

anthropology

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2022 AAA Annual Meeting Distinguished Lecture

BY DR. ANA CELIA ZENTELLA

“José Can You See?: A Nuyoricán View of Unsettling Landscapes”

Saturday, November 12 • Livestreamed from Seattle

Our conference “Unsettling Landscapes” theme brought to mind a sad joke. When José finally secures a perch atop the flagpole after having been denied a seat in all sections of the stadium, he is touched when the huge crowd stands, looking up at him and singing: José can you see. Viewing the landscape from the point of view of those who have been denied basic rights but are thankful for any indication that their needs are of concern to the deniers, reminds me of the immigrants who work tirelessly in bad conditions for little pay, but are grateful for cast-off clothes or food. They and their communities are viewed as unsettled: illegal, uneducated, dangerous, unworthy, and in need of control. They in turn may view the landscapes of the powerful as settled and worthy of being in control. Clearly, whether a landscape is settled or unsettled depends on who’s looking.

Part of anthropology’s mission is accounting for why social/cultural/linguistic landscapes might appear settled to some when they really are not, or vice versa. My experiences and research, beginning in the South Bronx and other working-class New York and Philadelphia communities and more recently in affluent southern California counties, reveal the role that language, particularly distinct varieties of Spanish and English, plays in obscuring or unmasking our views of unsettling landscapes. Increasing acts of violence against speakers of varied languages across the USA who are viewed as out of place/unsettled demand our attention and response; I build upon the work of generations of scholars in linguistic anthropology who have concerned themselves with



Ana Celia Zentella

these issues by centering politics in what I refer to as anthropolitical linguistics. How can an anthropolitical linguistic approach counter linguistic intolerance and promote social justice?



Ana Celia Zentella, a Puerto Rican/Mexican linguist known for her “anthropolitical” approach to linguistic research, and professor emeritus at the University of California, San Diego, will deliver the Distinguished Lecture, “José Can You See?: A Nuyoricán View of Unsettling Landscapes,” at the 2022 AAA Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, November

9–13. Her lecture will address the role that language, particularly distinct varieties of Spanish and English, plays in obscuring or unmasking our views of unsettling landscapes.

Zentella is an expert on multilingualism, linguistic diversity, and language intolerance, especially in relation to US Latinx languages and communities. Her book, *Growing up Bilingual: Puerto Rican Children in New York*, won the Book Prize of the British Association of Applied Linguistics and the Book Award of the Association of Latina and Latino Anthropologists of the American Anthropological Association. Manhattan’s Borough President Ruth Messinger declared October 30, 1997 “Doctor Ana Celia Zentella Day” for “her leading role in building appreciation for language diversity and respect for language rights.” The Society for Linguistic Anthropology honored her with its Public Outreach & Community Service Award in 2016. In 2014, she was named Public Intellectual of the Year by the Latino Studies section/LASA.



AN 63.4 is filled with stories about movements of all kinds—linguistic, migratory, existential, and locomotive. Welcome to our “Move” issue, from barbells to bicycles, football to TikTok. We hope you enjoy it.

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ORRIE MARKFELD,
FLATBUSH CROSSFIT



