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The Stuff of Belonging

Simone Blair, SAGES, The University of Melbourne

[From a work in progress.]

Gippsland Lakes fishermen spend an enormous amount of time in their gear sheds slinging nets. Nets need constant updating: they need to be reshaped, repaired and altered to suit new conditions and new visions. I often first met fishermen in their gear sheds. These places were extraordinary, dense with equipment and vast in scale. In some cases gear sheds exceeded the size of the man's family home. And, in many cases, before we sat down to have a cup of tea or talk about family we talked about gear. As I poked about among the swathes of net hung from the rafters and the close smell of decomposing seaweed and fuel I learnt, from the fisherman, about relationships.

It was immediately clear to me that these sheds, that contained literally hundreds of thousands of metres of net of all colours, ages, and mesh sizes, contained objects that expressed nearly a century's worth of environmental change. As the populations of different fish species had fluctuated, or habitats had changed, gear had been changed in response. Fishermen never threw out their old gear because they could never be sure that some species of fish would not come back or that a particular place might not revert to a former state again – change, as reflected in these sheds is understood as continuous and without apparent direction.

It was not obvious on sight, though, that gear denoted not just ecological relationships but also social relationships. Yet, one of the first things that fishermen mentioned was who had given them various pieces of gear. Nets, in particular, tended to have quite complex social lives. Most men had nets that had once been owned by someone else. Fishermen took pleasure in recalling who had given them nets and how they had later changed those nets in order to make them uniquely their own. Individual nets were also commonly made from cast off parts of other men's nets. Further, nets had sometimes been constructed by a number of people: friends and members of the immediate family had tied the knots together to make the net. These sheds sat like vaults containing, in encyclopaedic fashion,

not only the environmental history of the lake but the social history as well. As one younger man marvelled, referring to the first time he had been invited into an older man's shed, it was like walking back through the history of the lake.

Because inlet and estuary fishing in Victoria is a specialized industry, gear is not readily saleable; there is little call for \$10,000 seine nets or bails of mesh net outside of the small number of men actually commercially fishing these waterways. It is uncommon though that, when one fisherman wants to sell a piece of gear, another wants to buy it. It is for this reason that quite a lot of gear passes from fisherman to fisherman, as gifts.

During my fieldwork I took a trip – more out of curiosity, than necessity – to a small commercially fished inlet 200km east of the Gippsland Lakes at Mallacoota. I had arranged to meet some other inlet fishermen, here. I met an elderly man who had retired from fishing but continued to build and restore boats. When I arrived he was in his shed steaming wood in order to shape the hull of the boat he was restoring. We talked about his gear. He told me he had given quite a lot of it away since he had retired. In fact, he said, he had just given away the last of his seine nets the other weekend to a young Gippsland Lakes fisherman. He had, at first, tried very hard to find a different young fellow whom he had once met while building a boat down at Lakes Entrance. This young man had impressed the older fisherman as a hard worker with a young family. He had really wanted to give his nets to this man but had been unable to find him in the phone book and, because he had lost contact with many of the people he had formerly known, had not been able to track him down.

This retired fisherman was a laconic, direct, and understated man and so I was surprised at the lengths he had gone to, both in thought and action, to find the young person he felt most deserved his nets. His story alerted me to the fact that fishermen did think hard about who they would give their gear to. Bestowing gear was a sign of approval. It followed the general concern among fishermen to foster, in their colleagues, a sense of

commitment to the fishery – both in term of its environmental dimensions and its social dimensions.

Gear sheds, I came to see, stood as testament to the desire fishermen felt to ensure the transcendence of the fishing community over particular family groups. Possessions were not hoarded or left to rot, they were given to the right man at the right time. But the right man was not necessarily your kinsman, it was someone who had shown commitment to fishing, someone who, as local fisherman Arthur Allen wrote, ‘lived for fishing because fishing was [their] life’. The musty depths of these sheds represented the orientation towards, acceptance of, and capacity to embrace, change. Gear was a manifestation of both past and potential social and environmental relationships. Although still and dank, gear captured the continuous and autonomous movement towards and away from others that characterised belonging – as process – among Gippsland Lakes fishermen.

Editor’s note: The Boxing Day tsunami resulted in the death of more than 7,500 Sri Lankan fishermen and the loss of thousands of fishing boats. Since January 2005, Victorian fishermen, including those from the Gippsland Lakes, have been reaching into their sheds and donating nets and other fishing equipment to Sri Lankan people for whom ‘fishing is their life’.

AAS Annual Conference 2005

The Australian Anthropological Society Annual Conference 2005 will be held in Adelaide on September 27-30, 2005 and hosted by Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide.

Organising Committee: Professor John Gray (convenor), Dr Simone Dennis (co-convenor), Dr Deane Fergie (secretary), Dr Michael Wilmore (treasurer)

Theme: Fundamentalisms and Their Alternatives: Anthropological Responses and Responsibilities

Keynote Speaker

Professor Kirsten Hastrup

Kirsten Hastrup is Professor of Social Anthropology in Institute of Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen. She has an extensive research profile. Her substantial research on Icelandic history and society fuelled an interest in history and philology (three monographs and a compilations of articles have been published). Later, her interest in human rights and her setting up and running an interdisciplinary research department at the Danish Centre for Human Rights made her look closer at law and political science (she has edited four interdisciplinary volumes in this field). Of late, an interest in theatre (notably Shakespeare) has led to an awareness of the scholarly field of aesthetics and drama. Connecting these separate fields is a sustained interest in

exploring the link between the unique event and the larger history as well as between the individual social agent and the larger community, and theorizing social dynamics.

