane et al., 2008; O'Kane et al., 2009; O'Kane & Nettle 2009), are derived from a situated learning perspective (Brown, Collins & Dugiud 1989; Lave & Wenger 1991) which posits that learning is a social activity which occurs in a specific socio-cultural and temporal context. The design of the Project 3030 advisory tools was the culmination of three years research aimed at formulating an effective approach to meeting the learning challenges posed by the set of complex forage management principles and practices produced by Project 3030. The approach was grounded, first, in a comprehensive literature review and then in a detailed investigation of key decisions, decision-making processes, and decision-making times. We then utilised the Communities of Practice concept, the Interplay model and social network analysis to construct a series of successful learning opportunities within which participants in Project 3030 could address issues pertaining to adoption and fit-to-farm difficulties. This process was augmented by the use of social network analysis to understand the ways in which different levels of social capital held by participants could influence their efficacy in either passing information on or by blocking it from others (King et al., 2009). Finally, the approach was enhanced by a focus on risk and risk perception which allowed for a package of advisory tools centred on presenting farmers and advisors with an effective pathway for achieving practice change.

The package was designed to combine an effective one to one advisory strategy with the creation of dynamic learning groups focussed on forage management practices. In the first instance, the intention is for advisors to conduct a structured conversation in which farmers are taken through a four-step process. This

was designed to allow the advisor an insight into farmer risk perception concerning feedbase management, and to identify whether or not individual farmers had the necessary management skill levels to contend with the more complex management practices required to gain benefit from Project 3030 principles. If the advisor felt the farmer was not ready or could gain more production through better rye grass management practices, that farmer would be directed to a more appropriate, less complex, way to address feedbase concerns. If the farmer is deemed ready by the advisor then he/she is directed to a Forage Practice Group (see figure 2) in which a discussion concerning Project 3030 forage management principles and practices are discussed and evolved. Again, the advisor whose role becomes one of resource provision and facilitation oversees this process.

In keeping with a foundational approach, the Communities of Practice (CoP) concept (Wenger 1998; Wenger et al., 2002) was employed to provide a framework within which to understand the different roles played by those participating in the partner farm groups. Wenger's concept was useful here because it could be used to imagine partner farm and regional development group members as being either in the core of the group (participating at a deep level in which decisions about farm management were made) or on the periphery of the group (informing the group via their experience, expertise and membership in other CoPs yet not involved in the decision making processes). Indeed, when I came to better understand and relate to the farmers and rural service providers participating in the project, Wenger's CoP concept was expanded (see figure 2) to included a third group of participants who were situated between the core and the periphery (O'Kane et al., 2008).

This new band of association was named the Participatory (or Engaged) group as it described the majority of regional development group members who were neither involved in making decisions concerning the partner farm nor playing a role which brought new information into the group from other networks. As such, the role they played was a filtering one in which information concerning the practice of forage production was considered in light of local knowledge and knowledge of local conditions. Such a process informed the decision makers at the core by producing a thoroughly contextualised discourse which was then employed to plan action. In turn the process was further enhanced by an understanding of the Interplay Model (Gremmen 1993; Paine 1997; Kenny 2002; O'Kane & Nettle 2009) of interaction in which the evolution of practice is sought

through an understanding of the leading role played by rural advisors in the field. In the interplay model, the advisor operates as a mediating practice in which the areas of expertise held by the different social actors within a CoP are made accessible to the group through a process called 'joint performance'. It is this joint performance that generates an evolution of the practice at hand through the interplay of ideas.
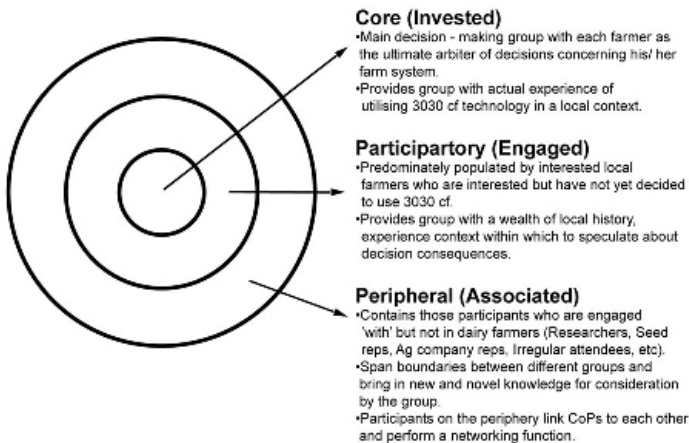
Figure 2: Adaptation of CoP concept for Project 3030 (O'Kane 2008)

In concert with the CoP concept and the Interplay Model, interviews and interactions with partner farm and regional development group members were also considered in light of Holub's reading of the Gramscian notion of the Intellectual. Holub (1992) interprets Gramsci's conceptualisations of the intellectual (traditional, organic and critical specialist) as being positioned across the ideological spectrum – from those working within the dominant paradigm to those opposed to it – within 'structures of feeling' (ibid: 155-160). These 'structures of feeling', while being impossible to quantify, produce a recognisable external form known as the 'intellectual community' (ibid: 162). Intellectual communities are held together by a common epistemological language perceived by Holub as a dialectic. It is through the use of these dialectics that intellectual communities maintain and share their identities, especially in relation to those like-minded persons who have solidified around other co-existent structures

of feeling.

Hence, as intellectuals, both researchers and farmers are subject to the wider flux and flow of ideas that exist in the various kinds of discourse that they come into contact with, both as individuals and as members of collectives. However, as politically active intellectuals, they are contesting the accepted wisdom of the dominant intellectual community and competing with other older and more established intellectual communities who, like them, are seeking primacy. The implication here is that, while intellectuals may create an environment in which change is encouraged, they may similarly create an environment that is stifled (ibid: 24). Accordingly, Holub refers to the way in which structures of feeling linking intellectual communities may be a conduit through which consent or dissent for the ideas of the dominant group may be marshalled.

The ideas and understandings canvassed above were further enhanced by the application of social network analysis (SNA) to the interactions of those participating in the networks created by the project. The SNA approach (see King et al., 2009), was applied by the Project 3030 social research PhD candidate and served to identify the key types of behaviours necessary for successful knowledge transfer within the dairy industry, from research to farm. Through the research into social networks conducted over the past three years, social networks have emerged as important spaces in industry based research, development and extension where information transfer may be either blocked or facilitated depending upon the strengths and types of the relationships within those networks. Social networks also impact greatly upon the ability of any research development and extension project to achieve impact within the industry and to deliver the full benefit of research to the farming community (for a full discussion, see King et al., 2009).

The other fundamental approach employed to develop the Project 3030 Advisory Tools was born of an engagement with Ulrich Beck's notion of risk and the risk society (1992, 1994, 1998). After the initial twelve months of the research had transpired, it became apparent that both farmers and the rural service providers involved in the project held nearly univer-sally negative attitudes towards the agronomic and scientific information generated by the research team (as opposed to the social research team). When I enquired as to why this should be so, the majority of farmers indicated that they saw this new technology, and indeed any and every new technology, through the prism of risk. They had real concerns about the viability and

profitability of the new practices need to utilise the technology and did not have enough information concerning what impact it would have on their farms or businesses. As such, it was clear that, until the question of risk was addressed, the project would have little impact on the day-to-day business of dairy farming in non-irrigated Victoria.

Beck's notion of 'risk society' was useful here as it is predicated on the assumption that society is preoccupied with a perceived level of risk created by human activity (O'Kane et al., 2009). These risks, in turn, are the cause of such anxiety because their origins are understood as being beyond the control of the human populations whose collective actions brought them into being and, as such, can only ever be managed, not eradicated (Beck 1998:12). This conceptual insight aligns well with the lived experience of farmers as they expend a vast amount of their time and energy assessing risk and attempting to create contingency plans for a host of possible events that may be thrust upon them at any moment. Consequently, while not written with the farming community in mind, Beck's words ring true in this context. Holling and Meffe (1996) lend support to this position in their article concerning the pathology of the 'command and control' ethos in all forms of natural resource management. They submit that the 'command and control' approach attempts to either prevent negative outcomes by controlling the processes that lead to these outcomes or by 'the amelioration of the problem after it occurs' (1996: 329). Furthermore, they see this as a generic default position (hence, pathological in nature) in which managers of natural resources seek first to command their environment in the face of risk. This perspective has much in common with Beck's. However, while Holling and Meffe (1996) are concerned with the way in which a narrow focus on 'command and control' can obscure whole system perspectives, Beck simply acknowledges the behaviour as a compelling reality and argues that modern social actors cannot be understood without recognition of the way in which risk impacts upon their everyday lived experience (O'Kane et al., 2009).

An intertwined perspective was used to form an understanding of risk in which the farmer's risk perception became the most important pathway or impediment to on-farm practice change through engaging in Project 3030 forage technology. However, in order for it to be effective there remained the problem of how advisors and farmers might generate an understanding of farmer risk perception given the traditional relationship of advisor/advisee in place in agricultural extension throughout

Australia. This was addressed through the use of a framework for elucidating contrasting worldviews known as the Germinator method (Kenny 2002).

In its original form, the Germinator model works by looking at how the advisor constructs an opinion of the farmer, the farm system and the farm practice, thus constituting the advisor 'picture of how they believe the farmer sees the problem situation with which they are faced' (Kenny 2002: 159). This picture evolves from an understanding of 'three main elements – the farmer as a person – who they are – the farm system – what they do, and the farming practice – the interrelationship of who they, what they do and why they do it' (ibid: 160).

In Project 3030, an understanding of worldview in relation to forage production is predicated on an advisor being able to comprehend the way in which farmers perceive the capabilities and potentials of both their farms and their own levels of management proficiency. Furthermore, in order to determine both scale and scope, advisors must be able to grasp the farmers' vision of their situation while, at the same time, bringing their own expertise and experience at farm and farmer assessment to bear on any advice or suggested courses of action they may offer the farmer.
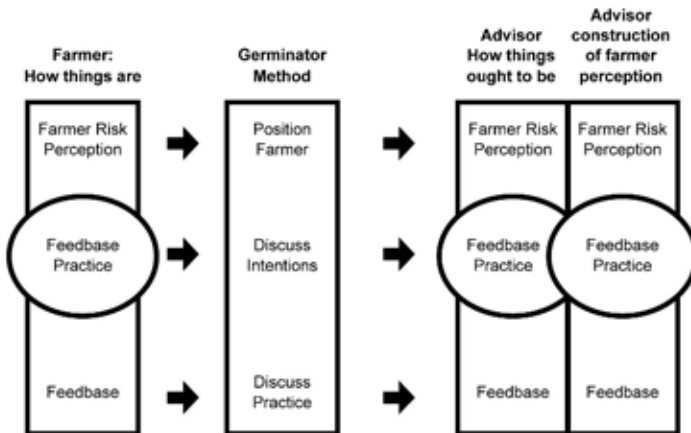

Figure 3: The Germinator risk process (O'Kane et al., 2009)

Figure 3 focuses specifically upon aspects feed base related risks rather than the more general approach contain in the original model. In this approach, the first panel represents the farmers understanding of the farm system in relation to the feed base, feed base management practices and the risk environment (feed budgeting, identifying and meeting the feed gap, etc). The third panel represents the advisor's understanding of appropriate practice given the potential, condition of the farm system, feed base and risk environment. The second panel represents the process of farmer engagement by which the advisor can build a realistic opinion of how the farmer is positioned in relation to his/her goals, risk perception and understanding of the farm system with particular emphasis on feed base issues. The fourth panel represents the new, grounded, understanding at the core of this discussion.