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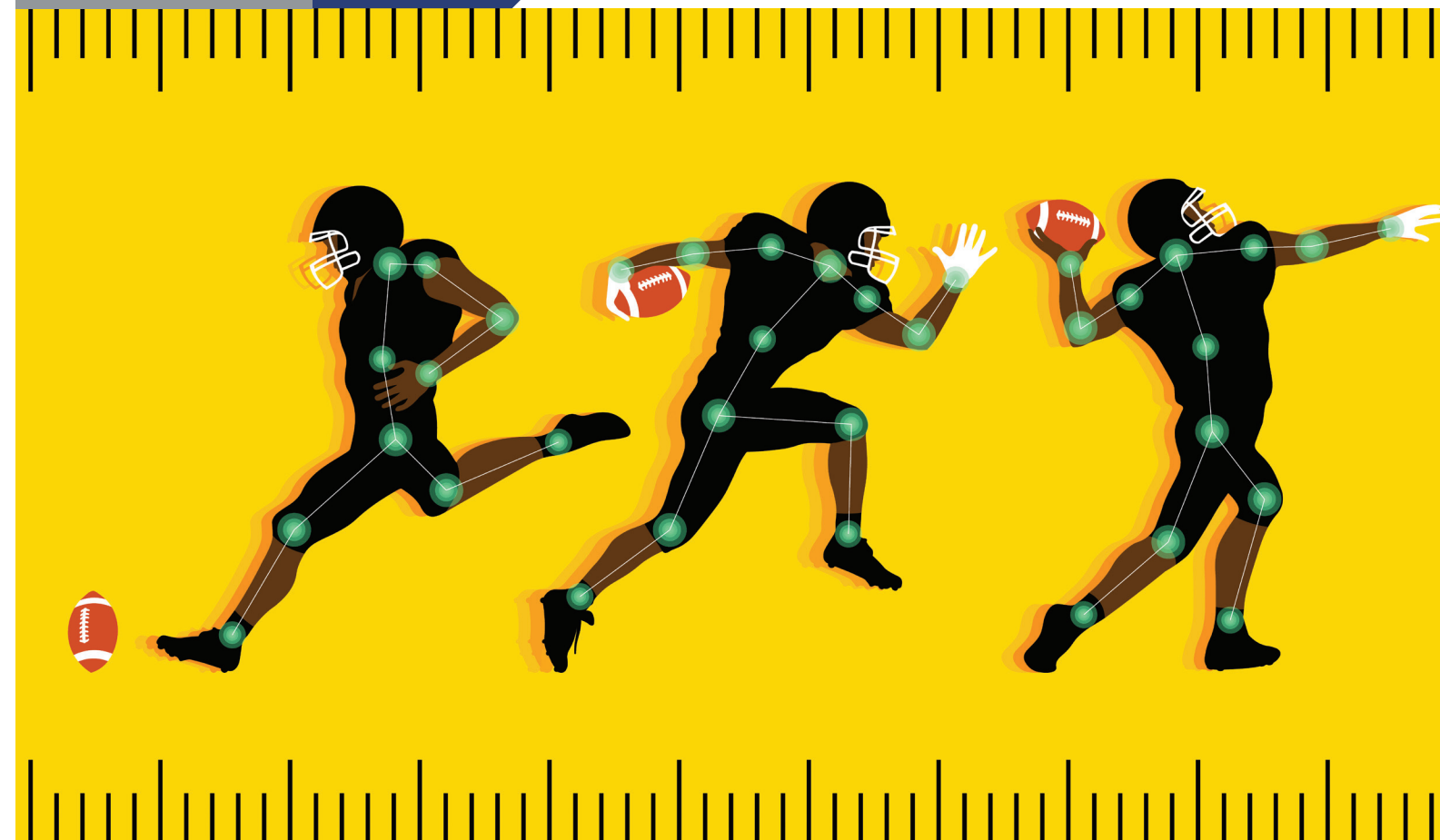
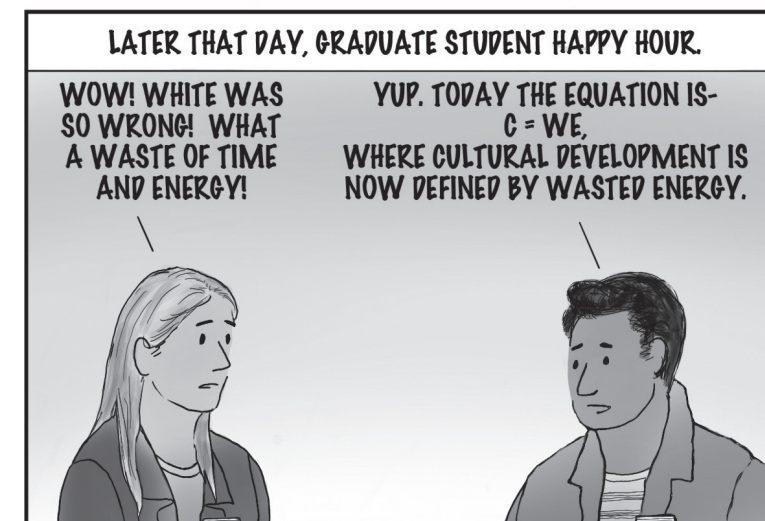
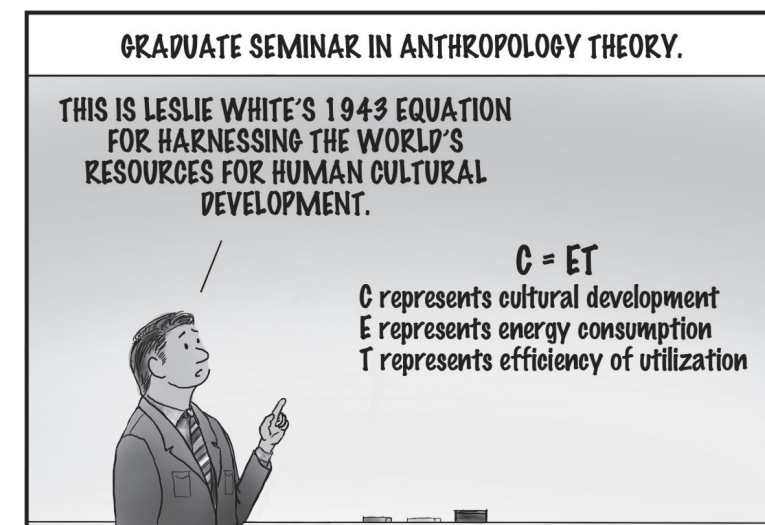
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By Bernard Perley © 2022



AN PAN

Plantation Logics at the NFL Combine

AT THE ANNUAL NFL SCOUTING COMBINE, BLACK FOOTBALL PLAYERS' EVERY MOVEMENT IS MEASURED, QUANTIFIED, AND APPRAISED. THE EVENT'S COLLEGE-AGED MEN ARE AT THE HEART OF FOOTBALL'S BILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY.

By Tracie Canada

Jordan Peele's *Get Out* revamped the horror genre with its skillful play on the idea that anti-Black racism is horrifying, and horror filled. The film centers on the idea that Black folks' bodies are so desired and valuable that white people would bid on them, acquiring them for themselves. This grisly revelation comes late in the film, when the audience learns the party they're watching is not a party at all, but instead a silent auction. The bidding occurs during a weekend when the Black protagonist is meeting his white prospective family, enduring what feels like an interview.

In March 2022, I visited the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana, where the Colts usually play. I was there to witness the public portion of the NFL Scouting Combine, a spectator to hundreds of players aiming to become members of what the professional league calls the “NFL family.”

Touted as the “job interview of a lifetime,” the combine is a five-day-long event for invited college juniors and seniors who hope to be drafted into the National Football League in April. It involves a brief orientation to NFL processes, interviews with team administrators and league representatives, chats with the media, opportunities to network with other prospects, and the part I was there for—a performance of on-field skills and drills. Interested spectators could reserve free tickets to enter the stadium on four different days to watch as football players were tested, measured, quantified, and analyzed in front of coaches, administrators, and media.

I was herded into the bustling stadium along with the trail of other attendees. Most were dressed in paraphernalia supporting their favorite teams and players, past and present. Before entering the stands, we were handed a program for the day and NFL-branded headphones. Putting them on, I learned that we could follow along with the commentators as they broadcast live on television.

The stadium was strikingly quiet. Without music or commentary coming through the speakers, there was a consistent hum of white noise—voices and machinery echoing through the bowl-shaped structure designed to seat at least 60,000 people. Players were down on the field with those organizing the drills. Fans were in the stands surrounding it. Team representatives enjoyed a synoptic gaze from the press boxes above. Bright lights, rigged cameras, giant screens, broadcast desks, invested scouts,

excited fans—all of us gathered to focus on the gridiron.

“These are just a few of his measurables.”
—NFL COMMENTATOR

Based on the programs I collected across different days of the combine, the 324 players in attendance were split into 12 groups, according to playing position. Each player received a number within his group and each group wore a certain color. As I made my way to my seat, the players in the group closest to the end-zone, about 25 of them, were stretching to prepare for the first round of testing. Two other groups were mapped out on different sections of the field, already partaking in separate events.