In addition to these more specialised fields, she has published critical explorations of the philosophical and epistemological foundations of international anthropology, textbooks in anthropology, and general introductions to the history of the human sciences and their contributions to society.



Kirsten Hastrup

Plenary Session

‘Are there any fundamentals in an anthropological education?’

Sessions

Alternatives to Dominant Fundamentalism in Western Allopathic Medical Treatment of Mental Illness and Intellectual Disability.

Contact Details: Robbie Lloyd, PhD Action Researcher, UWS Bankstown, Critical Social Sciences, School of Applied Social and Human Sciences
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Abstract

As New Zealand ethnographer Michael Jackson has said, we all need to find our way home in this world, in some form of community of belonging. Of all human environments, healing places should reflect such values, but the evidence in Australia is the opposite. The materialist, objectifying, impersonal, detached and despiritising approaches in allopathic medicine and psychology have created a fundamentalist desert of the soul in rehabilitation for people living with mental illness and/or intellectual disability.

Anthropology, in the tradition of Gregory Bateson's formative work, needs to explore the entrenched nature of fundamentalist, ideologically driven medical models of mind and body, and their ignoring of heart and soul. This paper explores the territory of terror in hospitals, community health services, job-ready training agencies, and supported living. Fundamentalism is not always away from the source of power, and economic rationalism, medical materialism, and welfare-punishing

economics are three strands of a global trend to let ideology rule out compassion, community and more indigenous ways of caring.

In a participative action research project through UWS Bankstown, 60 participants have been sharing a life journaling with buddies project since May 2004. This peer and elder supported, community-based, self help model of rehabilitation uses indigenous concepts of “working the business of life” to generate healing, growth and development among participants. It is a way of using ethnography to work towards a practical alternative to a cruel fundamentalism currently dominating most Australian community health and welfare environments.

An Almighty Clash of Cultures? Inflections of Christian Fundamentalism in the Asia-Pacific

Contact Details: Richard Eves, Gender Relations Centre, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University.

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Abstract

This session seeks to explore the phenomenon of Christian fundamentalism in the contemporary world, drawing on specific examples from the Asia-Pacific. Much of the impetus for the recent rapid expansion of Christian fundamentalism in this region has come from international groups, who have inherited the nineteenth century Protestant ‘errand to the world’ and see their role as spreading their evangelical interpretation of the gospels. However, Christian fundamentalism is an altogether more refracted and multifaceted phenomenon than its distinctively global flavour might imply, and to understand it means to see how it is realised in these new settings and how local meanings are assigned. Papers that map out the specific contours and localised inflections of global discourses are especially welcome.

Detailed description available on Conference website

An Anthropology of Boredom

Contact Details: Yasmine Musharbash (University of Western Australia) & Kalissa Alexeyeff (University of Melbourne)

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Abstract

Boredom is a common experience around the world, yet, anthropology has largely neglected it as a phenomenon worthy of analysis. This is a curious oversight of an immensely important aspect of social life, considering the ubiquity of boredom in modern life generally; the many personal observations of anthropologists about boredom being common in the communities they research; as well as the frequently implicitly made link between boredom and such often harmful behaviours like substance misuse, gambling, and violence. Addressing these oversights, this

panel seeks ethnographically grounded explorations of boredom from cross-cultural perspectives. In particular, we invite papers that:

- Present case studies of boredom from a variety of ethnographic settings;
- Examine cross-cultural ideas about what constitutes boredom/experiences of boredom;
- Relate concepts of boredom to ideas of personhood;
- Analyse gendered and/or inter-generational experiences of boredom;
- Integrate inter-disciplinary perspectives into an anthropological analysis of boredom.

Detailed description available on Conference website

Back to Disciplinary Basics? Enquiries into Anthropological and ‘Positivist’ Fundamentalism

Contact Details: David Martin (Australian National University) & John Morton (La Trobe University)

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Abstract

This session considers the contemporary theoretical and methodological climate in Australian anthropology, particularly in light of the discipline’s increased engagement with policy and forensics. Anthropologists and their methodologies, particularly since their widespread involvement with the Federal Court since the mid-90s, have come under increasing scrutiny from outside the discipline, notably legal practitioners who work with positivist assumptions about both the law and expert knowledge. This has caused some scholars to question the appropriateness of particular approaches to research and writing, both in and out of the academy. We welcome offers of papers that address this issue in terms of general theory and the full gamut of practices defined as ‘anthropology’.

Detailed description available on Conference website

Death and Mortuary Practices in Indigenous Australia

Contact Details: Myrna Tonkinson, Katie Glaskin, Yasmine Musharbash & Victoria Burbank

(Anthropology, University of Western Australia)

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Abstract

While many scholars have observed changes in death-related practices in Indigenous Australia, these matters have not been addressed in their own right. This session proposes to examine contemporary death and mortuary practices in Indigenous Australia through ethnographically-grounded analyses of:

- Temporal and regional variation in mortuary practices;
- Ways of dealing with material remains, retention, modification and cessation of various rituals and practices;
- Interplay with Christian beliefs and practices, syncretism;
- Impacts of bereavement on individuals, families and communities, including work and school attendance, housing, disposable income;
- Transport and communication and their effects on death-related practices.