In order to follow the process outlined in the model above, it is necessary to engage with farmers around risk and the feed base effectively and efficiently. To this end, a four-step process was designed to clarify farmer positioning and provide the advisor/extension officer with a realistic understanding of farming practice. Again, this approach has been adapted from the original (Kenny 2002) for the purposes of understanding how risk perception affects farming practice in relation to matters concerning the feed base. The intention behind each of these four steps was to:

> 1. Determine the position of the farmer in relation to the farm system feed base.
>
> 2. Develop an understanding of the farmer's intentions with respect to the feed base.
>
> 3. Engage with the farmer around feed base practice.
>
> 4. Identify farmer risk perception in relation to the feed base.
>
> (See O'Kane et al., 2009 for a detailed discussion)

Following this exercise, the advisor should be able to understand the farmer's perception of risk concerning the feed requirements of the herd sufficiently to enable the formulation of a management strategy supported by both the farmer and the advisor. The intention here is for the farmers to first employ the risk perception mapping exercise to determine whether or not Project 3030 forage technology would be beneficial to the farmer. If this is the case, the advisor then suggests involvement in the Project 3030 Forage Practice Groups (see figure 1) in order to implement the new technology on-farm.

Conclusions: anthropology and practice-based social research

It is important in concluding this discussion to point out the influence of an anthropological approach upon this research and its output. I feel compelled to highlight this aspect of the research, as with many multi-disciplinary research efforts, there is a danger of the work being represented as a kind of generic grab bag of ideas and concepts pasted together with no apparent method. In this case, it is precisely because an anthropological approach was so deeply embedded in the research methodology that it might not be readily recognisable.

To explain, in the first instance participant observation was the primary method of data collection with many days and nights spent 'in the field' (quite literally) talking to farmers, advisors and researchers. This led to an understanding of the rhythms of the seasonal cycle which dictates the when, where, how and what of decision-making concerning the production of forage and the management of farm feed-bases. The consequent understanding of existing decision-making processes provided an opportunity to imagine ways of assisting this process by the provision, not only of more precise technological information, but the experiences of veteran local farmers and service providers in concert with an evolving practice change focused discourse. It was the time spent in the field that allowed me to identify the CoP concept and notions of risk as key elements. This process occurred via an approach aimed at facilitating more successful learning opportunities for the time and resource strapped non-irrigated farmers of south-eastern Australia.

Intentionally anthropological in nature and (in conjunction with an ongoing social network analysis – see King et al., 2009) my work, as a result, produced a suite of advisory tools which took into account the ways in which the farmers and advisors involved approached the adoption of new technologies and the subsequent processes of practice change involved when engaging with new technology. Through three years of engagement with Project 3030 participants, the relationships and understandings that developed over that period have been used to develop a pathway to practice change which is dependent upon a continuing, and context rich, discourse about the practice of forage production.

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DIFFERENT STORIES ABOUT THE SAME PLACE: INSTITUTIONALISED AUTHORITY AND INDIVIDUAL EXPERTISE WITHIN TOPOGRAPHIES OF DIFFERENCE

Brendan Corrigan

Abstract

The identification of three separate sets of narratives and practices that emerge from distinct socio-cultural, geographic and epistemological frameworks sits at the centre of this article: the discipline of archaeology, Aboriginal groups in the East Kimberley, northern Western Australia, and the Orang Ganabai of the Aru Islands, Indonesia. I describe the content and cultural embeddedness of the respective narratives of archaeology and indigenous understandings of origins evident in the East Kimberley and Aru Islands and demonstrate how each of the epistemological and cosmological positions described are relied upon within their respective communities, as a naturalised and typically un-objectified order of things – albeit an order of things that is sometimes questioned from within those communities and certainly between them.

The following comments illuminate the contrasting emphases that underpin the description and analysis in this article.[1]

The first colonisation of the Greater Australian Region, Sahul, is the oldest evidence for the

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expression of behaviour that is distinctly human. This colonisation is central to an understanding of human evolution because it provides certainties where other events only provide ambiguities. The first colonisation of Sahul, perhaps as much as 53,000 years ago … also involved only humans fully modern in their anatomy, as no remains of other hominid fossils have been found in Australia (Davidson and Noble 1992:135).

Some people reckon we come from overseas, floated over here on some kind of a log or something, they reckon we're some kind of Chinaman, well they're wrong, we come from here, you see this dirt [poking finger into the ground] this is where we come from, this country right here, nowhere else, you tell that to your university mob! (Scotty Birrell, Marbarn Man[2], comments from an interview at the Lower Ord River, East Kimberley, 1999).

The evident disjunction of rationality between empirical archaeology and the epistemological doctrines among groups present in the East Kimberley of Northern Australia and the Aru Islands of Eastern Indonesia ultimately arises from the entirely different sets of evidence that are recognised as having authority in the respective cultural and geographical contexts from which they emerge[3]. The construction of what constitutes acceptable evidence, and the way that evidence is used to assert[4] particular

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[2] *Marbarn* is a term commonly used by Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley to refer to communally recognised authority over esoteric religious dogma and supernatural powers. A Marbarn is regularly called upon to divine the nature and cause of illness (with a special interest in whether the cause of illness is sorcery) and is generally regarded as an authority on esoteric traditional knowledge. Elkin (1977) referred to such people as 'Aboriginal men of High Degree'.

[3] The East Kimberley research referred to in this article was undertaken with people of the Kija, Jaru and Kadjerong language groups, whereas the Aru Islands research was undertaken with people of the Ganabai language group, *Orang Ganabai* in Bahasa Indonesia.

[4] I use the term assert throughout to capture the unobjectified and naturalised belief that experts in the various contexts have in relation to the claims they make. I do not intend to suggest that there is anything spurious or unsound about their claims, but rather as a taken for granted 'fact' within the context of their expertise.

understandings between as well as within these respective contexts, is interrogated here for what it reveals about the politics of comparative cosmology.

The materials I present reveal a series of contexts where any given order of things (or set of naturalised understandings) becomes challenged by the existence and assertion of knowledge that does not fit within the established dogma and interpretive frameworks of the respective communities. To understand this more fully, I investigate ways in which archaeological knowledge is questioned from within the specialist context of archaeology and the wider community that supports the discipline, as well as paying attention to the ways that indigenous dogma is questioned from within its internal context. The role archaeological assertions and practise play in eliciting questioning of dogma within these indigenous communities is also interrogated, as is the role indigenous forms of knowledge play in the construction of archaeological theory.

My analysis is anchored in the context of the ongoing construction of cultural identity and pays special attention to the operation of power over the forms of knowledge that are described. Thus, it is the tools of dissemination through global and literate mechanisms, and the wide distribution and reception of empirical rationality within a regime of scientific authority and contentions, that creates a framework for the disempowerment of indigenous cosmology through the practice of archaeology. As I shall show, this disempowerment is not simply, or necessarily, accepted amongst the indigenous groups discussed nor is it necessarily the intention of particular archaeological projects to disempower indigenous groups. Much of the material I present from the East Kimberley and Aru Islands demonstrates a recognition of, and resistance to, this kind of disempowerment. Yet, as I show, expert indigenous voices may be taken as immutably 'truthful' in their host communities, but ultimately the mythological doctrine that underpins this truthfulness is rendered as a type of 'subjugated knowledge'[5] by the empirical regime that archaeological narratives emerge from.

Here, I follow the Collins English Dictionary: 1. to insist upon (rights, claims etc.) 2. *to state to be true; declare categorically* 3. to put forward in an insistent manner.

[5]   Here I refer to Foucault's (1980:80-81) discussion of the subjugation of forms of knowledge, which I describe in more detail below..

The principles I adopt in this investigation are necessarily concerned with 1) the construction and use of knowledge generally, especially the relationship between power and knowledge; 2) the construction of expertise in social contexts; 3) the types of evidence that individual experts adduce as demonstrating particular cosmologies; 4) the embeddedness of those individuals within particular social structures and institutions; and 5) the political dimensions that surround representation of knowledge within such structures and institutions.

Archaeological narratives

> One of the Australian archaeologist's main concerns … is … to document the time of arrival, and place of origin, of the first human colonists (Bowdler 1993:60).

The construction of archaeological models relies on evidence obtained through the practice of institutionally authorised experts, anchored in the field of archaeology, which itself emerges from the globally relevant structuring framework of Western thought.

Archaeological models assume that the East Kimberley and the Aru Islands have shared a substantial portion of their earliest human prehistory, approximately 25,000 - 40,000 years[6], as the same prehistoric landmass that has come to be called Sahul (e.g. Allen, Golson and Jones 1977; Smith, Spriggs and Fankhauser 1993; see also Map 1). The common archaeological term, Sahul, refers to the prehistoric continent that existed when lower sea levels exposed dry land connections between what are now called Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Torres Strait Islands and the Aru Islands[7]

A review of published archaeological models reveals that we may discern four, roughly approximate, periods of relevance to this argument (see also Map 1):

1.   The period immediately prior to human presence until approximately 20,000 years ago, when the continent of Sahul remained essentially physically stable, from the time of first human migration to it (c.40-60,000 years ago), until

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[6]   The exact age of the first human presence in Sahul is not firmly agreed upon by archaeological experts.

[7]   Ballard (1993) provides a detailed discussion of the archaeological construction and use of the term Sahul.

approximately 20,000 years ago, when rising sea levels began inundating portions of it.

2.   The period from 20,000 years ago until 12,000 years ago, when rising seas began to inundate portions of Sahul, but direct dry land connections between the Aru Islands and the rest of Sahul continued to exist.

3.   The period from 12,000 years ago until 6,000 years ago, when seas continued to rise and reclaim all dry land connections between the Aru Islands and the rest of Sahul.