Football depends on specialization; there are different playing positions for offense, defense, and special teams. Each position was allotted a particular time during the combine to guarantee that players would be tested alongside those with similar skill sets; each test designed to address position-specific challenges. A quarter-

back would be asked to throw the ball in a variety of high-pressure situations, while a running back would need to demonstrate his agility and ability to subvert tackles.

“He’s a white guy,” I heard the white woman beside me say, as she pointed to a name in the program that corresponded with one of the prospects down on the field. “There aren’t many. Only two in this group,” she shrugged before moving on to the next point of conversation with her companion. It was an astute observation, but unsurprising to anyone who follows college and professional football.

Half of all Division I college football players are Black, and non-white players account for 75 percent of the NFL—abstract statistics clearly visualized by an overwhelming majority of Black players down on the field. Further, because of racial stacking, which tends to racially segregate athletes by playing position, Black players were overrepresented in most groups. Thus, the combine is an event focused primarily on the potential of the Black male athletic body. This isn’t new. William Rhoden explains that the sports industry depends on “black muscle,” a note that underscores the physical labor required for the system to persist.

After a few minutes of self-guided stretching, players’ flexibility was measured. Shoulder, hamstring, groin, back, and ankle flexibility were all calculated. Next, the vertical jump measured reach, as players jumped up as high as they could to hit a flag, followed by the broad jump to measure explosion and balance by jumping forward. One after the other, in the order of their given number, players went through the required physical motions.

This was followed by the combine’s most recognized event: the 40-yard dash, colloquially known as “The 40.” Prospects are asked to run at full speed for 40 yards, twice, with their fastest time officially contributing to their record. Once everyone in the group finished running, equipment like cones, kicking cages, and standing and step-over dummies were scattered across the field to mark the various drills. Round after round, players proceeded through these tests. Here, they were expected to impress team scouts who were critiquing the minutiae of their athletic movements: how fast they run, how quickly they turn, how effectively they catch or throw the ball, how abruptly they stop, how precisely they shift directions.

These athletes, the best young football players in the country, have been preparing for this moment their entire college careers—many of them their entire lives. Embodied details matter. The drills at the combine present a snapshot of what those with power have determined will provide the best data to measure NFL potential, even though most of these events would never take place in this way during a real football game.

Scouts use a linguistic shorthand to reference an athlete’s personality and work ethic, but most importantly, how his physical body is “built” and how it moves on a field. These comments about players that reference their “above-average fluidity,” “size to overwhelm certain opponents,” and “huge hands with rare weight-room power,” for example, make up the few qualitative notes that mark strengths and weaknesses. Immense focus is instead

placed on quantitative stats, including height, weight, arm length, hand size, bench press reps, and 40 time. By the end of the event, each player is reduced to a bundle of numbers. One single stat will determine their overall performance: a grade that signals a prospect’s alleged worth, value, and potential promise. This year, players were ranked between 5.52 and 6.81, a seemingly insignificant range that somehow encapsulated the performance of hundreds of players.

“Remember the bloodline in that family.”
—NFL COMMENTATOR

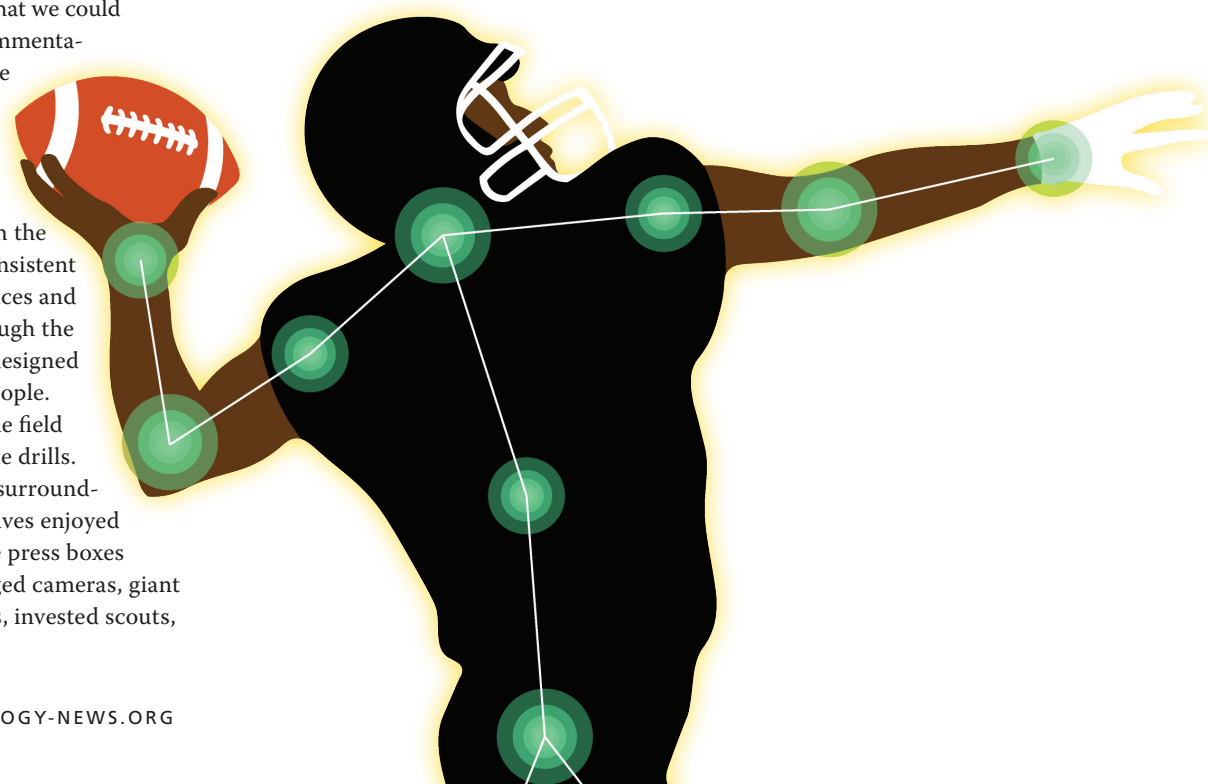
What the fans in the stands were witnessing—up to 7,000 people on the busiest of the four days—was the public professionalization process of the amateur football body. These young men are deemed “student-athletes,” a notion touted as the cornerstone of intercollegiate competition in this country, even though its accuracy has long been challenged and deemed a fallacy because this business thrives on unpaid athletic labor. Due to their statistical overrepresentation in the sport, amateurism enacts tangible harms that particularly impact Black athletes. The potential to be drafted into the NFL presents an opportunity for these athletes’ efforts to finally and literally pay off.