Detailed description available on Conference website

Dying with Dignity and Beyond

Contact Details: Assoc. Professor (emeritus) **Michael Roberts**, Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide

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Abstract

The intention is to bring together scholars in the social sciences writ-large in order to discuss such varied scenarios as euthanasia, self-immolation in protest, sacrificial suicide and 'suicide terrorism'. Invariably this broad sweep will encompass such concepts as 'martyrdom' and 'noble death' and all forms of heroic action that skirt the likelihood of death. Though the emphasis will probably fall within the contemporary modern period, there is no reason why historians cannot join our 'action'. For instance, it would be great if we can have someone who has worked on the kamikaze.

Foundering Fundamentals: Capitalism, Globalization and Governance in Melanesia

Contact Details: **Martha Macintyre** (CSHS, University of Melbourne) & **Mary Patterson** (SAGES, University of Melbourne)

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Abstract

Since European contact, Melanesians have reacted in a variety of ways to the penetration of their worlds by global forces. Colonisation brought pacification, Christianisation, resource exploitation, and engagement with ideologies and technologies that transformed relationships of all kinds. But decolonisation in the 1970s has not enabled the independent states of Melanesia to prosper and to develop politically and economically free of the kind of external international influences that now see them characterized as 'failed' or 'weak' states. The organizers of this session invite papers that explore the dynamic relationship between global forces and their local understandings in Melanesia. In particular we wish to focus on those activities and ideologies that would appear

to inhibit the development of 'good governance' and 'civil society' required of Melanesian states by the global donors of Aid whose neo-liberal policies are promulgated as global solutions to local problems.

Fundamentalism and Globalisation: The Winds of Resistance and Change of Healing, Health and Illness among Traditional Societies

Contact Details: **Arelis Sumabila** (The International Health Project, Sydney)

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Abstract

This session proposes to explore the relationship between illness, health and healing, in the contexts of global economic, and political forces and religious fundamentalism (particularly Christian missionaries) that play a key role in people's health, especially in traditional communities. In these contexts it will examine the responses of traditional communities, ethnic and minority groups to global forces and fundamentalism which affect the traditional ways of healing that lead to unequal distribution of health resources and poor quality of health. In particular this session will explore the impact of global economic and political forces and fundamentalism on poverty, human mobility and the transmission of disease. It will also explore the link between globalisation and increased exposure to pathogenic micro-organisms, to weakened human resistance, to new emerging diseases, and to the increasing introduction of non-human carriers of disease into areas where they did not previously exist, often with fatal results and with different cultural and social responses from different ethnic groups.

Fundamentalism and Fieldwork

A session within the Postgraduate element of the 2005 AAS Conference.

Contact Details: **Fiona Sutherland**, Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide

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Abstract

Fieldwork is a central, defining feature of our activities as anthropologists. It involves gaining access to 'the field', engaging deeply with those being researched, and 'returning' and reintegrating in order to provide an anthropological interpretation. In this session for postgraduate students, papers are invited that consider the challenges presented by fundamentalisms we may encounter in all of these stages of fieldwork. The contemporary global context is increasingly characterized by fundamentalisms in many aspects of social life. Who defines what is fundamentalist? Is it possible to engage deeply and fruitfully as anthropologists with informant groups who may deny the validity of other ways of being? How do we address fundamentalist aspects of our informants' lives while respecting their deeply held values? Is it possible to provide anthropological

representation of fundamentalist positions in ways that are acceptable to research participants? This discussion also entails an examination of those 'fundamentals' our discipline holds dear about the nature of the fieldwork experience.

Good to Define With: Fundamentalisms and Boundaries in the Human-Animal Relationship

Contact Details: Kirrilly Thompson (Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide) & Lisel O'Dwyer (School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management, Flinders University)

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Abstract

By definition, anthropology is fundamentally the study of humans. However, the ways in which humans relate to non-humans has become a legitimate area of anthropological enquiry for its own sake. Usually grouped together in the homogenous category of animal, the 'non-human other' offers heterogeneity of anthropological angles and analyses even broader than the array of non-humans with which humans engage and disengage, together with the animals that engage and disengage with non-animals. The fundamental categorisation of human from non-human and as an entity distinctive from the animal kingdom has been brought into a public forum with the reality of xenotransplantation. Nevertheless, anthropologists have been providing ethnographic data that slips, overlaps and penetrates the fundamental boundaries constructed around human and animal bodies. This session invites papers addressing the fundamental considerations of the human boundary in light of its relations to and with the non-human other. In a reflection of the session's aim to 'cross' and 'bridge' borders set up around humans and non-humans, papers are encouraged from perspectives and ethnographic contexts which may at first appear to be fundamentally irreconcilable.

Is There Life After Study?

A session within the Postgraduate element of the 2005 AAS Conference.

Contact Details: Fiona Sutherland, Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide

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Abstract

A session focussing on working life after completing study will be held as part of the postgraduate element of this year's conference. The session will be organised as a forum, with a panel of speakers addressing diverse anthropological work in fields outside of the tertiary system. Speakers include those addressing the uses of visual anthropology, working in festival contexts, a variety of forms and applications of social research and work addressing native title and heritage issues affecting Indigenous Australians. As panel members are finalised, it

is envisaged that further diversity of work opportunities will be addressed. Those attending the forum are also invited to bring their own experiences for discussion, as we examine the possibilities for anthropologists working within and outside of familiar career trajectories.