4.   The period from 6,000 years ago until the present, when the Aru Islands have been definitively cut off from dry land connections to Sahul and the geo-physical conditions of the region that have remained essentially as they are today.
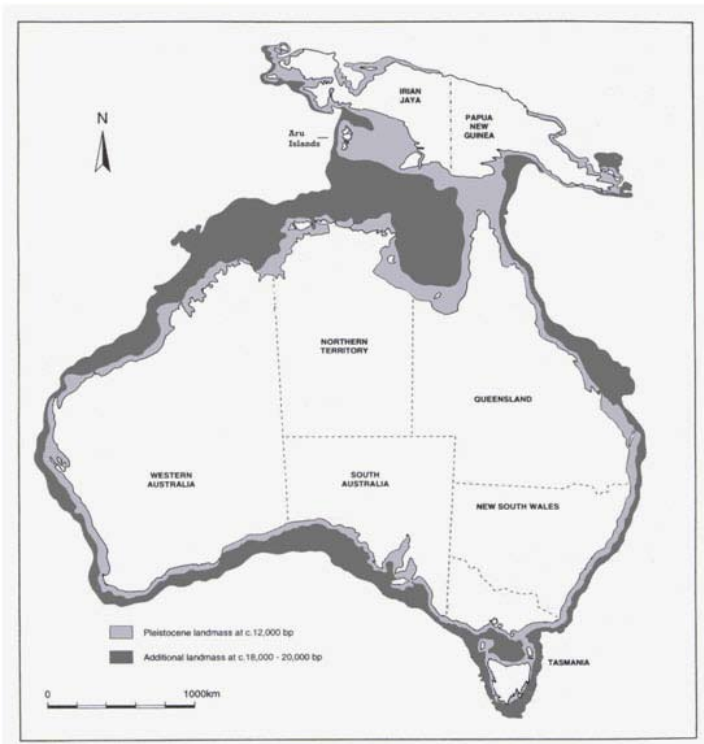
Map 1. Sahul at c.20,000 and c.12,000 years ago (maximum dimensions in a human time-frame), including the Aru Islands, adapted from Murray (1998:42).

Another key assumption and assertion embedded in archaeological models is that the first human beings who migrated to Sahul, and left evidence of their presence, had evolved from primates elsewhere. Current scientific debate argues that central East Africa is the likely location of evolutionary developments that led to the existence of all human beings approximately 175,000 years ago (e.g. Fagan 1989; Trigger 1989). In partnership with understandings about human evolution outside Sahul, archaeological evidence of human activity at a number of locations in remnant Sahul, including the Kimberley Region (e.g. O'Connor 1995, 1996) and the Aru Islands (e.g. Veth, O'Connor and Spriggs 1998; O'Connor, Spriggs and Veth 2005), is commonly relied upon in archaeological arguments as evidence for the first human presence in Sahul in the order of at least 40,000 years (e.g. Allen 1998; Jones 1999; Murray 1998).

In some instances, the age of human presence in Sahul is argued to be considerably older than 40,000 years. Thorne, Grun, Mortimer, Spooner, Simpson, McCulloch, Taylor and Curnoe (1999) have argued that skeletal remains from the south east of central Australia attest human presence for at least approximately 60,000 years. In other instances, evidence for human occupation of Sahul has been argued to be in excess of 100,000 years. Of interest here is the claim made for evidence obtained from the East Kimberley, at a place that archaeologists call Jinmium [8](Fullagar, Price and Head 1996). Scientific concerns with the Jinmium (Gurnamum) evidence in the East Kimberley initially raised likely technical problems with the dates, soon after their original publication (Spooner 1998, commenting on Fullagar et al 1996). More recently, two separate revisions of the Jinmium (Gurnamum) evidence demonstrate that the original claim was simply wrong (Watchman, Tacon, Fullagar and Head 2000; Roberts, Bird, Olley, Galbraith, Lawson, Laslett, Yoshida, Jones, Fullagar, Jacobsen and Hua 1998).

There is also another, separate, claim for human occupation of Sahul of more than 100,000 years (Singh, Kershaw and Clark 1981). However, these data concern an anomalous build-up of fire-derived carbon and do not directly demonstrate human presence. These older dates are not generally relied upon in current archaeological models. The likelihood of Aru Islands to

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[8]   Local Aboriginal people who advised me that the name Jinmium refers to an entirely separate location and that the place that the archaeologists' have come to call Jinmium is actually called Gurnamum.

yield significant archaeological evidence concerning the earliest settlement of Sahul was claimed as early as 1957 (Birdsell 1957). Recently reported archaeological evidence from the Aru Islands asserts that human beings have been present there for at least approximately 30,000 years (O'Connor, S., Spriggs, M. and Veth, P. eds. 2005). Therefore archaeological evidence from both the Kimberley region and the Aru Islands is central and significant to the professional debate concerning the earliest human presence in Sahul (see particularly O'Connor 1995, 1996 as well as Bellwood 1978, 1985, 1996 and 1997 and O'Connell and Allen 1998).

The significance of the above is to foreground the summary details of published archaeological models of human migration to Sahul in the order of 40,000 years ago and the representativeness of the East Kimberley and Aru Islands data in that discourse (see also Corrigan, 2007).

Mythological narratives

In direct contrast to the empirically knowable and measurable prehistory of Sahul asserted by archaeological models, indigenous experts within the traditional doctrines of the Aru Islands and the East Kimberley assert locally relevant models of autochthonous human origins. Significantly, as is revealed below, these locally specific forms of knowledge do not recognise the geographically connected prehistory asserted by the existence of Sahul, evolutionary descent from primates, or immigration from elsewhere.

Traditional Aboriginal doctrine in the East Kimberley claims a direct oral connection with the beginnings of time: a creative period called Ngarankani in the Kimberley (commonly glossed as the Dreamtime) - when the land was formed, people were brought to life and the rules of social life were established (e.g. Blundell 2000; Cane 1984; Corrigan 2001; Kaberry 1939; Palmer and Williams 1990; Toussaint 1995). These socially embedded understandings of the past are reproduced in a range of contexts, public and private – ceremonial and mundane, where aspects of Ngarankani re-present 'immutable truths' (Kaberry 1939:193). Social interactions, and the dogma they perpetuate, form the fundamental principles of contemporary cultural life for the many Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley who adhere to that dogma[9]. Here I pay special attention to the framework of

[9]   I would not suggest that contemporary Aboriginal life in the East Kimberley is entirely dictated by traditional dogma, yet it is the case that those who refer to Ngarankani as the originary point

assumptions that knowledge of Ngarankani is constructed within, as well as the existence of experts in that field of knowledge and the relationship those experts have with the wider community.

Amongst Orang Ganabai[10] of the Aru Islands, the beginnings of time - the creation and the population of their islands, along with the rules of social life established at that time - are explained by them through expert interpretations of what have become commonly known in the anthropology of Eastern Indonesia as Origin Narratives (e.g. Fox and Sather 1996; Lewis 1988; McKinnon 1991). In the Aru Islands, similarly to the Ngarankani example from the East Kimberley, Origin Narratives describe activities of supernatural beings involved in the creation of the physical world and establish a direct connection with the beginnings of time: through orally transferred details of particular individuals, groups, and their activities in the landscape through time (e.g. Osseweijer 1997, 2001; Spyer 1990, 1992, 1996 and 2000, also see Valeri 1989).

Origin Narratives in the Aru Islands are reproduced in a range of public and private contexts and function as a template for contemporary social and economic life amongst Orang Ganabai. I note here that, similarly to the East Kimberley example, the operation of these Origin Narratives in contemporary social life provides a framework of assumptions, reproduced by local experts in that field of knowledge.

The prehistoric migrants who settled an archaeologically constructed world ultimately descend from an incredulously vast distance of time and human evolutionary reconstructions formulated within science. The founding figures recognised amongst the focus communities of this study also emerge from the same incredulously vast distance of time; yet, with a striking difference they are understood as autochthonous - as emerging from local creative forces attested to by Origin Narratives and Ngarankani respectively.

Mythology and expert knowledge in the East Kimberley

The terms Dreamtime and the Dreaming have been widely

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of theory typically do so in a an immutable fashion, as described in Chapters Three and Four of Corrigan (2007).

[10] Bahasa Indonesia: refers to people who speak Ganabai language.

used in reference to the body of knowledge and practices that act as the central organising principle in Australian Aboriginal society (e.g. Berndt and Berndt 1964; Elkin 1967; Maddock 1972; Hiatt 1966; Stanner 1959). The body of knowledge and practices commonly known as the Dreamtime emically attests to the supernatural creation of the world, the peopling of it, and the establishment of all dogmatic social obligations. Individuals in Aboriginal society commonly participate in various special acts throughout their life, which places them in a position of authority over particular knowledge of the Dreamtime (e.g. Elkin 1977; Kaberry 1939; Myers 1986; Sutton 1996). Their historical experiences and community life also commonly bring them into contact with certain understandings of the world that are informed by that body of knowledge. Thus, culturally specific institutions and particular life histories mediate the way in which Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley interact with and employ knowledge of the Dreamtime.

The Dreamtime, or Ngarankani, is the source of particular languages linked to particular places, the origin of kinship terms with their associated social relationships, and so on. For many East Kimberley Aboriginal people, it could be simply said that the dogma of Ngarankani acts as a definitive codification of all truth. Drawing upon anthropological fieldwork undertaken in the East Kimberley region in the early 1930s, Kaberry (1939) noted:

> The Aborigine does not view her country as so much geological strata, as so much sand, stone, and spinifex. The boulders and pools are narungani [sic], they belong to the past and to the totemic ancestors. When this word is used it always implies unquestionable finality on the subject at issue; narungani stamps a practice as legal; it invokes a religious sanction for its performance. Now, when a woman describes narungani, she speaks as though revealing an irrefutable dogma of the utmost importance. (p.193).

Kaberry's words are echoed in the words of Majaju, an Aboriginal man from the Jaru language group, with authority over land to the southwest of Halls Creek. Here he speaks about the immutable truth of Ngarankani in relation to his country:

> [B]efore Dreamtime, we don't know anything about that, that's the first time, Dreamtime, Ngarankani. Nothing before, it all starts at that time, Old people bin wake up, born there, grew up. When they bin born here they learn that law, and then they know

what this country really is (Field Notes, 1999).

Knowledge of Ngarankani in the East Kimberley is inextricably connected to particular land and waters, social organisation in relation to those land and waters, and institutionalised access to such knowledge. The resultant social forms render knowledge as exclusively bound to particular features of the landscape and individuals of authority over that knowledge within the localised corporate structures of Aboriginal society. As Majaju put it:

> All this country, hills an all, you know, they all got a story. My country, I can sing em all, I can dance that country and make you cry (Field Notes, 1999).

Majaju categorically asserts authority over his country within the regime of traditional knowledge that is Ngarankani. He points to the proof of his statements through his ability to demonstrate immutable truths that he has learnt through participation in ceremony and 'special acts', such as initiation into manhood on his country, along with a lifetime of experience in relation to his country. Another East Kimberley informant, Rammel Peters, had this to say about the immutable truth of Ngarankani:

> Blackfella law can't change, one law, that was set down in the dreamtime, you can't change that, fathers and fathers fathers, all the way down the line, never changes, that kartiya[11] law always changes, just about every week, but we got to follow our law, otherwise we might get a spear, kartiya always wants a proof, but we got our own proof. We know where our grannies are buried and what our law is (Field Notes, 1999).

Mythology and expert knowledge in the Aru Islands

Since the early identification of Indonesia as a 'field of ethno-logical study' within the structuralist theory of the so-called Leiden School of anthropology (see Needham 1968) there has been a substantial corpus of ethnographic literature established. More recently, anthropologists employing a range of theoretical perspectives have continued to research and prepare literature on the people of the region. Much of this contemporary and recent ethnographic endeavour refers to early and pioneering research of F.A.E Van Wouden ([1935] Trans. 1968) by way of background and often in reference to extending particular assertions of Van Wouden. Working, at least partially, within

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[11]   Kartiya is a Kimberley Kriol term for a non-Aboriginal person.

the comparative and structuralist framework that Van Wouden established, and which Fox describes as "primarily a study of social classification premised on the assumption that marriage is the 'pivot' to a comprehensive organisation of cosmos and society" (1980b:3) around 70 years of ethnographic endeavour have been undertaken in South Eastern Indonesia.