Yet former players have called attention to the combine’s exploitative nature and racist overtones. *Colin in Black and White*, the 2021 miniseries coproduced by Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Ava DuVernay and athlete-activist Colin Kaepernick, made headlines because the first few minutes of the show strikingly compare the combine and the slave auction block. In his cowritten memoir, retired defensive lineman and Pro Bowler Michael Bennett also associates the event with slave auctions, troubling the ways that players are treated “like a potential porterhouse,” as their bodies are studied, poked, prodded, and objectified.

At the combine, players are dehumanized, talked about as if they are pieces of meat for sale, something that became clear as I followed along with the omnipresent televised commentary in my headphones. This quantifying of the Black body traces back to plantation slavery, as hierarchy between pseudoscientifically determined biological races was rationalized through measurements to highlight physical difference. Skull size, bone density, lung capacity, and nervous systems, among other anatomical features, were studied to downplay Black intelligence and stress Black laboring potential. This race science developed in a way that prompted scholars like W. Montague Cobb to write against the idea that Black athletes were biologically equipped to excel physically.

Sitting in the stands, watching the combine, one might be unaware that these myths of racialized sporting prominence have been dispelled. Here, predominantly Black athletes are evaluated on a number of physical skills and abilities to determine their value to NFL teams. It’s a form of speculation, a strategic calculus influenced by the number of draft picks allotted to each team, which teams need to fill certain positions, how much money can be spent to draft players, and which players’ bodies might hold up best under strenuous professional play. These decisions question the value of Black labor in the marketplace in a way that is disturbingly reminiscent of how Michael Ralph discusses the ties between slave insurance and life insurance. Black athletes are classified as property and treated as machines, argues Harry Edwards; their performing and productive bodies fuel the league’s capitalist imaginary, for as long as those bodies remain physically capable of performing.

Age matters here; these players were recently sitting in college classrooms. With over 300 players in attendance, 103 universities were represented, and 60 of those universities received invitations for more than one player. Some athletes had participated in major post-season games, called bowl games, played just a couple of months earlier. But consider games



like the Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic in Arlington, Texas, and the Allstate Sugar Bowl in New Orleans, Louisiana. These events are named with obvious but not-often-discussed references to the commodities that sustained the economies in these southern geographies through slave labor. This rhetorical choice is important because it signals that the past is not yet past, in the words of Christina Sharpe.

Such entanglements of labor, capital, and Blackness are supported by the media-fueled obsession with the Black athletic body. The combine has been televised since 2004 on the NFL Network, before moving to the more accessible ABC/ESPN in 2019. These broadcasts are accompanied by constant and cacophonous commentary and analysis from journalists and pundits and former players in newspapers, and on television shows, radio programs, podcasts, blogs, and news websites. Keep in mind that since these players exist in a liminal phase—no longer college players and not yet professional athletes—they are not paid for this labor. But the media frenzy surrounding both the combine and the draft acts as a monetized segue between the college football season—a billion-dollar industry—and the upcoming NFL season. It's a never-ending, yet highly predictable, cyclical spectacle which lasts all year long and depends on laboring Black college-aged men.

**"These guys are special. You just expect freakish things."
—NFL COMMENTATOR**

The combine drew fewer spectators on the final day. Noting the strangeness of the quiet stadium, and curious about the experience without the commentary, I removed the headphones for the day's first events.

Posted instructions encouraged fan interaction and support during all the drills, except for the 40-yard dash. Because of the attention required to precisely complete this task, one of the most important of the day, players preferred quiet.

Former players have called attention to the combine's exploitative nature and racist overtones.

Without the commentary to tell me who was running or how fast their time was, I watched as players took their designated spot, got into the appropriate position, and started running. One by one, they lined up and were ready to go once the person ahead of them was done. The audience politely applauded after each player completed his run, each lasting between four and six seconds. The sound of our hand claps filled the building for the several minutes it took for every player in the group to complete the drill.

The 40 on that last day reminded me of the auction scene from *Get Out*. Numbered, yet nameless, Black athletes were paraded in front of attentive, yet faceless, white scouts, team owners, and spectators. The anti-Black sentiment at the combine mirrored that in the film, but here we were presumably watching someone demonstrate his full potential, rather than bracing ourselves for the terrifying finale in the film. Football dreams were supposedly coming true inside Lucas Oil Stadium. But this was occurring in a way that reproduces Katherine McKittrick's conceptualization of a plantation logic: Black people are normalized as the commodities which help bolster the economic value of the NFL in a way that rhetorically links labor, violence, exploitation, and subjugation. The combine is just one striking example of society's obsession with the productive Black body.

**"Look at how he's put together.
That's a big, strong man."
—NFL COMMENTATOR**

I filled my camera roll with photos and videos of the different stations on

the field. I didn't want to forget what I was seeing. But revisiting them now, I'm moved by the effect of this technological capture. Uncontextualized, these are just unnamed Black men, bodies moving, performing, jumping, running, and catching on a football field. I'd managed to visually represent what Ben Carrington theorizes as "the black athlete," a constructed and idealized man reduced to being recognized by what his hypermasculine, physically advantageous, unthinking, animalistic body can do. These men have now become an abstraction preserved in my cell phone and by the NFL's official statistics of their performance. Franz Fanon might describe them as "objects among other objects."