Media Violence and Fundamentalism: Ethnographies of Representation and Resistance

Contact Details: Andrew Skuse & Michael Wilmore (Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide)

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Abstract

This session will draw together a collection of papers that examine conjunctures of conflict and mediated representation from an ethnographic perspective. Drawing on the general conference theme of fundamentalism and its alternatives, the session seeks to analyse the diverse uses to which media are put when societies are subject to violence, intense rupture and concomitant calls for unity around shared cultural identity. We invite papers that examine the mediated representations of conflict, the experiences of those who use media during conflict, and the violence that media does to those whose lives are represented.

Detailed description available on Conference website

Moral Panic: Sexuality and Fundamentalism

Contact Details: Simone Dennis & Fiona Sutherland (Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide)

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Abstract

The frame of sexuality may be used to explore the fundamentalist resurgence in diverse contexts that characterises contemporary life. These contexts include the political construction of fundamentalist ideas of family. This links to legal questions regarding what constitutes family, including contemporary debate surrounding the issue of 'gay marriage'. Marriage and family are also related to the technological fundamentalisms surrounding reproductive issues, for example, technologically mediated conception, pregnancy and birth. One might also question anthropological fundamentalism regarding ways of conceptualising relatedness, where, for example, documented relatedness required in contexts of native title work do not fit easily within academically disseminated views of genealogical mapping. Other areas of fundamentalism within sexuality related topics include aspects of religious, moral and identity discourses and the exploration of pleasure and pain.

New Religious Movements (NRM) and the Challenge of Modernity

Contact Details: Jim Taylor, Discipline of Anthropology, University of Adelaide
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Abstract

What accounts for the rise of diverse fundamentalist NRM in today's world? What has been the role of the media in projecting negative or pejorative images on NRMs – of whatever ilk? Papers will look at case studies, subject experiences/actor viewpoints, and various theoretical positions on fundamentalism in relation to NRMs – even in a broader social, cultural and political context. But, the panel discussions should be focused to some extent around the “religious experience”. It is expected that there will be considerable theoretical ground on which to make cross-cultural comparisons and to share ethnography or work in progress. Rather than restrict the panel to particular religious traditions, language groups, or geographic regions, the debate can be open to wider scenarios.

Detailed description available on Conference website

Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Host societies: Perceptions and Experiences of Struggle.

Contact Details: Sophia Corfield & James Lino Lejukole (University of Adelaide)
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Abstract

Fundamentalism is a struggle to maintain a sense of self in a world that is becoming alienating and isolating. Thus people who become refugees perceive a breach of the very fundamentals of their life-worlds including ‘normality’, security and certainty, as well as the political, the social and the cultural. Often, refugees are negotiating between the needs and expectations of one's own culture and the demands of integration within a host society. However, this sense of struggle is not exclusively the experience of refugees, but may also be relevant to the host societies whose identity might also be perceived as precarious.

Detailed description available on Conference website

Transnational Religions

Contact Details: Cristina Rocha, Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney
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Abstract

This session will explore the ways in which religion is part of and is influenced by processes of globalisation. Contrary to the thesis of secularisation, where modernisation necessarily meant the public decline of religion, more recent scholarship has acknowledged that religion

remains significant and can be a driving force in the contemporary world. Indeed, in these globalised times religious flows carried by missionaries, migrants, tourists, and, more recently, by the internet have provided an infrastructure for affirmation of “old,” hybrid and transnational identities. In this session I would like to invite papers on the following issues:

- How religious organisations in the sending and receiving countries respond to migration and what changes that generates in these institutions.
- The ways in which religious identities, beliefs and practices enable migrants to belong to multiple locations (the homeland, the host country, institutional religious organisations, or informal, popular religious practices).
- The ways in which tourists contribute to processes of hybridisation of religion across diverse nations.
- The role of non-migrants in importing religious practices and beliefs which are associated with prestige and cultural capital (e.g. the case of Buddhism in the West).
- Case studies of hybridisation and creolisation of global religions.
- Case studies of religion and the internet: how have cyber religious practices transformed religious belonging?

Detailed description available on Conference website

Fundamentalisms in Australian Aboriginal Affairs

Contact details: Kim McCaul (Native Title, South Australia) & **David Martin** (Australian National University)

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Abstract

Always a contested arena, Indigenous affairs today seem more than ever to be characterised by conflicting ideologies and policy prescriptions. At one extreme, amongst some Aboriginal people there is an oppositional ‘traditionalism’ where to be truly Aboriginal requires the maintenance of fundamentally distinct values and practices. At the other, amongst many policymakers there is a form of economic fundamentalism in which engagement with the ‘real economy’ is seen as central both to addressing Aboriginal marginality and to the necessary moral reordering of Aboriginal individuals and collectivities. Papers for this session are invited both to critically analyse such fundamentalisms, and to look beyond them to alternative possibilities.

Detailed description available on Conference website

AAS Conference 2005: Important Dates

15 July - Deadline for proposals for **papers** to session conveners

12 August - **Session programmes** sent to conference organisers

2 September - Announcement of **Conference final programme**

27 - 30 September - **The Conference**

Registration Fees

Full Fee Members	\$250
Full Fee Non-members	\$300
Concession* Fee Members	\$125
Concession* Fee Non-Members	\$150
Daily Rate Members	\$150
Daily Rate Non-Members	\$175

* Concessions are for students, unwaged and retired attendees.

Registration and Accommodation: Links

Registration:

http://www.sapro.com.au/AAS/aas_form.htm

Accommodation:

http://www.sapro.com.au/AAS/aas_acc.htm

Contact details

Academic, Administrative and Registration Enquiries:

aas.conference2005@adelaide.edu.au

Conference Websites

http://www.arts.adelaide.edu.au/socialsciences/anthro/aas_ac2005/

OR

www.aas.asn.au and follow the links.