More recently, Eastern Indonesia has been widely visited with anthropological research focussing on the ways that understandings of origins in particular groups intersect with local concerns. Fox captures the connection of local concerns and fundamental social principles in Eastern Indonesia when he notes that "concerns with origins and all the varied discourse on such origins may thus be viewed as particular articulation of a near universal orientation to the world" (1996:8). Fox's words imply an emic assessment although an etic interpretation may well also apply. Writing in the introduction to Lewis's (1988) People of the Source Fox also states:

> Over the past two decades there have been more than two dozen detailed ethnographic studies carried out in Nusa Tenggara Timur alone. … Thus, instead of being one of the least known areas of Indonesia, the region is now fast becoming a major area of ethnographic comparison. From this comparative research, a configuration of certain general distinguishing features of the societies of Eastern Indonesia is discernible. Some of these distinguishing features are … a concern - indeed an obsession - with the specific knowledge of origins, which establish not only personal and social identity but the very foundation of cultural life (Fox, Introduction in Lewis 1988:xii, my emphasis).

A striking concern with origins in Eastern Indonesian societies is reflected in the anthropological interest about them. The term Origin Narrative has become widely used in reference to the body of knowledge and practices that act as the central organising principle in indigenous Eastern Indonesian societies (e.g. Fox 1977; Pannell 1992, 1996a and 1996c; Lewis 1988). In Eastern Indonesia, Origin Narratives vary widely in their manifestations, from elaborate ritualised recitations (Fox 1988; Lewis 1988; McWilliam 1997; McKinnon 1991) to relatively unobjectified and simplistic expressions (e.g. Dix-Grimes 1997), and can generally be characterised as follows:

> [I]ndigenous ideas of origin involve a complex array of notions. Conceptions of ancestry are invariably

important but rarely is ancestry alone a sufficient and exclusive criterion for defining origins. Recourse to notions of place is also critical in identifying persons and groups, and thus in tracing origins. Similarly, alliance, defined in the broad sense of relations of persons and groups to one another, is also an important element in defining origins. Together all of these notions imply an attitude towards the past: that is knowable and that such knowledge is of value, that what happened in the past has set a pattern for the present, and that it is essential to have access to the past in attempts to order the present. Origins may be conceived of as multiple and access to them may be provided by diverse means. Dreaming, contact with spirits, recitation of formulaic wisdom, the witness of elders, or the presentation of sacred objects as evidence of links to the past may each provide forms of access to the past (Fox 1996:5)

As described in more detail in Corrigan (2007), in the Aru Islands, similarly to elsewhere in Eastern Indonesia, particular communally authorised individuals, or experts, learn, hold and perpetuate Origin Narratives concerning the heroic creation ancestors and other esoterica on behalf of a wider corporate group that their authority over such knowledge emerges from. This knowledge, along with associated expert interpretation and assertion of it, is relied upon in all manner of social interactions in the Aru Islands, ranging from marriage negotiations and dispute resolutions (Spyer 1992) to fundamental assumptions about the origins of resource species and the maintenance of their fecundity (Osseweijer 1997; see also Spyer 2000).

The context of expert knowledge in archaeology and traditional cosmologies

The social structures and institutions in which individual archaeologists are embedded appear relatively easy to characterise. At a primary level, to be an archaeologist almost certainly requires literacy and attendance at university, which is a substantial difference between archaeological and the indigenous knowledge systems discussed here. There are certainly no universities in the East Kimberley or Aru Islands and literacy rates are very low amongst the indigenous communities there. Literacy links archaeologists to global communication and universities link archaeologists to a global history of ideas. These demonstrate their embeddedness in

global institutions and the regime of truth constructed through the history of ideas manifest in Western thought.

The types of rites de passage[12] that enable individuals to be archaeological specialists are graduation from University, practical research achievements, professional publications that build upon previously reported data, engagement with the politics of career and research grants, and so on. Such actions empower particular archaeologists within the mandate of the discovery, consideration and perpetuation of particular understandings about the world. As with experts in the East Kimberley and the Aru settings, archaeologists and their practices are only made sensible through reference to the originary point of generalising theory that is of relevance to and supports their knowledge. An interesting feature of the voice of archaeologists is that individual practitioners also belong to a range of cultural groups. For example, I have worked with archaeologists who are also Aboriginal people. Necessarily, these are Aboriginal people who have attended university and who must necessarily employ scientific assumptions in their work regardless of their epistemological positions[13]. This presents an interesting case in itself

Bourdieu's (1977) argument is useful here. He argues that particular individuals act with 'agency' that emerges from the personal space he calls 'habitus'. To follow Bourdieu, habitus is the sum total of all historic, cultural, physical and learnt attributes of any given person that provide the template for any action or thought that individual might call upon as doxa[14]. This understanding may of course be applied equally to a contemporary archaeologist or a contemporary indigenous person and reveals the ways in which expert knowledge and the construction of its

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[12]   See Van Gennep (1960).

[13]   Davidson addresses this issue where he notes 'Archaeologists make up stories about the past, but not just any stories. … the methods used in making up the stories can be used by anyone with suitable training … In Australia, stories about the time before the continent was invaded by people from Europe may be regarded as relating to the heritage of Aborigines, but very few Aborigines are yet trained as archaeologists. [however] An archaeologist does not become Aboriginal by knowing the past of Aborigines, nor can a person's.

[14]   Here I employ the term 'doxa' to indicate all that can be known by a person in contradistinction to other similar terms, such as 'orthodoxy' where someone may be aware of understandings other than those they hold to be true for any number of reasons.

validity are anchored by individual expertise within the particular social context of each narrative considered.

Bourdieu had much to say about the internalised sense of learnt 'impeccability' in the 'art of living' within particular social and symbolic categories and structures that one aims to master – through 'mechanical learning by trial and error' (1977:88). His theory applies equally to literate societies although his comments are focussed through the example of fieldwork in Algeria. Bourdieu notes that;

> [I]t is in the dialectical relationship between the body and a space structured according to the mythico-ritual oppositions that one finds the form par excellence of the structural apprenticeship which leads to the em-bodying of the structures of the world, that is the appropriating of the world of a body thus enabled to appropriate the world. In a social fomation in which the absence of the symbolic-product-conserving techniques associated with literacy retards the objectification of symbolic and particularly cultural capital, inhabited space – and above all the house – is the principal locus for the objectification of the generative schemes; and, through the intermediary of the divisions and hierarchies it sets up between things, persons, and practices, this tangible classifying system continuously inculcates and reinforces the taxonomic principles underlying all the arbitrary provisions of this culture (1977:89).

In this way, the understandings of the world that individuals within particular communities share are themselves constructed within culturally and historically specific frameworks of power and knowledge. Thus, to combine the arguments of Foucault and Bourdieu, the proposition adopted here is that each and every individual, and community, in the world acts within a particular version of reality that differs from place to place and time to time - being ultimately informed by specific understandings that have been constructed through time and within the institutions (either formal or informal) of the communities they inhabit. It is from these understandings of episteme and habitus that the narratives and practices of individual experts appear and become embodied.

Archaeology, Aru and the East Kimberley each have persons of recognised expertise in relation to the knowledge systems of

which they are a part. Fieldwork undertaken for this project, in Aru and the East Kimberley, focused on the role and status of those individuals and their assertions. Whilst constrained to act within certain parameters of authority established by the community they live within, the various individuals who provided the material for my thesis are also informed by their personal politics, actions and life histories (Corrigan 2007).

As above, notions of the past and human origins are embedded in the cultural totalities of everyday communal practice, as well as ritual contexts, ceremonial institutions, and the minds and voices of particular individuals. The theoretical approach taken here combines the arguments of Foucault outlined above, particularly with regard to the operation of institutional power over knowledge along with the differentiation of that power and knowledge, and also emphasises the agency of particular individuals within those institutional structures. The value of this approach is that it emphasises both the doxa and orthodoxy represented by individual understandings re-produced in the field of social practice.

Landscape as evidence and topographies of difference

One of the primary forms of evidence called upon by experts in archaeology, and amongst traditional Aru and the East Kimberley societies, are features of the landscape. The proposition that any particular landscape is culturally constructed and understood in certain ways by certain individuals is clearly demonstrated in a range of writing on the subject (e.g. Bender 1993; Fox 1997; Morphy 1993, 1995; Hirsh and O'Hanlon 1995). What is significant here is the way in which particular and overlapping interpretations of the landscape become adduced as evidence of various cosmological positions (e.g. Hirsch 1995; Layton 1995 and McWilliam 1997). Such overlapping interpretations of features in the landscape, or different stories about the same place, serve the dual purposes of, firstly, confirming the veracity of the cultural values being utilised, and secondly, opening a space of contestation and dispute - which is readily amenable to analysis (Corrigan 2007; see also Morphy 1993, 1995 for Australian Aboriginal examples and Osseweijer 1997, for an Aru example).

The quotation from Phyllis Kaberry (1939) referred to above clearly shows that particular features of the landscape, as described to her by Aboriginal women, demonstrate the immutable truth of Ngarankani. Boulders, hills, waterholes, particular species of trees and animals, and so on, all testify to the ongoing

and originary creative forces of Ngarankani. The way in which the landscape acts as "palpable proofs of mythical times" (Levi-Strauss 1966:242) amongst East Kimberley Aboriginal people is clearly demonstrated.

The same palpable proofs of mythical times in the present are evident in the Aru landscape. Amongst Orang Ganabai, particular features of the landscape require culturally specific expertise to apprehend their 'true' meaning and at the same time serve as enduring proofs thereof (Corrigan 2007, Ossewijer 2001, Spyer 1992 and also). The ways in which culturally specific interpretations of the Orang Ganabai landscape thus both reflects and confirms mythological understandings, and contemporary social forms derived from those understandings.

The archaeological technique of 'reading the landscape' (a term borrowed from Benterrak, Muecke and Roe 1983) employs the abstraction of empirical science to confirm its veracity and is constantly under dispute in the light of new evidence becoming available. Significantly, scientific method is fundamentally structured by the principle of new evidence feeding back into revisions of original assumptions, as demonstrated in the various published archaeological discussions that are reviewed in Chapter Two. In contrast, Aru and East Kimberley interpretations of the landscape are carried out within a framework of assumptions that rely on the logic of unchanging dogma.

It is common in Aboriginal Australia for newly encountered evidence to be interpreted within pre-existing understandings framed by the dogma of the Dreamtime, for example, where Myers (1986) notes that a previously unknown boulder discovered in a creek bed following heavy rains created anxiety amongst its discoverers - who were unsure if it might be 'dangerous'. This discovery required expert interpretation that established the boulder was part of a nearby dreaming complex (see also Morphy 1993:234 for a similar example). This type of expert interpretation from within such a naturalised framework is widely reflective of East Kimberley practices and evidences the way in which existing dogma is brought to bear on new discoveries. The scientific methodology of archaeology could be said to act similarly, with the important distinction that a new discovery is likely to cause a revision of existing understandings rather than the East Kimberley or Aru confirmation of existing truths.