It's no wonder, then, why Billy Hawkins wrote about the college sport system as "the new plantation" or Rhoden described Black athletes as "forty million dollar slaves" or former tight end Martellus Bennett reconstituted the league's acronym as "Niggas for Lease." There's an underlying focus on labor, exploitation, racialization, and anti-Blackness that is all on public display at the NFL Scouting Combine. Its eerie similarity to both a slave-trading past and a horror film in the present, is stranger than fiction. The James Baldwin quote applies: the combine is a clear example of history being trapped in these athletes. 🌀

Tracie Canada is a cultural anthropologist with research and teaching interests in race, sport, kinship, and the performing body. She is an assistant professor at Duke University and is currently working on a book project about the lived experiences of Black college football players. In her current and future projects, she aims to highlight what football, and its Black players, can tell us about power dynamics in the contemporary United States.

An Pan, multimedia designer, illustrator, and culture lover. His works focus on decolonizing design, culture exchange, and Asian futurism. He enjoys traveling and doll collecting. <http://anpandesigns.com>

If I Could Only Imagine

By **Gabriella Valdez Hasselstrom**

A woman I know crossed the sea
At the age of only nineteen
When times were cross and barren to thee
If I could only imagine, if I could only imagine

She crossed the sea with the smell of smoke
And only she dreamt of her lover and woke
The splash of the sea was foreign to thee
If I could only imagine, if I could only imagine

A woman I know felt very safe
In a place with no war or the city's decay
She started to build her new life with fleet
If I could only imagine, if I could only imagine

She told us that you can make a living
If you work hard and give all your giving
But you should always be grateful that you are free
Just try to imagine, just try to imagine

This piece was selected as a winner of the AAA's **AnthroDay Student Unessay Competition** in the middle school division. Inspired by the *World on the Move* exhibit, this year's unessay competition focused on migration. Selected prompt: "Do you or your family have any stories about moving? If so, share one." 🌀

Gabriella Valdez Hasselstrom is a sixth-grade student at The Classical Academy in Colorado. In her free time, she enjoys fencing, golf, history, reading, and writing. Her exposure to anthropology is through extensive family travels, most recently to several European and Latin American countries, where she explores various aspects of different cultures.

Working Out Anxieties

WHAT DOES CROSSFIT TELL US ABOUT EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY AND PRIVILEGE?

By Katie Rose Hejtmanek

It begins the night before. I check the website for tomorrow’s Workout of the Day (WOD). What will it be? How much will it hurt? The workout is a tough one called Fran. Will I puke from exertion? Will I get “Fran lung”? I shouldn’t have checked the website, now I won’t sleep.

The logic of CrossFit is that workouts are variable (different each time), intense (hard), and functional (use movements that reflect everyday tasks). And if you regularly attend an hour-long group-fitness class you can complete a Hero or Girl workout, like Fran. Unlike sports where athletes practice their specific events, CrossFit emerged as a fitness regimen to train Navy Seals and first responders, those performing warrior tasks, not playing games. It prides itself on preparing participants for extreme body and mind challenges with its daily workouts often published on the gym’s website the night before. Can you adapt to the extreme workout thrown your way? How will you push through?

I’m anxious throughout the night and at the gym the next morning. My heart is pre-workout racing. My hands are pre-exertion sweaty. How can I approach Fran, which requires a strong grip, with sweaty palms? How can my heart withstand Fran if it is already hammering in my chest? Chalk should help my palms. A deep breath should slow the heartbeat. They don’t help enough.

“3...2...1...Go!” yells coach, as the clock beeps for each second and then louder on the “go.” My heart spikes and my stomach drops.

“This hurts so bad,” I think, two minutes into the workout of 21 thrusters (front squats with a barbell that you then thrust overhead), followed by 21 pull-ups, then 15 of each in sequence, and, finally, 9 of each. My muscles are burning with pain, filled with lactic acid. Lactic acid build-up is a biological process: as the body moves, muscles metabolize energy and produce lactate. Lactate can generate more energy, unless the body is producing more of it than it can expel, and it builds up in the blood. As lactate accumulates, the blood becomes acidic, which the brain identifies as a toxic environment. To detoxify and find equilibrium, the body expels excess lactate, sometimes through vomit. Fran, the workout of 21-15-9 thrusters and pull-ups, is famous for making people vomit.

I stand akimbo, the classic out of breath pose, and strategize how to finish without vomiting. I want to stop. Will I find a way to keep going?



ORRIE MARKFELD, FLATBUSH CROSSFIT

CrossFitters in the United States sign up and pay a lot of money to push themselves to punishing points of exertion alongside others before or after a day of professional office work. We aren’t actually training for war; we are just practicing as if we were.

I stumble to the pull-up bar for the last time. I have nine pull-ups left. My anxiety is gone. Now all I feel is pain and a deep desire to finish, to make it all stop. I pull my body up four times. I drop down. I look at the clock, it’s at four minutes. Hoping to finish this workout in 20 seconds, I jump back up and do two more. I drop down. I take a deep breath and jump back up. I pull my body up twice. I hold onto the pull-up bar, negotiating with myself, “If you do it

one more time you won’t have to jump up and down again.” I pull hard but I can’t get my chin above the bar for a full rep. I drop.

“Katie, FINISH!!” Coach screams.

I jump up and pull as hard as I can, feverishly kicking my legs to propel myself up and make my chin go over the bar. I do. I let go and collapse on the ground. The workout took me less than five minutes. Everything in me hurts.

When anxiety and desire are gone, I’m available to feel all the pain I have just inflicted on myself. My head is pounding. My face is bright red. My legs and arms, swollen with lactate, pulse with my racing heart. I feel the familiar muscular burning sensation. I haven’t vomited but for the

next two days I will cough as I breathe. CrossFitters calls it “Fran lung,” because it is associated with this workout; to medical scientists it is “exercise-induced pulmonary edema”: when the lungs can’t keep up with the heart, fluid builds up in them. Coughing is the body’s reflexive act to help expel the fluid.

We lay around on the ground, cursing the pain as we move, talking about our times: Did we go faster than the last time we did Fran? Did we take fewer akimbo breaks? Where did we go wrong?

“I’m not coming tomorrow,” someone says.

“You should. Move your body around, it’ll help you recover,” someone replies.