Changing Places

From AAS executive

In a postal ballot of AAS members held during April 2005 **Martha Macintyre** was elected as President of the Australian Anthropological Society and **Gillian Cowlshaw** as the new special Executive Member.

Martha Macintyre is a Senior Lecturer in Medical Anthropology at the Centre for Health and Society, The University of Melbourne. She completed undergraduate studies in History and English Literature at The University of Melbourne, and then went on to Cambridge University where she studied Social Anthropology. She gained her PhD from the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University for a thesis on the people of Tubetube in Papua New Guinea. She has held research positions at Monash University and the Australian National University and taught in Anthropology and Women's Studies at LaTrobe University prior to her appointment in CH&S. Martha's

research interests include historical ethnography of the Pacific region; anthropology of gender; immigrant communities in Australia; development studies; and medical anthropology. She has undertaken studies of the lives of refugee women in Australia, examining cultural differences in understandings of health and illness and access to medical services in Australia. Her recent research has included social impact studies of two gold mining projects in Papua New Guinea and she has undertaken consultancies on socio-economic impact of mining on Lihir over the last decade. Her recent academic research there has focused on the social changes that have transformed women's lives, especially with respect to health. In 2004 she is embarking on a research project examining environmental issues and sustainability in the context of the mining development on Lihir. Recent publications include: 'Taking Care of Culture: Consultancy, Anthropology and Gender Issues' in *Anthropology and Consultancy: Issues and Debates*, edited by Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern, Bergham Books, New York 2005, pp 124 -138; 'Politicized Ecology: Local Responses to Mining in Papua New Guinea' in *Oceania* Vol.74, No.3, pp231-251, 2004; 'Thoroughly modern mothers': maternal aspirations and declining mortality on the Lihir Islands, Papua New Guinea' in *Health Sociology Review: International Journal of Health Sociology: Policy, Promotion and Practice*, Vol.13, (1), September 2004, pp 43-53.

At the time of the ballot Martha wrote: "I have decided to stand for the position of President as I am committed to the academic discipline and to the professional practice of Anthropology outside universities. I have been a member of AAS for over 20 years and have previously served on the executive. I am concerned that current proposed changes in Higher Education (such as the Research Quality Framework; the proposed 'Teaching/Research Nexus' and a range of constraints on postgraduate research) could have a dramatic and deleterious effect on Anthropology in Australia. I am hopeful that the AAS will be able to develop responses that challenge the assumptions about education that generate such policies and that we can make our voice heard. As a part-time academic who consistently works as a consultant in Papua New Guinea I believe that I have a sympathetic understanding of the interests of members who work in both contexts. I am also deeply committed to supporting postgraduate students and continuing to encourage their involvement in the Association."

Gillian Cowlshaw is an adjunct Professor at the University of Technology, Sydney. Her original ethnographic research in Arnhem Land was in a classical framework, taking up questions about traditional gender roles and relationships. The field work experience led to an interest in cultural change, the relationship between Indigenous and settler societies, and the position of Indigenous people within Australia. She has undertaken ethnographic studies of race relations, firstly in country NSW from which the main publication was

Black, White or Brindle: race in rural Australia. Subsequently she researched and wrote an historical ethnography in her original field site among the Rembarrnga people of Arnhem Land and published *Rednecks, Eggheads and Blackfellas: Racial Power and Intimacy in Australia* in 1999. She has numerous articles in international academic journals. Her recent book, published by Blackwell in 2004, is *Blackfellas Whitefellas: The Hidden Injuries of Race*. It has been shortlisted in the NSW Premier's Literary Awards. Dr. Cowlshaw enjoys taking part in public and academic debates.

Postgraduate Events

Cultural Intimacy and Social Poetics: A New Agenda for Cultural Research A Master Class with Michael Herzfeld

The Centre for Cultural Research, Parramatta Campus, University of Western Sydney, 8-10 August

The Centre for Cultural Research and the Cultural Research Network (Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies, University of Queensland), invite postgraduate students to a Master Class with Michael Herzfeld.

Michael Herzfeld is Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University and author of many books, including *The Social Production of Indifference* (1993), *Cultural Intimacy* (1997) and *Body Impolitic* (2003).

The Master Class will address the place of empirical research in analysing cultural dynamics in the transnational contexts in which we live. It will explore the continuing relevance, or otherwise, of disciplinary specialisation and its relationship to methodology in the study of culture, identity and relations.

Herzfeld's work offers an innovative approach to fieldwork defined against both the textualism of postmodern theory and the positivism of the conventional social sciences. Herzfeld offers an anthropology - which he defines as the critical appraisal of common sense - that is comparative and reflexive. It entails a politically engaged grounding in experience that is neither reductive nor romantic. It occupies the 'militant middle ground' between simple binaries of theory and practice. In one of his most provocative books - *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* - Herzfeld draws on wide-ranging fieldwork to explore the 'dirty laundry', the collective secrets, that sustain a nation-state by securing the loyalty of its citizens. His approach, which he calls a 'social poetics', examines the disjuncture between official models of national culture and the experience of ordinary citizens. This social poetics is an attempt to connect the minutiae of everyday life to cultural change in the *longue durée*, utilizing a semiotics of cultural form to explain how social norms not only inform everyday interaction but also draw from its accidents and distortions.