Excerpts from an interview with Indigenous traditional owner, Paddy Carlton, at Gurnamum (aka Jinmium)[15] help to illustrate my meaning here.

Brendan Corrigan (BC): Well wait now, we'll start up and introduce you to this camera. Hello, I'm sitting here with Old Paddy Carlton, we came out here to have a bit of a yarn, put it on video and see what kind of things are happening here. This is Old Kwanbany, bush name, we are sitting on his father's country, he got this country from his father, proper Dawang [Miriwung Language term which is commonly glossed in English as Traditional Owner] and that father got this country from his father first, all the way like that. So this is the traditional country for this Old Man, all round this whole area and this place is called Gurnamum.

Paddy Carlton: yeah.

BC: and that's a little bit of a funny story that, because this rock what are we sitting at right here is the place where Richard Fullagar and his archaeological team have been doing their excavations.

Paddy: Right here.

BC: Right here, so this is the place, right here, [indicates square on the ground c. 1m x 1m], where the Richard Fullagar team did their excavations and dug their material, and took the samples off. Took them down to Sydney and put them through dating techniques, and came up with their archaeology story. They've put everything back now, as you can see, that's right in't it.

Paddy: Mmm

BC: But really, this place is Gurnamum, not Jinmium, which is what they have been calling this place.

Paddy: It's Gurnamum.

BC: Yeah, but not Jinmium, eh?

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[15] The full transcript of this interview is on pages 149-162 of Corrigan (2007). The interview was undertaken on 18th of August 1999 and is transcribed from video footage.

Paddy: No, Jinmium, is right down that way [points approx. S.S.E].

BC: Oh yeah, different place, eh?

Paddy: Billabong.

BC: Ah yes.

Paddy: That's a Jinmium. I wasn't here to tell them this country is the Gurnamum, two different places you know.

BC: Ah yes.

From the very outset of this interview it is clear that archaeologists and Paddy Carlton have vastly different understandings about this rock outcrop. The difference in these understandings are emphasised throughout the following interview material and made apparent already by the different names the place is known by, which is especially significant where Paddy advises that the archaeologists have inadvertently named Gurnamum after another place nearby, known to Aboriginal specialists as Jinmium.

BC: so this place here, you got all the story and everything for it, from Blackfella side, in't it?

Paddy: yeah

BC: but, like, we don't have to put that story on tape, I can say that on that video there, I can say that, you have your own story, like a corroboree and song and everything, but maybe you don't want to put it on the videotape, that's right in't it?

Paddy: yeah, long as you,... long as you... Hmmm ...

BC: Well, I'll say like this, so it's clear, when we put anything on this videotape, this word can go anywhere, he's got to be open.

Paddy: hmmm, long as you... that song... that's the one you can't put em.

BC: you can't put em down, well, that's OK, but we can say like that, you know. You've actually got a song and everything for this place here, but you don't have to put them down. Because

that secret and not supposed to go out open. So, I'm saying that the right way in't it?

Paddy: yeah

BC: you got em, all the song and everything, but you can't put them, only open ones.

Paddy: that's right

Paddy: Ahh, ha ha haaa [big smile and a chuckle]! ... And, umm, he bin find that, what they call em, Junba [corroboree], that young fella now, from Queensland. [starts clapping sticks in time] Gurnai, Jipidgurnai Gurnamandai, Jipidgurnai Gurnamandai. That Jipidgo bin come round here and finish here, from that Red Ochre place.

BC: Oh yeah. Well careful now, anything you put down on here, that's open. He can go on there, but everyone can look at em.

Paddy: Yeah, well everything bin go Mama now, finish, Mama, they bin turn into rock, finish, some fella bin turn into bird. That Jipidgo now, bin turn into bird.

BC: Ah yeah

Paddy: Jipid [said in high pitch, imitating bird], Jipid, every night he sing out.

BC: Ah yeah, he makes that noise, eh?

Paddy: Yeah

BC: That's him singing out?

Paddy: Yeah, that's him, this fella here [gestures to the rear of the film area]

BC: Yeah, well thinking about that archaeology side now ...

Paddy: Well, this one here [pointing to the rock outcrop where the archaeologists excavated] that's a real Ngarankani.

BC: Proper Dreamtime eh?

Paddy: Dreamtime.

BC: That's how this rock got here?

Paddy: This rock, bin turn into rock, all that, everything!

BC: So, all these little dot dots everywhere here [points to approximately 40 circular pecking marks on the rock face, referred to by Fullagar et al (1996) as 'the oldest known human art form on the planet'

Paddy: Yeah, no more bin ..., we never do that, old people never do that, No! [shakes head emphatically]

BC: No Old people did that [made the marks], they just come there as part of it?

Paddy: That's the Mama

BC: Mama, that's when it turn into rock?

Paddy: Turn into Rock!

BC: Oh yeah.

Paddy: even that one [gestures behind the camera] Jipidgo.

BC: Oh yeah, that's him there now, huh, where he bin turn into rock, he gone Mama, eh?

Paddy: Yeah. ... and another place, might be you go some time, where he come from, where that Jipidgo bin come from, this fella here [gestures to rock behind camera], there's one rock there, middle of the ... saltwater dis side, right on the road, he got a hole on top, that where that boxer was camping, and you look up there, he got a hole there, that's where he bin get up there, he bin listen, ahh, he bin think Gurnamum, that's why he bin come all the way.

BC: Ah, he know that something was here.

Paddy: yeah, he knows something was here.

BC: Ah, like that, Ngarankani time, eh?

Paddy : Yeah, Ngarankani.

BC: yeah well what I'm thinking about, the reason why I asked you to come out here, from that side what I'm doing, all the university side of things, and that story what I've been talkin about, how Blackfellas have got one story here [holds up hand] and the white fellas have got a different story here [holds up other hand], for country, you know.

Paddy: Yo! [yes]

BC: how that Country started up.

Paddy: Yo.

BC: So, I was telling you I'm really interested to find out what Blackfellas are really saying, on this side, how country come into it.

Paddy: well, you're here now [here Paddy clearly demonstrates his naturalised belief in his own authority to supply the definitive version of Aboriginal understandings about this country by bringing me there and telling me].

BC: yeah, I'm right here now, listening ...

Paddy: well, you know that story, different story this way, well he got a different story that side, in't it, like a that.

BC: yeah well. different sort of Aboriginal people that I'm working with, all that Old Majaju, and all that Lissadell mob, Juwuru mob, and all that nother mob, well they bin put em all down different story, different story about how country started, where that skin group come from, all that Daiwul and all that

Paddy: yeah, well I can tell you what sort of story you know, only one place, where that Jipid bin walk away from there, follow that track, this fella here, come right here, when he bin get here, everything bin finish, turn into animal.

BC: Ah, Yeah, all turn into animal.

Paddy: he bin Mama here, that mean he's here, that one, that

one. [points to rocks in the immediate vicinity] and old people never do that [points to the pecking marks on the rockface].

BC: so old people never drew that, see that's the kind of thing I want come here and sit down with you about, because right here on this rock we got two kind of ideas, we got that archaeology side and then we got the Blackfella side, you know, two different ideas, running two different ideas.

Paddy: that's right.

BC: so, I'll just talk about that archaeology, what I understand about it. When they come along and dig that hole, put that hole right down here and they take away all those pieces, might be like that [picks up a piece of charcoal off ground] charcoal, and they want to get that piece of charcoal like that.

Paddy: [interjects] he didn't, he didn't show em me what he bin get em here!

BC: Ah Yeah

Paddy: Where he bin take em longa ... [thinks hard] ... Sydney for Solar machine, but he didn't show me! [Paddy shows a prettyy sophisticated understanding of what the archaeologists took samples for by calling their Thermoluminescence dating machine a 'solar' machine, one assumes this is briefing material provided by the Archaeologists making its presence felt]

BC: I think they took something like, they get a sort of a pipe and put it in the sand, and then they get that sand. They're doing something like a new archaeology, that one, when they get that sand, and count up all that sand, and find out how long that sand bin sitting there underground, that's the way they do em.

Paddy: Ah

BC: well, when they finish that, they come up with their idea, I read about that idea, where they reckon Aboriginal people bin living in Australia for something like more than 100,000 years.

Paddy: that's right.

BC: and then lately, they had to change that around because they got a lot of things wrong and they got to keep on trying to fix him up. But the thing I'm really interested in is what do you reckon, like about that story, like where do you reckon Blackfella's come from?

Paddy: I don't know. What's that rock, that mob find them, if they are gone, they got to bring him back and leave em here.

BC: Oh yeah, so anything you take away you got to bring him back here and put back?

Paddy: Yeah, like the one we got here, you wanna have a look?

BC: well wait now, we can have a look in a moment. Just while we got this video here, that question I want to ask you is the sort of thing I've been talking to you about lately, you know? Like, that idea that Aboriginal people come from overseas somewhere, come in to Australia and move around, find a different place in Australia, well that's the way they look at it on that archaeology side, what you reckon of that idea?

Paddy: Well, Ummm ... who bin say that?

BC: Well that's the story that them archaeology mob bin writing about all the time, that's their line, that's the way they think about it.

Paddy: Yeah??

BC: they think like, Aboriginal people come from overseas somewhere, come into Australia and move all-round to diffe-rent places, early time, first time.

Paddy: well that's the first time I listen to that!

BC: ah yeah, you didn't understand when I was talking before, eh?

Paddy: I never listen to that, only old people's story!

BC: oh yeah, well that's the kind of story, like Richard Fullagar and all those guys, all different archaeologists, working all over

Australia, well, their whole idea, what they're thinking about, is that Aboriginal people must have come from overseas somewhere and came into Australia, and then go round all that different area, and fill up that country, and live there, you know?

Paddy: Hmmm

BC: and that's where they first come into it.

Paddy: but, ... oh, ... well we ought to know what Ngarankani bin come from this country here, from this island, you know, come this way, dingo, umm, that snake now, and this old fella, got a big mob of wife.

BC: Oh yeah

Paddy: yeah, that's the one, they been draw there. That nother one cave, I bin show you there, and that one I bin show you, nother cave there.

BC: Oh yeah, right back there?

Paddy: yeah.

BC: ah, right out on the flat, eh?

Paddy: yoway [yes]

BC: yeah, well that's the question really, where Blackfella bin come from?

Paddy: they bin finish here and one mob keep going that way. What that country, New Guinea?

BC: overseas, that New Guinea?

Paddy: yeah, any Blackfella living that way?

BC: yeah, Blackfella living there. What, he the same Blackfella like Aboriginal people, or he different?

Paddy: well, like Aboriginal people.

BC: ah yeah

Paddy: yeah

BC: over there in Papua New Guinea. What, you reckon that law been travelling through here and keep on going to Queensland?

Paddy: well, some people bin finish here, turn into rock and into some kind of animal you know .

BC: yeah

Paddy: this fella bin come along [points to rock behind camera] finish here, everything bin finish here.