Coach yells to herd the next group of CrossFitters into a circle. We watch them, anxiety written on their faces. Coach looks at our gaggle of human debris and dismisses us with an “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

■ ■ ■

At the turn of the twenty-first century, CrossFit emerged as a rogue exercise method that demanded participants tap into a “primal” need to be extremely physical, in the words of journalist-CrossFitter J. C. Herz, finding “redemption in their willingness” to be so. CrossFit fashioned itself as an activity that makes one feel alive through enduring physical pain; this intensity, so CrossFit lore goes, is what it



ORRIE MARKFELD, FLATBUSH CROSSFIT

means to be human and is missing from our modern, boring lives. As Herz puts it, “I do not live in the Paleolithic. I have all of the gadgets and creature comforts of a plush, sedentary, chronically ill society. And I can’t help but believe that the path out of physiological purgatory [is through CrossFit].” Herz uses Christian (purgatory, redemption) and evolutionary (modernity, the Paleolithic) frames to articulate CrossFitters’ desires for a primal, physical, painful experience. CrossFit, and these frames, have since morphed from special forces training into a popular, expensive fitness method for (mostly) white Americans through which the pursuit of physical pain and voluntary existential anxiety are felt and then disciplined. As fellow CrossFit enthusiast Amy tells me:

All of a sudden you realize how insane the workouts seem and it becomes this mental game.

You set expectations for yourself in the beginning, based on your fitness level, then you get into it, then there’s a whole bunch of feelings and thoughts screaming inside your head: “Oh my god this is so hard,” “I can’t breathe,” “Oh, this is really heavy,” “I don’t know how

much longer I can do this,” “Ok, no, keep going,” and like that whole journey of getting through any given workout becomes its own form of fitness, of mental fitness. [CrossFit] retrains you to think through any given situation and try and come up with a plan or strategies: “If this seems impossible, what am I going to do make it possible?” It is not a cure-all because anxiety is still very much a part of my day-to-day but at the end of the day CrossFit has made me better able to deal with highly stressful situations because of the way that you have to almost mentally trick yourself to get through some of the workouts that you do. And when you get to the other side...you are marveling at your own capabilities.

CrossFit develops mental fitness, a puzzling-through the emergence of disturbing feelings and thoughts to come up with a plan to deceive oneself to move from anxiety and pain to “Ok, no, keep going.” I’ve argued elsewhere that CrossFit allows elite white Americans to deal with apocalyptic fears that their world of power and privilege is coming to an end. By conjuring and calming the anxiety of physical pain during workouts, my CrossFit associates

and I practice managing existential anxiety and physical pain in the present.

CrossFit is designed to be anxiogenic, with its varied and intense workouts preparing warfighters for battle. CrossFit is also designed to calm this anxiety. Coaches program workouts to cultivate subjectivities that learn to push through pain and anxiety by thinking, “I have been training my body to suffer this pain, I can do this.” CrossFit also encourages the *scaling* of workouts, especially for white collar professional participants like me and my colleagues, to make any series of tasks achievable for any individual at their own level of competence. The mental game of WODs for most non-special forces participants is to find a way to push through and scale a workout so that it’s hard but doable, to be able to manipulate the situation and oneself to make the impossible possible.

The anxiety of CrossFit workouts is in conversation with the anxiety of ontological being. Analyzing anxiety in a small country, anthropologist Nutsa Batiashvili argues that anxiety, unlike other forms of worry or panic, is projected at outward objects but its ultimate source of fuel is the overdetermined potentiality of the self. Batiashvili builds on Martin Heidegger’s anxiety about

being-in-the-world by arguing that being-in-the-world *as any number of potential forms of me* is what is problematic in anxiety. CrossFit workouts illustrate this form of anxiety. The painful experience of previous CrossFit workouts gives rise to the anxiety of future workouts: “What am I capable of?” “Will I be able to talk myself through the pain?” “Will I scale the workout correctly?” “Which me will show up to do Fran—the one who will push through the pull-ups or the one who will rest more?”

But CrossFit anxiety is a simulation or fantasy. One needn’t go to the gym or push oneself to puke or develop Fran lung. But people do, as a leisure activity. Why? Perhaps it’s a form of what sociologist Stephen Lyng calls *edgework*, a skillful negotiation of boundaries between life and death, chaos and disorder, during high-risk activities. Or maybe it’s pretend edgework, as the stakes are not life and death, but rather practice for the seemingly sharp edges of everyday life.

CrossFitters are probing anxiety in a voluntary, simulated high-stakes environment in order to practice managing anxiety. This prepares CrossFitters, like Amy, to handle highly stressful (varied, intense, anxiogenic) life situations outside of the gym. CrossFit’s high-intensity combinations of pull-ups, thrusters, burpees, deadlifts, and other exercises cause anxiety and elicit anxiety’s antidote. It requests the capable embodied self show up at the gym as rehearsal to brave a work meeting, have a tough conversation, or to manage one’s to-do list. What is interesting is that this braving and managing includes finding a way to scale a workout or work meeting so that it fits one’s capabilities.

The anxiety conjuring and calming in CrossFit is a privileged way of being in the world. The physical pain is not really a life-and-death experience and scaling the world to fit one’s capabilities means one is always proficient. Therefore, CrossFit is a

way to *play* at thinking one is overcoming something dangerous rather than actually facing the existential anxiety of nonbeing. Always being capable—at the pull-up bar or barbell rack—is a way for elite white Americans to practice dealing with ontological anxiety by mobilizing existential privilege and power.