Herzfeld's work invites us to consider a new agenda for cultural research and to think about the ways a social poetics might inform our own projects. In this seminar, we will focus on the ways interdisciplinarity and empirical work form the basis for cultural research, teasing out what we might mean by the 'militant middle ground' of theoretical and political engagement. A range of readings, centring on Herzfeld's own writing, will be provided to initiate debate. Participants will be invited to give brief presentations to bring their own specific intellectual interests into play in this discussion, reflecting on the relation between anthropology and broader cultural research, and what that might mean in terms of the kinds of methodologies that cultural research might develop. Students will find the Master Class beneficial in developing the methodological, theoretical and conceptual dimensions of their own research projects. To this end, you will be expected to contribute actively to the Master Class, relating your research to the ideas and methods discussed. A book of readings will be distributed prior to the Class.

Numbers for the Master Class will be kept low, and you need to apply for entry. The application will include a 300-word rationale outlining the relevance of the Master Class to your research, accompanied by a brief CV. Registration for the Master Class will be \$120. The Cultural Research Network will provide funds to cover travel and accommodation for postgraduate students outside Sydney. Your application will need to indicate whether you need these funds to attend the Master Class. The deadline for applications is June 30. Applications can be downloaded from the Centre for Cultural Research website, at:

<http://www.uws.edu.au/research/researchcentres/ccr/herzfeld>

For further information, contact Greg Noble at g.noble@uws.edu.au

Dr Greg Noble, School of Humanities, University of Western Sydney

Conferences Past

FRESH AND SALT: WATER, BORDERS AND COMMONS IN AUSTRALIA AND ASIA

A Trans/Forming Cultures Research Symposium, University of Technology, Sydney, April 8-10, 2005

Sandy Toussaint

Discipline of Anthropology and Sociology,
School of Social and Cultural Studies, The University of
Western Australia

'Fresh and Salt', an innovative symposium convened by Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and Heather Goodall, brought together a complex mix of academic and postgraduate researchers from a range of disciplines

(anthropology, biology, cultural studies, environmental science, geography, history and law) alongside artists, community advocates and film-makers, to explore a number of interconnected water themes. Focusing on both inland rivers and coastal oceans, speakers and discussants variously drew on examples from places such as Australia, Indonesia, the Marshall Islands and Madagascar to discuss issues such as international sovereignty, water as a physical and metaphorical border, historical landscape pollution, legal conflicts and how different rivers and oceans were and are culturally mediated by government policy and long-term human activity. While discussion and debate was both facilitated and occasionally hampered by the mix of cross-disciplinary expertise, a highlight of the symposium was the showing of historian Ruth Balint's 'Troubled Waters' documentary with its concentration on the plight of Rotinese fishers who endeavour to continue to fish in Australia's northern waters, an activity that has now become illegal under expanded Australian legislation. The film eloquently conveys the problems that arise for fishers in their interactions with the Australian legal system. Ethnographically rich, the film also explains some of the economic demands and social responsibilities that are experienced by the fishers and their families in their Indonesian homelands, alongside the politics of territorial interests and rights. Symposium abstracts and several of the original presentations are available online (<http://www.transforming.cultures.uts.edu.au/>). These papers will form the basis of a proposed publication to be edited by Stephi Donald and Heather Goodall. Those interested in water and environmental issues in particular, and issues of sovereignty and border debates more generally, can be assured that access to many of the papers will be both rewarding and productive.

Forthcoming Conferences

Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa New Zealand

The thirtieth annual conference of the ASAA/NZ will be held in 2005 at Victoria University of Wellington.

Further details: <http://asaanz.rsnz.org>

No additional information was available on web site at June 9.

Workshops on religion in Vietnam

Religion in Contemporary Vietnam (10 August 2005)

2005 Vietnam Update. Not by rice alone: Making Sense of Spirituality in Reform-era Vietnam (11 – 12 August 2005)

Venue: Australian National University, Canberra

Further details: <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/polsoc/Vietnam/>

International Conference on Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory into Research

15 – 18 November 2005

The University of Tasmania

The conference themes include: CDA as a research method/perspective; CDA and research agenda; Language, empowerment and identity; Discourse of new technologies; Organisational discourse and power; Academic discourse: power and identity; CDA and the construction of social and cultural entities; Foucault and Critical Discourse Analysis; Discourse and politics; Discourse and gender; Discourse and identity; Transformative Education; The relationship between discourse and culture; Discourse studies in Education; Intercultural discourse.

Further details: <http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/conference/>

Pain and Death: Politics, Aesthetics and Legalities

8 – 10 December 2005

Centre for Cross-cultural Research, The Australian National University

The so-called war on terror and its representations have ignited interest in pain and death across a wide range of disciplines, including criminology, political science, law, history, literature, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, linguistics, journalism and philosophy. At the same time artists working in the visual arts, as well as music, poetry, dance, and theatre have taken up the issue of state violence with renewed vigour. Fertile dialogue among and between artists, activists and scholars is the aim of this gathering.

State-inflicted and state-sanctioned violence involves practices that are justified and contested on legal and political grounds. Yet it also raises a question of aesthetics: how/can officially-authorized violence be represented? Scholars, artists and activists working on the politics and legalities of state violence, and those exploring and producing representations of officially-sanctioned pain and death are invited to submit an abstract.