BC: yeah

Paddy: All bin have em big Wamalu

BC: oh yeah, like a big corroboree?

Paddy: Yeah, Aboriginal Corroboree.

BC: oh yeah

Paddy: this billabong [points approximately east]

BC: ah, close up here, eh?

Paddy: yeah

BC: yeah, well, that side of it, that's like that Ngarankani business, eh?

Paddy: that place, you get water there and water them on the head.

BC: Oh yeah, you put a water on people there [a practice where a person with a right to do so may introduce a person to the spiritual guardians of that country by putting water from that country on them]

Paddy: Billabong is long like this, right up to ridges, that far, that where he bin campin there, that Blackfella snake now,

him there, him snake and snake again that Billabong [indicates with hand how the billabong's path resembles the action of a snake moving], long one, right in a hills, where people campin there.

BC: yeah, well, I might come at it a different way now, by asking this question. How long have Aboriginal people been in this country now?

Paddy: Here?

BC: yeah, like right here, how long have you had any people on your country?

Paddy: this country, oh, I couldn't tell you, I bin nothing yet.

BC: before your time?

Paddy: yep

BC: before your father's time?

Paddy: yep, before my father, only my grand father, father for my father.

BC: oh yeah, before him too, might be?

Paddy: yeah before him too.

BC: keep on going?

Paddy: before everybody!

BC: before everybody?

Paddy: yeah

BC: yeah

Paddy: that's the story there now, before him, all the way along.

BC: oh yeah, right back, Ngarankani?

Paddy: right back to my father, right back to me

BC: ah yeah, coming down right to you and your sons and kids.

Paddy: yeah, like a that.

BC: following for father.

Paddy: Yoway!

BC: So what do reckon, it might be fair to say that Aboriginal people have been in this country since the Dreamtime?

Paddy: [nods] Dreamtime!

BC: what, that's the first time?

Paddy: that's right!

BC: what, anything older than that Ngarankani, more older than that Dreamtime, or what?

Paddy: no more

BC: no more?

Paddy: no more, what, older than the Dreamtime, that people were there lately, but that Ngarankani time, no more bin Blackfella or kartiya, nothing.

BC: nothing , eh?

Paddy: I just tell you now, what they call that … Noah

BC: Noah, I don't know

Paddy: Noah time

BC: I don't know, must be really old time or what?

Paddy: [points upward]

BC: Oh, might be you talkin heaven, like that God side, all

the Christian Mob, God Mob?

Paddy: yeah, what time that been happen, Noah time?

BC: I don't know.

Paddy: you know, what this country was covered with water, long time ago.

BC: Ah yeah, big flood

Paddy: yeah

BC: what, that's Ngarankani or what?

Paddy: That's the Ngarankani, Ngarankani bin come up!

BC: Oh yeah

Paddy: It's in song. That's the way we living, like that, two young fella or three young fella, when they're ready we can take em out bush with that song now, take em from mother, this one [gestures to indicate circumcision]

BC: Ah, secret one, like when you make a man?

Paddy: yeah

BC: well I guess there's not much more we can put down, you know, the one thing that I came up here to the Kimberley to do was talk to Aboriginal people, about what they reckon about archaeology, you know, like whether that archaeology is any good, got the right idea, or the wrong idea?

Paddy: what's that?

BC: that archaeology, you know, when I came up here that's what I wanted to talk to people about. Like that nother people and yourself. Like that Majaju, and all the Lissadell Mob. I'm trying to find out, well what they really reckon about that archaeology? He work the right way with Aboriginal side, or he different from Aboriginal side? I reckon, well Blackfella thinking different, like that Ngarankani side, he can't work together with that archaeology side really.

Paddy: No. Blackfella different!

BC: But, that's alright in't it? That's the whitefella idea, they can have their own idea in't it?

Paddy: Yeah, that's right.

BC: And you mob have your idea again. I just don't understand what I can write about yet.

Paddy: You write like this, you had a look at this place, like this one here [points to peckings on rock face], and no Blackfella bin do that, no, that's a Ngarankani!

BC: Well, what do you reckon? Pretty good to have your own say, or what? Because people all over the world are looking at this rock.

Paddy: yeah?

BC: Yeah, in the Newspapers and everything.

Paddy: well he really Dreamtime, Ngarankani.

BC: And so, what, you're worried for this place because its Ngarankani?

Paddy: Yeah, really Ngarankani.

BC: Hmmm

Paddy: This one and that one [points to rock behind the camera]

BC: yeah, well a few yarns I had with David Newry at that language centre, about the idea from archaeology that Blackfella has come from overseas and come into this area ...

Paddy: yeah he told me. He got that book thing, newspaper, I don't know where from.

BC: Oh, you've seen that newspaper, eh? [news clippings that describe the archaeological excavations at Jinmium, which

David Newry, Director of the local Aboriginal language centre, keeps on file]

Paddy: yeah, he bin show em me that newspaper

BC: I'm not sure which one, might be out of the Australian newspaper?

Paddy: We'll have to ring up for that, white fella bloke, whatever bloke bin give it to him, we'll ask him that story for that one. How he know that Blackfella come from overseas, here?

BC: yeah, but what you reckon about an idea that archaeology can count how many years Blackfella have been here, you reckon that a good idea or what?

Paddy: this country?

BC: yeah, well this country, right here might be

Paddy: well, I couldn't tell you how many years Blackfella was this country. But they tell me that Blackfella was living here, you know, the sky, it was low, not high, but low fella.

BC: the sky was only low, eh? OK

Paddy: that true, or nothing?

BC: I don't know, up to you, you mob entitled to your own ideas.

Paddy: that's what I heard again from old people, might be true, by crikey it might be true alright!

BC: Well, you follow all the Ngarankani business. That's all your idea there in't it? You follow for that side in't it?

Paddy: yoway!

BC: right or wrong?

Paddy: no more bin white fella, no more bin bullocky, no more bin horses, nothing

BC: just all Blackfella?

Paddy: just all the Blackfella .

BC: So, you mob got a different idea for this place from all the archaeology people?

Paddy: no more, that's a good idea!

BC: That's the main one I got to write about, see, in the University side. That University, he different again, we do all kind of crazy things at University

Paddy: yeah?

BC: True. But I'm really trying to understand about Blackfellas and archaeology, two different ideas, eh?

Paddy: Anyway, let's think about it again sometime ...

Politics, power and reflexive struggle

The generalised and differentiated operation of power over knowledge as manifest through the agency of individuals, which has long been an emphasis of anthropology is highlighted by Moore (1996):

> We have all been aware in the social sciences of the impact of the critique of the Cartesian cogito and the unravelling of grand narratives and totalising theories, variously labelled post-modernism, post-structuralism and/or deconstructionism. The debates sparked by these critiques have led to a revision of the role of the academic and/or the expert practitioner. One consequence has been a call for a revaluation of the actor's or community's point of view, as part of a more general call to specificity, to the local. The clear demand is that the politics of positionality and location should be recognised and addressed (Moore, p.2).

Evident here is a warning against assuming any totalising theory of human action and encouragement to an approach of understanding social practice through detailed attention to its specificities. Moore also notes that whilst anthropologists have

long prided themselves on their grasp of local circumstance and local perspectives, the discipline of anthropology remains grounded in the geo-economic politics of Western thought, and that, 'Western social science consistently repositions itself as the originary point of comparative and generalising theory' (1996:3; see also Marcus and Clifford 1986).

In consideration of Moore's concerns, I rely on the proposition that all of the voices that have constructed certain origin narratives are speaking from a position of an imagined originary point of comparative and generalising theory. Such a position recognises and re-enforces my argument that all representative voices are essentially products of an individual's embeddedness in the ontology, epistemology and history of knowledge in their respective communities. Such an argument also returns to the general proposition of differentiated knowledge and power at work in the construction of communally authorised knowledge (Foucault 1965), as manifest in the practices of particular individuals (Bourdieu 1977).

One of the key links between archaeology and the cosmological positions in Aru and the East Kimberley is the way in which archaeological knowledge contributes to the identity of the people who are, to use a phrase that has become popular in Australia against the background of Aboriginal land rights, 'traditional owners'[16], of the land from where such archaeological evidence is obtained.

Working from the position that archaeology renders mythological knowledge as a type of subjugated knowledge[17], it follows that archaeology is constructed as having more authority in the wider context, particularly in the context of literate global communication from which the discipline of archaeology emerges. As such, the way in which archaeology contributes to notions of identity in the East Kimberley and Aru Islands is of great relevance to this discussion.

It is well demonstrated that contemporary identity amongst particular groups often refers to a particular past of remembered traditions and practices (e.g. Keesing and Tonkinson 1982;

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[16]   Arising in large part from reference to the Commonwealth Native Title Act (1993) and related legislation, such as the Northern Territory Land Rights Act (1976), the term Traditional Owner has developed into a commonly used reference for Aboriginal people with traditional interests over specific places in Australia.

[17]   Foucault 1980:81-82.

Linnekin 1992), sometimes valorised (e.g. Linnekin 1992:259-260), often a hotly contested domain open to symbolic and practical forms of exploitation by inter and intra group interests (e.g. Keesing 1989; Spyer 2000), inextricably linked to ongoing cultural and quotidian affairs (e.g. Tonkinson 1992, 2000; Morphy 1993, 1995; Fox 1996; Spyer 2000), part of ongoing political processes (e.g. Keesing and Tonkinson 1982; Tonkinson 1992, 2000; Linnekin 1992) with such politics demonstrated through, and observable in, particular readings and overlapping interpretations of culturally specific landscapes (e.g. Bender 1993; Morphy 1993, 1995; Rumsey 1994; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Fox 1997).

Linnekin (1992:249) notes 'the premise that culture is symbolically constructed or "invented" has become a hallmark of social-science scholarship in the postmodern era'. The unsettling result of this apparently well-founded interest is what Linnekin terms acceptance 'that all cultural representations - even scholarly ones – are contingent and embedded in a particular social and political context' (1992:250). In this way, she argues for rejection of a positivist and objectivist search for essentialisms in preference to a de-centred theoretical rubric that deconstructs the various influences that give rise to particular representations. I adopt this reasoning here, and argue that it is consistent with the de-centred and differentiated approach to understanding the relationship of power and knowledge that I have outlined thus far. I also retain the valuable observations made about the powerful ways in which symbolic constructions in communities act to demonstrate and perpetuate particular understandings, whether they be shared by all interested parties (e.g. Kapferer 1986; Turner 1985, 1974, 1969; Turner and Turner 1992)

A complementary argument is that anthropological attempts to describe and analyse an interpretation of the 'other' often make reference to the positionality of the author, and often do so within a framework of cultural relativism that seeks to privilege, or at least be sensitive to, and certainly accountable to interlocutors perspectives, no matter what particular theoretical models are brought into play (Linnekin 1992). This cultural sensitivity, along with disciplinary reflexivity and cognisance of the Orientalist debate (Said 1995) and the way in which the 'framer' becomes 'framed' by the texts they produce about others (Trinh Minh Ha 1992), has long been a part of anthropological perspectives.