The day after Fran, we all show up, sore and coughing: “What’s the punishment today?” We will practice overcoming it, soldiers winning our simulated war with anxiety. ☿

Katie Rose Hejtmanek is associate professor of anthropology at Brooklyn College, CUNY. Her forthcoming work includes an ethnography on CrossFit, *Training for Life: The Promise of CrossFit*, a collection on the *Anthropology of Anxiety*, and an edited volume on strength sports, *Strong A(s) F(eminist): Power in Strength Sports*. KHejtmanek@brooklyn.cuny.edu

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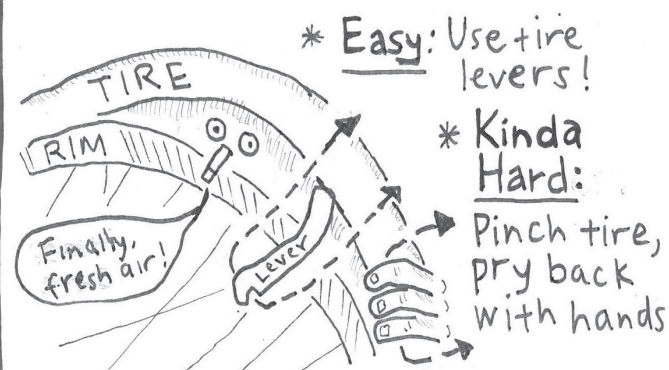
HOW TO CHANGE A BICYCLE TIRE

BY LUIS A. VIVANCO

While out biking...



2. Deflate tube, pull back tire bead on one whole side.



3. Remove tube. Inspection time! Find hole and offending source.



What to do?!



AAA to the rescue! *
*Not that one, this one...

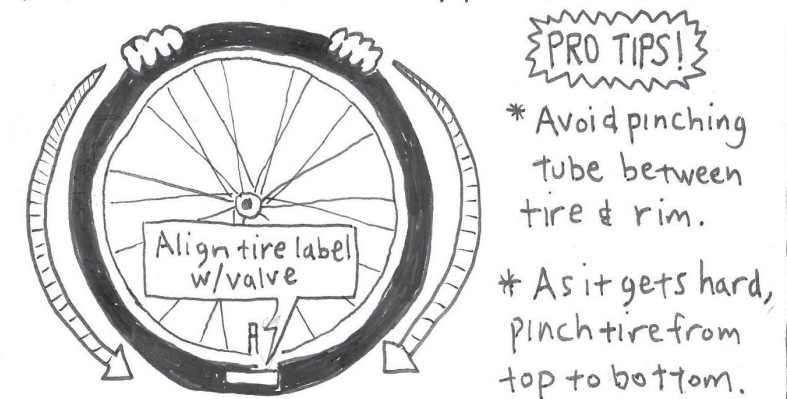
D.I.Y. Checklist

- ☒ Hands
 - ☒ Patch kit or new tube
 - ☒ Pump or
 - ☒ Tire levers x3
 - ☒ Wrench (maybe)
- PRO TIP**
Carry these on your bike

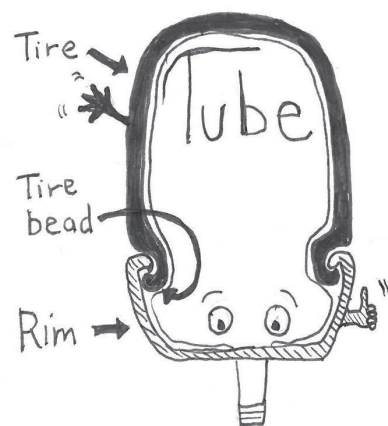
4. Patch or replace tube.



5. Slightly inflate tube and replace in tire. Work tire bead into rim, finish at valve.



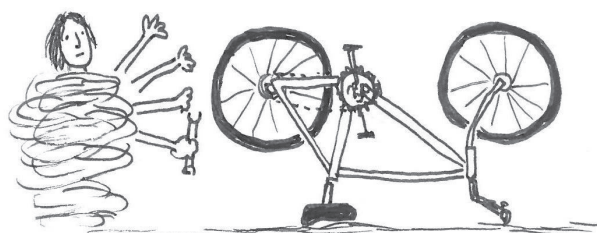
Meet the players!



You will need to separate the **tire bead** from the rim

Let's go!!!

1. Flip bike, remove wheel.



1. Shift gears to smallest rear cog.
2. Undo quick release or loosen bolts
3. Undo rim brakes

6. Completely inflate tire, replace wheel, & pedal on!



Did I reattach my brakes? I guess I'll find out...

THE END

An avid cyclist and comics creator, cultural anthropologist Luis A. Vivanco is Professor and Chair of the Anthropology Department at the University of Vermont. You can learn about his ethnographic and historical research on bicycle mobilities, cultures, and politics at: www.illustratedwheel.com

"Let's Go Brandon"

ON THE MUTABLE POWER OF SEMIOTIC PEEKABOO.

By Janet McIntosh

On a grey day in February, I headed to Easton, Massachusetts, to browse at one of five newly christened "Let's Go Brandon" (formerly "New England for Trump") stores. It nestled in a modest strip mall, next to a low-key hair salon and across the street from Lemery's Auto & Motorcycle repair. At a table inside, a cheerful middle-aged white woman arranged a careful stack of red, white, and blue socks. Her pink sweatshirt read "Let's Go Brandon/FJB"—short for "Fuck Joe Biden."

A man with feathered grey hair and a black leather jacket came through the door with a delivery of paper towels. He engaged the clerk in a chat about the several "Freedom Convoys" headed to Washington, DC, that week to protest mask and vaccine mandates. The stores had been gathering donations, and he planned to join the Boston convoy. The clerk said she'd been waving flags at intersections in support of the truckers. She gestured to her red pickup outside the store, bedecked with two American flags and a huge navy blue "LET'S GO BRANDON" announcement flapping from the back.

I explored the merchandise while they chatted. Exuberant flags, T-shirts, bumper stickers, and buttons announced that MAGA (Make America Great Again) isn't going anywhere; that Trump supporters love God and guns; that vaccination mandates violate freedom; that Blue Lives Matter; that Biden "pees sitting down." And again and again, that signature line: "Let's Go Brandon."

The slogan became a tongue-in-cheek rallying cry for former President Donald Trump in

October 2021 after the Sparks 300 NASCAR race at Talladega, Alabama. Brandon Brown, a NASCAR Xfinity Series driver, had just won, and an NBC reporter stood interviewing him in front of the grandstands. A group of young men in the bleachers were in a raucous political mood, tearing off their T-shirts, fist pumping, and chanting: "Fuck Joe Biden!" When the microphone captured their strains, the reporter tactfully suggested they were chanting "Let's Go Brandon." Since then, the phrase has been uttered on the floor of Congress, stitched into Republican ball gowns, and hashtagged across the right-wing nation.