Further details:

<http://www.anu.edu.au/culture/conf/painanddeath/index.html>

15th Congress of European Anthropological Association

August 31 – September 3, 2006

Faculty of Science, Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary

Further details: <http://eaa2006.elte.hu>

Previous listings (see March AAS Newsletter)

The Meanings and Values of Repatriation: A Multidisciplinary Conference [8 – 10 July 2005]

Inaugural Conference of the Animals and Society (Australia) Study Group [12 – 15 July 2005]

Moving Masculinities: Crossing Regional and Historical Borders [November 30 – December 2, 2005]

The Second International Conference on Small Island Cultures: Culture and the Environment [9 – 11 February 2006]

Recent MAs and PhDs in Anthropology

Claudia Damhuis, School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies, The University of Melbourne

Title: *Fragrant Self and Malodorous Other: Anthropological Perspectives on Olfaction and on Discourses of Odour and Embodiment* (PhD 2005)

Abstract

Anthropologists to date have approached odour and olfaction primarily from a structural-functionalist perspective. Although there are theoretical discourses on the role of odour as a means of symbolic expression and differentiation between the “Self” and “Other”, there has as yet been no comprehensive examination of the actual factors influencing the processes of ‘making scents’ of odour at either the individual or collective levels. Indeed, there is a need to re-evaluate the general theoretical paradigms from which odour and human olfaction are approached in anthropology. Importantly, in order to fully appreciate ethnographic accounts of odour we need to have some understandings of the levels of connectedness, which inform ethnographic accounts, but are inaccessible through ethnography itself. Through an interdisciplinary approach this thesis creates a unified model of the multidimensionality of human olfaction by drawing on understandings from within as well as outside of the discipline of anthropology and takes into account studies with biological, phenomenological, semantic and cognitive perspectives. Thus, this thesis contributes to one of the fundamental concerns in contemporary anthropology, the structure-agency debate, and the extent to which individual agency is enabled given that there are biological, cognitive and social parameters of olfaction, as is the case with human experience in general.

Catherine Laudine, School of Social Sciences, University of Newcastle

Title: *Expression, Consumption and the Environment* (PhD 2005)

Abstract

This study documents an anthropology of diverse contemporary Australian practices, which their exponents

believe allow them to make contact with the natural world in some way. These practices mostly take the form of ritual or performance arts and are mainly derivative of established spiritual traditions.

The introductory section of the thesis makes an argument about the value of some secular expressive arts. Expression and consumption are posed as opposites of a continuum — one end of which has been long neglected. An argument is made about the relationship between mono-expression and depression. These chapters provide the base upon which the fieldwork chapters are mounted.

There is a strong emphasis in the presentation of the fieldwork data on the experiential component of various ritual and performance arts whether social or embodied. It was found that each of the different individuals or groups of informants either already had, or developed through their practices, a different idea of the nature of self to normative Australian concepts of self. Another developed theme revolves around ideas of political efficacy, empowerment and healing. Experiences of joyful or synaesthetic immersion or integration are also analysed as important findings from the data.

In order to highlight some of these ideas, visual art is analysed around the theme of various sorts of integration, which locate the self by means of art in relationship rather than in opposition to all of the rest. These themes allow the consideration of an ethic based upon the aesthetic as opposed to a morality of external control.

In conclusion it is argued that such expressive ways of being and knowing provide a necessary but neglected balance to linear rationality. They also provide their own positive reinforcement in the form of joyful or empowered experience and in this way may serve environmental recovery better than an imposed moral code.

Discipline of Anthropology and Sociology, School of Social and Cultural Studies, The University of Western Australia. (Abstracts not available)

Jan Anderson

Title: *Rural Identity and Social Change: Dairying in the Atherton Tablelands* (PhD May 2004)

Michael Azariadis

Title: *Struggling With Alevi Identity: An Anthropological Analysis of the Social Processes that Structure the Unequal Relationship Between the Abdal and Tahtac Communities of Fethiye, Southwestern Turkey* (PhD Feb 2005)

Gavan Cushnahan

Title: *“Where have you been?” Independent Visitors’ Risk Management Strategies on an Indonesian Island* (PhD Oct 2004)

Noriko Hagiwara

Title: Professional Kyoiku Mama: Being a Good Mother via the Practice of Ojuken among Educated Women in Modern Tokyo (PhD May 2004)

Linda Low

Title: New Age Spiritual Quest in a Western Australian Community (PhD May 2004)

Sally Robertson

Title: Music as medium for human engagement: Indigenous/non-Indigenous musical interactions at two Australian festival sites (MA May 2005)

Robin Rodd

Title: The biocultural ecology of Piaroa shamanic practice (PhD Oct 2004)

Suharsono

Title: Javanese in the Eyes of its Speakers: Reflections from a Suburban Area of East Java, Indonesia (PhD Oct 2004)

Sue Summers

Title: The Interface of the Personal and the Political: adaptive strategies of former Yugoslavs in the post-Yugoslav war and as refugees in Perth, Western Australia. (PhD Feb 2005)

Marianne Yrke

Title: 'What you do is who you are': Gender Identity in the Resources Industry (MA June 2004)

New Publications

Anthropological Forum

Volume 15, No. 1. March 2005

Gary Robinson: "Anthropology, Explanation and Intervention: Risk and Resilience in a Parent- and Child-Focused Program"

Andrew McWilliam: "Houses of Resistance in East Timor: Structuring Sociality in the New Nation"

Warren Shapiro: "Universal Systems of Kin Categorisation as Primitivist Projects"

Sandy Toussaint, Patrick Sullivan, Sarah Yu: "Water Ways in Aboriginal Australia: An Interconnected Analysis"