In contrast, archaeological characterisations of the people and material conditions they describe, through reference to

prehistoric materials, are primarily only accountable to the global discourse of science via sponsoring institutions, notwithstanding any formalised or purported frameworks of ethics established to structure access to archaeological activities. Here, the way in which archaeology engages with popular understandings about prehistoric people and the landscapes they occupied, as captured by the plethora of documentaries and popular media depictions of the same, intersects with the ongoing construction of identity amongst the communities whose land archaeology excavates evidence from.

It is the way in which archaeological knowledge is disseminated widely that establishes and re-enforces the cosmological position of that discipline's authority to define the past, on behalf of the social institutions that support and sponsor its activities, notwithstanding any arguments about ownership of such definitions (e.g. McBryde 1985). My discussion here sets out the basis and content of archaeological models and demonstrates the way in which archaeology must be understood as a tool of the dominant regime. An apparatus in a Foucauldian sense, an element of a regime that is not altered by in its instantiation by any particular political or ethical views held by individual archaeologists, nor any involvement of indigenous stakeholders in the production and dissemination of archaeological knowledge.

Analytical comments

The above discussion has emphasised the role of individuals within social institutions in the ongoing symbolic construction of culturally specific understandings about the origins of the world, and the people in it. I have emphasised the way in which particular expert interpretations draw on culturally specific forms of authority and become a contested field. I have also described the existence of widely divergent understandings about the origins of people, and the embeddedness of those understandings in the respective communities of archaeologists, Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley and Orang Ganabai in Aru. The discussion of those different stories about the same place has emphasised the construction of those narratives within particular communities and the role of expert individuals within historically informed and culturally specific institutions of authority.

The materials presented above generate insights into understanding the comparative cosmological positions described, especially the particularities of inter-relationships between archaeological narratives and the locally specific contexts of

the East Kimberley and the Aru Islands (which could valuably be explored in more detail than available in this article, see also Corrigan 2007). I have emphasised commonalities amongst the origins of social life in the East Kimberley and Aru, such as the existence of autochthonous doctrines as originary points for the interpretation of archaeological narratives. In Corrigan (2007) I take more space to emphasise differences in political positions that emerge from local particularities in relation to archaeological practice in the Aru Islands and the East Kimberley. Emphasis was also placed on the ways in which local particularities emerge from differences in politics of identity, land access and ownership, and the embeddedness of these in the respective nation state structures that the focus communities exist within.

The doctrines of Aru and the East Kimberley, as well as archaeology, all emerge from their particular histories but none are necessarily representative of an exclusive rationality. The particular rationalities of people with whom I worked in Aru and the East Kimberley demonstrate similar characteristics to the rationality of archaeology, in that they construct reality in a culturally specific way. But it is archaeology, I have argued, which constructs a particular interpretation of reality in a way that is structured by global sponsorship and the authority of far reaching institutional support. In this way, it is archaeology in collaboration with other frameworks of rationality within contemporary Western thought that renders understandings of the past in Aru and East Kimberly as types of subjugated knowledge. Foucault is again helpful here, where he notes:

> [A] whole set of knowledges … have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity … It is through the reappearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work (1980:81-82).

I have also explained how the indigenous communities of Aru and the East Kimberly are understood as occupying land that was joined as one in archaeological models, yet without any contemporary recognition of that shared prehistory amongst those communities. Indeed, as I have demonstrated, specialists within those indigenous communities do not share the same notions of the origins of humanity that are argued by Western Science, especially archaeology.

The proposition that the world, and its people, were created through the supernatural actions of creative beings - as is the case in the traditional doctrine of Aru and the east Kimberley- is shown to be unintelligible to the epistemological framework of science[18]. I have shown, too, that evolutionary acts of random genetic mutation and ancient geologic activity are unintelligible to the epistemological framework of the traditional doctrines discussed.

Amongst this disparity of worldviews it is appropriate to consider the ways in which particular individuals are able to bridge the various ontological issues arising from the existence of radically different understandings of the world. As noted above, there are a number of ways in which certain individuals understand the relationship of the different stories described, although, significantly, these strategies only arise where circumstances have created the need.

Where archaeological specialists acknowledge the existence of a different epistemology in the Aru and Kimberley contexts, for example, it would appear to require a suspension of their scientific beliefs to allow consideration of mythological understandings of the world. Such archaeologists do not, of course, abandon their own ontology and scientific practice, for as is revealed in their publications it seems apparent that they would be unable to perform their work without a fundamental belief in the tenets of their chosen field within science, or at least an adherence to the requisite doxa. The way in which awareness of indigenous narratives are held in tension, incorporated, contested or ignored by archaeologists in their work is revealed here to be a necessary correlate of scientific practice, yet still ultimately results in the subjugation of indigenous voices.

Some members of the Aru and Kimberley communities, with whom I conducted research, are familiar with archaeological arguments concerning their land and heritage and in some instances, more so in the East Kimberley than in the Aru Islands, borrow from archaeological understandings in everyday contexts and for local political purposes (e.g. Veth 2000a). The arguments of

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[18]   Here I do not mean to suggest that particular scientists, or disciplines, cannot comprehend the meaning of so-called mythological knowledge that underpins the indigenous epistemologies considered here, or even be sympathetic to it, but that such knowledge cannot, by its very nature, be relied upon as having determining value in a positivist framework.

archaeology, however, remain ontologically incompatible with the indigenous knowledge systems I have described and, as noted above, are also often flatly rejected.

In the Aru Islands some have given consideration to how archaeological assertions might be incorporated piecemeal into their own systems of understandings. The wider population of the Aru Islands has only been marginally exposed to archaeology, but the particular group of people I worked with, Orang Ganabai, have now had archaeologists excavating on their land and visiting their community from time to time, over a period of three years in the mid 1990s. Orang Ganabai are more familiar with the discipline of archaeology than any other community in the Aru Islands, as there is no other sustained archaeological research that has been undertaken in Aru. On the other hand, many Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley are relatively familiar with the arguments and practices of archaeology, primarily because there have been a substantial number of archaeological projects in the region and because archaeological narratives have an apparently wider presence in public discourse in Australia.

Archaeological arguments link the discipline inextricably to a nationalist project, a discursive structure within an imagined community (Anderson 1983). Many of the Aboriginal people with whom I worked in the East Kimberley resist archaeological narratives of human origins, yet Aboriginal people also sometimes borrow from archaeological understandings, for example when they assert that they have been in their land for 40,000 years. Such adoptions of archaeology have been shown above to usually reflect an appropriation of a powerful discourse that assists with land claims and similar.

The discussion of the power of populist definitions of Australian Aboriginal people's ancient links to the land and waters of Australia through the existence of, often poorly understood, sometimes enthusiastically grasped, archaeological knowledge centring on 40,000 years of inhabitation must also consider the wider role of Australian music, news media, documentary, literature, museums, National Parks and so on (explored in more detail in Corrigan 2007). The Aru context differs significantly and, as revealed above, there is every reason to believe that the archaeological work undertaken there has not penetrated local understandings in the way it has amongst East Kimberley Aboriginal people and other Australian Aboriginal people generally.

Competing claims about the past could theoretically exist in isolation from each other, without the need to consider them as more realistic than the other. However, the dilemma that I have focussed on here is the archaeological use of evidence from the Aru Islands and the East Kimberley to construct homogenised understandings of human prehistory that are irreconcilably different from local perspectives and thereby directly challenge the fundamental truths of social life in those communities. My inquiries have illustrated how the various narratives de-constructed here reveal themselves to be powerful templates in the ongoing construction of the different worldviews that are obviously in dispute at an epistemological level, yet also brought into some form of resolution in the minds and practices of various individuals. Co-existent yet different stories about the same place actually seem to tell us more about the political dimensions surrounding the operation of power over and within knowledge systems, rather than offering comment on any resolution of cognitive dissonance that may arise

The Aru Islands and the East Kimberley examples explicate the link between the perpetuation of culturally specific models of the past to particular individual experts within the structures and institutions of authority in their respective communities. What is common to all of the individual experts in the cosmological fields of archaeology, Aru and the East Kimberley is their embeddedness in the particularities of their respective formal and informal social institutions, and their ongoing involvement in the formation of a particular ontology of being in the present - that draws upon notions of the past for authority. In the same way that Orang Ganabai Origin Narratives and Ngarankani amongst Jaru, Kija and Kadjerong specialists, tell us a great deal about the fundamental assumptions and social organisation of the communities in which they are embedded, so too the assertions of archaeology tell us much about the social milieu in which it is embedded.

Conclusions

The political aspects of comparative cosmology that are grounded in the relationships of archaeological and indigenous mythological forms of knowledge in Aru and the East Kimberley are evident in a variety of ways. In the first instance, particular individuals learn and become authorised to perpetuate particular culturally specific forms of knowledge in ways that have political dimensions, whether these politics are overtly expressed, or otherwise.

Such political action is also evident in the archaeological context through established structures such as formal qualifications and charters for ethical practices, or in the indigenous context where certain individuals may be excluded from esoteric knowledge in the context of traditional strcutures such as initiation and ceremonial practice (see also Maddock 1972 and Elkin 1977).

The political aspects of acquisition and dissemination of knowledge within the respective cultural settings is, in any event, exaggerated by the tensions of difference inherent between and among archaeological and indigenous knowledge systems. For example, an archaeologist might recognise that something they intend to publish is completely and fundamentally different from indigenous understandings about the evidence they adduce, but they may choose to publish their understandings regardless of this difference. This sort of difference is evident, for example in Davidson's (1991) comments about incompatibilities between archaeological evidence and Australian Aboriginal oral traditions, noting that[19]:

> There can never be a reconciliation of these views, except that the belief in the multiplicity of pasts allows archaeologists to admit the existence of a traditional [Aboriginal] past as well as one based on material evidence, whether or not these views of the past are compatible (1991:249).

The publication of arguments that are incompatible with mythological world views may perhaps seem innocuous but has in some instances led to passionate contestation about whether archaeological knowledge is regarded by some as more valid than localised indigenous knowledge. These sorts of issues are especially relevant to the ongoing construction of contemporary identity amongst indigenous groups and often have a direct impact on significant matters such as rights to access and use material resources (e.g. Spriggs 1991, 1992; Trigger 1984; Tonkinson 1999).

Other forms of political activity concerning the production and dissemination of archaeological and indigenous mythological knowledge, within those respective contexts, include decisions individuals make about who else might legitimately gain access to particular knowledge, decisions made by individuals about what to do with any knowledge so gained, and so on. For example, an

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[19]   See also Bowdler 1985, 1997; Thorley 1996 and 2002 for Australian examples, and Miller and Tilley 1984 for a general argument.

Aboriginal person in the East Kimberley might be in possession of certain knowledge and choose to withhold that knowledge from an archaeologist, or other East Kimberley Aboriginal people, for any number of reasons whether overtly political or otherwise. Similarly, an archaeologist may choose not to share controversial findings through peer-reviewed publication, where such findings may create disturbance for their personal careers or perhaps threaten their ability to obtain research funds.

The ways that culturally specific institutions establish frameworks through which individuals learn and perpetuate types of knowledge, within the focal contexts of archaeology, Aru Islands and the East Kimberley, range from secret to public, as well as formal to informal. The significant issues here are that particular social institutions not only constrain and regulate access to knowledge; they also pre-configure it, and operate as a point of origin for the authority and validity of particular types of knowledge. Various epistemological, ontological and practical differences between archaeological and indigenous mythological knowledge are thus brought into existence through the practise of individuals who are themselves embedded in and empowered by communally endorsed institutions.

The kinds of radically different understandings of the world that are set out above only really manifest as a problem when they clash with one another; for example, when archaeological narratives concerning the past confront indigenous narratives of the past. In my argument, neither of these narratives are more 'real' nor are any of these beliefs wrong, as they are variations of the human response to the act of being in the world. Yet their co-presence creates situations where one or the other does become considered more 'real'. The key contention here is that certain understandings of the world become characterised as valid and having more, or less, authority regardless of any inherent and fixed reality, through the discursive manner in which they came into being.

The various claims, assumptions and assertions of experts in the respective settings of the traditional doctrines of the Aru Islands and the East Kimberley, along with archaeologists, all tell us much about politics within and between the cosmological positions they emerge from. The structuring frameworks of authority and the construction of experts within those frameworks are revealed to be as significant as an individual's practice within them. However, the embeddedness of the empirical validity of archaeological practice as a privileged position is shown to undermine

indigenous understandings in particular ways and contexts. It is argued here that archaeological knowledge is essentially the same sort of knowledge as the other forms of knowledge it contradicts - it explains the past to a community that shares the assumptions of a particular cosmology. Yet, in an analysis that emphasises inter-subjectivity in the operation of power over knowledge we can observe that archaeological models are distributed more widely than indigenous understandings and in forums holding an asymmetric power position, notwithstanding the adoption of portions of archaeological evidence by indigenous groups in some cases, or the recognition and respect of indigenous perspectives shown in some archaeological cases. While the amplification, the instantiation and the relative distribution of all the narratives described above are a significant element of social life among the respective communities they emerge from, it is the empirical archaeological narratives that obtain the upper hand in the powerful discourse of global science.

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The Politics of Suffering: Indigenous Australia and the end of Liberal Consensus, **by Peter Sutton, pp. 280. Preface by Marcia Langton, published by Melbourne University Press, 2009.**

Introduction by Sandy Toussaint

The 2009 publication of *The Politics of Suffering* by anthropologist and linguist Peter Sutton generated a mix of responses. Whilst a number of these were published in newspapers and journals (e.g. Altman, 2009; Neill 2009; Dombrowski 2010) much of the debate about the book's content was expressed via the Australian Anthropology Society's (AAS) electronic network. A great many of the comments criticised Sutton's work, in part because of the misgivings he expressed about certain aspects of anthropology's engagement with Aboriginal and Islander groups, and policy developments such as the 'Northern Territory Intervention', as well as the picture he presented about contemporary Australian Aboriginal life. A key and heart-wrenching concern for Sutton, one that permeates the book, is the extent of Aboriginal suffering, especially for families with whom he has sustained a long-term relationship. Analysis of the network exchanges as a kind-of interlocutor revealed as much about the diversity and emphases of anthropology in Australia, as it did about the how, when and why some topics are privileged. In light of the debate and review content, it seemed relevant in a collection such as this to seek additional perspectives, primarily because the topic and the debate that ensued touched on many of the epistemological, ethical and political issues that are at the heart of the World Anthropologies Network: the production and vantage point of different knowledge claims, disciplinary critique and transformation, and the way in which power in all its various symbolic and material forms is used and by whom. It is the case, too, that so many of the issues Sutton raised continue to exist, especially for Aboriginal and Islander people themselves, and also, of course, for anthropologists and the discipline more broadly. With these emphases in mind, Pat Lowe and Triloki Pandey agreed to review

the book. As their biographical notes show, they come from different disciplinary backgrounds, knowledges and cultures, qualities that reveal a certain distinctiveness, as well as a few overlaps, in their reviews of Sutton's work.

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Review by Pat Lowe

Peter Sutton, an anthropologist who has worked around North Queensland since the early 1970s, was once a left-wing activist for Aboriginal Land Rights, sharing the prevailing view that all ills in Aboriginal society were the result of colonialism, with its displacement and maltreatment of the original inhabitants, and would be remedied by a return to country and the maintenance of culture. I am not an anthropologist, but I remember activists assuring me that most indigenous social problems in the Kimberley, where I live, including unemployment, widespread alcoholism, poor health and early death, the high suicide rate and interpersonal violence, would be solved or greatly ameliorated when people were able to move back onto their own country. Instead, these indicators have got much worse, and this is the problem that Sutton seeks to explain in *The Politics of Suffering*.

To illustrate the deteriorating state of affairs on some communities, Sutton documents the violent ends of many of the people he knew, backed up by grim, upwards-trending statistics of indigenous suicides and murders.

A main thread in Sutton's argument is that certain aspects of traditional society were and are incompatible with the demands of settled life, and that these incompatibilities have never been taken into account by politicians, decision makers and the do-gooders who have supported and funded the Land Rights and

'return to country' movements. He points to traditional means of social control, including fear of sorcery and violent retribution, the absence of political and legal structures, beliefs about ill-health and untimely death and the absence of a germ theory of disease.

Sutton argues that, to maintain groups of people in discrete communities, which he calls 'ghettos', is to deny them the benefits of modernity and to keep them tied to an idealised past that neither can nor should be revived. He overlooks the modernising influence of community schools, television and the Internet as well as the mobility of the residents, and doesn't seem to have noticed that the younger generation on most communities show every sign of being part of the global youth culture. He claims that, while most post-contact groups fared reasonably well under the relatively benign control of superintendents, missionaries and pastoralists, they cannot provide the leadership necessary to managing the communities themselves. While I had attributed failures in community leadership to the denial of indigenous autonomy over so many decades, Sutton puts it down to pre-contact social organization and kinship obligations.

The persistence of what Sutton considers the most maladaptive practices and customs he explains by child rearing, and gives instances of adults' failure to correct or punish tantrums and violent behaviour in children, and active condonement of it through the practice of 'cruelling': teasing or hurting a small child to provoke rage and retaliation. Similarly, he claims that habits of cleanliness and hygiene are seldom taught or modelled.

There is a certain relief in truth-telling, and many of Sutton's observations are correct; conditions on many Aboriginal communities are shocking, and lifestyle certainly plays its part in the low life expectancy of dwellings, cars, personal belongings and people themselves. Alcohol abuse remains a major contributor to high rates of poor health, accident, suicide, violence and murder. Sutton's solution, in line with a new wave of right-wing thought, is to close the ghettos and 'modernise'. He approves of the Northern Territory intervention driven by the Howard government and continued by Rudd's. In support of his argument for modernising, he points out, somewhat irrelevantly in the context of remote communities, that Aboriginal Australia is changing through high rates of intermarriage with white Australians, implying that soon you won't be able to tell us apart: AO Neville's dream come true. This, he implies, will be a good thing. So much for the people he has befriended during his working life.

It's the Trugunini argument again: yes, there will always be genetic descendants of Aboriginal people—and all that made their ancestors who they were will have been obliterated. Modernisation can be a euphemism for cultural genocide, and some of us still consider this to be a tragedy..

Meanwhile, absent from all sides of this argument is the indigenous voice. What do Aboriginal people think? Those who live on remote communities have not been forced to live there: they have chosen to, often finding refuge there from the excesses of the towns. Before we take another stab at social engineering, let's hear from them.

Review by Triloki Pandey

The Politics of Suffering is a very important book. Its importance lies in its clear and thoughtful assessment of the impact of liberal thinking and state policies on the rural and urban Australian Aborigines. Sutton's text reveals that he is a superb fieldworker; his linguistic and ethnographic studies of various Aboriginal communities are well known. Coupled with firsthand fieldwork observations that began in 1969, in conjunction with a careful reading of the available literature on Australian Aboriginal life, he documents the tragic failures of social engineering schemes promoted by the Australian state, as well as by liberal thinking and acting politicians. Marshalling comparable evidence about indigenous groups from the Native North America and many other countries, Sutton paints a moving picture of their sad situation.

Given my own forty-year familiarity with the 'tribal' situation in India, and with various Native American groups, I share resonance with many of Sutton's portrayals of Aboriginal life. I agree with him, for instance, that the modernization agenda of the state has not worked for the non-state indigenous groups almost everywhere. Sutton opines that, 'The uses of diversity and multiculturalism are considered to be of important value' (p.61), especially by the modern state. But for racially, culturally, and ethnically constructed minority communities, it is not only a question of their 'rights' but their very survival. Globalization of values such as 'humane treatment and equality for all' (p.17) has not changed much. Furthermore, despite criminalizing racial and other types of ' domination' and 'discrimination' by the state (p. 116), such practices are still widely reported. It is the racism of the 'pale–skinned people' (pages 17 and 160) that has hindered

the development of the mutual acceptance and respect that had been the primary goals of 'Reconciliation' in Australia (p.211).

Sutton constructively refers to the renowned Australian anthropologist, William Stanner, when he deliberates on Stanner's view that 'ours [non-Aborigines] is a market- civilization [whereas] theirs [Aboriginal peoples] is not' (quoted at p.67). Indeed, there is a sense in which 'The Dreaming' and 'The Market' are mutually exclusive. Given this difference in worldview and value system, it is hardly surprising to learn that the projects to create one nation and one people, rather than perpetuate ' two nations', 'two people' (Chapter 8) have failed. The profound dualisms such as ' Black fella'/ White fella' in Australia and 'Black/White' in the United States have also persisted resulting in violence of various kinds (p. 213).

I agree with Sutton that one should not blame colonialism for every kind of asymmetry and injustice and discrimination in society. At the same time, I have no doubt that the culture of colonialism has promoted ' economic exploitation', ' inferiorization', (p. 204), and dehumanization of the colonized by the colonizer. Colonialism has not fostered a feeling of 'relatedness' or 'oneness' of the nation's people (p. 98), but it has caused divisiveness and intolerance in far too many ways. Sutton is absolutely right when he observes that that industrialization failed to produce homogeneity and cultural uniformity in Australia, as everywhere else, and cultural differences continue to survive and have meaning. The challenges that remain are how to deal with such differences in all multicultural and pluralistic societies, including in Australia.

I have regularly been struck by the Australian experience documented in anthropological studies of various Aboriginal communities over time, What was most striking to me was the convergence between my own views and experiences when working with indigenous groups in non-Australian settings, although some differences are also evident. A difference between the Aboriginal Australian and Native American situation, for instance, is how the land claims cases are handled in court. According to Sutton, the evidence of indigenous witnesses is preferred over the testimony of anthropologists, whereas this is not the case in American courts convened to hear such cases where anthropological evidence is given more weight.

The Politics of Suffering should be required reading for anyone wishing to understand the local and varied circumstances of indi-

genous peoples throughout the world. In my view, laws, policies and political adjustments alone cannot influence reconciliation between Aboriginal and settler populations. It must be sought deeper down, in the hearts and minds of the people. Intellectual sympathy can draw people together; compassion and sympathy can unite them.

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