The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology

Volume 6, No. 1. April 2005

Matthew H. Amster and Johan Lindquist: "Frontiers, Sovereignty, and Marital Tactics: Comparisons from the Borneo Highlands and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth"

Reed L. Wadley and Michael Eilenberg: "Autonomy, Identity, and 'Illegal' Logging in the Borderland of West Kalimantan, Indonesia"

Gregory Forth: "The Diatribe of 'Ajo Bupu and the Oration of Lowa Bata: Examples of Parallelistic Speaking among the Nage of Central Flores (Indonesia)"

Mark Mosko: "Literal Meanings: The Case of Mekeo Sorcery"

Obituary: "Marie Olive Reay, Born Maitland, NSW, Died Booragul, NSW, 16 September 2004, Aged 82" (by Michael Young)

Aboriginal Religions in Australia: An Anthology of Recent Writings

Max Charlesworth, Françoise Dussart and Howard Morphy (editors). Ashgate Publishing, 2005 (344 pp, Hardback £47.50/£49.95)

Over the last 25 years there has been an explosion of interest in the Aboriginal religions of Australia and this anthology provides a variety of recent writings, by a wide range of scholars. Australian Aboriginal Religions are probably the oldest extant religious systems. Over some 50,000 years they have coped with change and re-invented themselves in an astonishingly creative way. The Dreaming, the mythical time when the Ancestor Spirits shaped the territories of the Aborigines and laid down a moral and ritual Law for their occupants, is the fundamental religious reality. It is the basis of the Aborigines' view of their land or country, kinship relationships, ritual and art. However, the Dreaming is not a static principle since it is interpreted in different ways, as in the extraordinary movement in contemporary indigenous painting, and in attempts at an accommodation with Christianity.

There are contributions by anthropologists, cultural historians, philosophers of religion and others: Diane Bell, Deborah Bird Rose, Frank Brennan, Max Charlesworth, Françoise Dussart, Jenny Green, L.R. Hiatt, Ian Keen, Marcia Langton, Fiona Magowan, Ian McIntosh, Francesca Merlan, Howard Morphy, John Morton, David Mowaljarlai, John Mulvaney, Fred Myers, Peter Sutton, Robert Tonkinson.

To place an order: contact Ashgate Publishing Direct Sales in the UK or visit <http://www.ashgate.com>

Sustainable Environments, Sustainable Communities: Potential Dialogues between Anthropologists, Scientists and Managers (Melbourne: The University of Melbourne, SAGES Research Papers No. 21; Editor: Monica Minnegal)

Monica Minnegal: “Who is talking, who is listening? Reflections on potential dialogues between anthropologists, scientists and managers”

Sandy Toussaint: “Building an epistemological bridge: coeval integrated practice in studies of human/environmental relationships”

Jane Mulcock, Beverley McNamara & David Trigger: “Teaching multidisciplinary: lessons from an Honours practicum”

Jane Harrington: “Heritage, identity and place making: implications and applications for environmental management”

Robert Levitus: “Management and the model: burning Kakadu”

Michael O’Kane: “Aspects of anthropological engagement with environmental discourse”

Graeme MacRae: “But I’m just an anthropologist – what can I do about farmers’ problems?”

David Hyndman: “‘Caring hands’ and ‘caring for country’: sustainable resource management encounters between Landcare and Indigenous peoples”

Veronica Strang: “Meaningful differences: dis-integrated management in the Mitchell River catchment”

Martha Macintyre: “Informed consent and mining projects: some problems and a few tentative solutions”

Colin Filer: “Bridges and escalators: metaphorical engagements with non-scientific knowledge in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment”

Price: \$10.00

For order form: <http://www.geography.unimelb.edu.au/> and follow the links (Publications, SAGES Research Publications)

Electronic Dance Music Culture

In April Graham St John posted a message on AASNet inviting interested members to join a new mailing discussion list for research on electronic dance music culture (EDMC).

He wrote:

“There are now a wide range of researchers involved in analyses of the social, cultural, political, religious, historical, health and musicological dimensions of EDMC (from proto-disco through to post-rave forms). This escalation in research over the past ten years or more (under various rubrics including ‘Club Culture’, ‘Rave Studies’, ‘Techno’, ‘Electronica’ and ‘Dance Culture’) is symptomatic of both an increasingly popular dance music and digital arts phenomenon, and an emerging interdisciplinary field of study.

While those who are engaged in EDMC research generate dialogue and exchange information in small circles, researchers would benefit substantially from larger network building and collaboration generating frameworks. Such a network will assist existing and emerging researchers and aid the formation of a recognizable area of study drawing upon a wealth of knowledge from researchers working in various disciplines, in many different global locations, employing diverse methodologies.”

For more details see:

http://listcultures.org/mailman/listinfo/dancecult-1_listcultures.org

AAS Newsletter Contributions

The Newsletter provides a vehicle for informing members about AAS matters and other issues of relevance. We welcome items such as Conference announcements; notable appointments, retirements or honours received; titles and abstracts of MA and PhD theses in anthropology that were awarded in the past 12 months; short book reviews or brief notices regarding important new publications; short articles on issues of importance to the discipline; reports on research-in-progress; postgraduate events of significance. The current editors are Peter Dwyer (pddwyer@unimelb.edu.au) and Mary Patterson (marycp@unimelb.edu.au), both at the School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies, The University of Melbourne.

The next issue of the Newsletter will be published in September. Back issues are available on the AAS web site: <http://www.aas.asn.au>