Hostility toward Biden is hard for many liberals to understand, but the steady stream of lower- to middle-income Trump enthusiasts who use this store come not only for swag but also solidarity. Many will be feeling the pinch of inflation and the global supply chain crisis. Some will have been frustrated for years by corporate outsourcing that stripped American factory jobs; others may be middle-class suburbanites and small business owners angry about where



COLLEEN PESCI

their tax dollars are going. Spurred on by right-wing media, they are frustrated by what they see as unfair favoritism and “entitlements” handed out to immigrants and people of color. And they resent the way “elite PC whiners,” with all their cultural capital, have seemed to denigrate white and working-class identities while functioning as oppressive language police protecting the feelings of unworthy groups.

The sly “Let’s Go Brandon” slogan is a quintessential Trump-era rejoinder to such grievances. As Ben Rhodes, former speechwriter for President Obama, wryly remarked, Trump’s rise was predicated on “saying things that the other guys won’t,” often through sweeping disparagement of his enemies and norm-violating candor. Trump’s “supporter-created cyber domain” followed his lead with a swell of “shitposting”: angry, provocative, and often ironic social media sprinklings. All of this has widened the Overton window of acceptable political discourse—to the point that you can now buy “Let’s Go Brandon” socks with an image of President Trump giving the double middle finger. If, in the words of Lauren Berlant, “anti-PC means ‘I feel unfree,’” socks like these strike a blow for freedom.

There’s been a long history in the West linking working-class masculinity to impolite and “improper” speech, a dynamic the sociolinguist Peter Trudgill referred to as “covert prestige.” Politesse may be statusful, but it’s also marked as feminine, sometimes problematically so—and today’s performances of right-wing masculinity in the United States tend to feminize not only normative verbal respectability but also liberalism itself. Breaking the verbal rules and making it fun has become part of the Trump brand, with supporters exulting in flags and T-shirts that read “Fuck your feelings” and “No more bullshit” as they champion draconian anti-immigrant policies. Trump-supporting women are encouraged to do the same, but the pink on their shirts preserves some semiotic femininity. Notice the nestings of the denigrated feminine: Biden pees sitting down, after all, which

Breaking the verbal rules and making it fun has become part of the Trump brand, with supporters exulting in flags and T-shirts that read “Fuck your feelings” and “No more bullshit” as they champion draconian anti-immigrant policies.



might seem to lump all women in with the libs, but the projection of feminine weakness vs masculine strength happens at different levels of scale (it’s “fractally recursive,” in Susan Gal and Judith T. Irvine’s phrasing). Better to be a Trump-loving woman than any pussified Dem at all.

But profane masculine pride doesn’t explain the faux drama of the way the “Let’s Go Brandon” slogan conceals its underly-

ing meaning. Why not simply: “Fuck Joe Biden”? Where does this game of semiotic peekaboo come from, and why does it have such affective appeal? Some critics have dismissed the coding as “juvenile,” but I suggest there are more complex semiotic dynamics at work.

Several cultural and political histories feed the slogan’s disconnect between signifier and signified and play into its semiotic affordances. Since 9/11, the American left wing has increasingly engaged in the ironic critique of politics in venues ranging from late-night comedy shows to the *Onion*. But, as Viveca S. Greene has documented, the white nationalist right wing has honed its own political satire over the last decade or so. The sarcastic “Thanks, Obama” began trending around 2009 on the Right, though it seems meek by comparison with today’s underlying belligerence. In the 2010s, on subversive and ultimately right-wing chat sites like 4chan, aggressive postings involved a perpetual “twinkle of winking irony,” “an escape route,” argues Dale Beran, for hypersensitive young men who couldn’t afford to show their own deep vulnerability.

Irony and satire are entertaining verbal devices, and “Let’s Go Brandon” has an undeniable sense of fun as it bubbles across the right-wing community. It’s funny to cloak an insult in the guise of an innocent, youthful cheer—with the surface message seeming to egg on the political right as if it, too, were a winning race car. But the stakes feel more serious to the American right. That “Let’s go” has shades of the phrase “Let’s roll”—an exhortation made famous on 9/11 as valiant airline passengers threw themselves into a fight to the death. Could “Let’s go Brandon” come from the same heady oxygen breathed by those who stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021? It goes beyond fun, after all, to target a sitting president.

Yet its satirical guise is important to its meme-worthiness. An Oregon man finished up a televised Christmas Eve phone call with the Bidens by saying “Let’s Go Brandon,” later telling media outlets it was “innocent jest” and he “meant no disrespect.” If he’d just said, “Fuck you, Biden,”

it would have sounded like artless personal vitriol; using the slogan, he was able to wink to the larger community of Trump supporters, who took up the moment with a series of playful memes. Collective amusement builds community with others who are in on the joke, and in the Trump era, as Donna M. Goldstein, Kira Hall, and Matthew Ingram remind us, barbed humor can be a powerful political weapon.

But many “Let’s Go Brandon” enthusiasts may have something else on their minds, too. Trump supporters have deeply resented the scolding of the so-called PC liberals, often claiming that their language is being censored. They deem the sensitive phrasings espoused on college campuses the work of fragile “snowflakes,” and many have abandoned conventional social media platforms for alternative venues like Parler where they can express their anger and hostility more freely.

The very fact that “Let’s Go Brandon” is coded may be a nod to any would-be censors. Its little game of hiding and showing seems to mock the pretense of verbal respectability and empathic sensitivity so important to many liberals. Consider a T-shirt I saw in the store, for instance, which draws attention to how thin the slogan’s semiotic veneer is by proclaiming a desire “to solve the puzzle: F _CK JOE B _DEN” above the slogan, “Let’s Go Brandon” (the design may also be inspired by liberal conventions of deleting select vowels of potentially offensive words).

The “Let’s Go Brandon” slogan can thus be a locus, for some, of gleeful affective energy that bespeaks resentment toward the very idea that one might have to mince words. Meanwhile, its barely-there veneer of decorum can be exploited to offer a bit of plausible deniability (that Christmas Eve caller spoke “innocently” to President Biden, right?).

In fact, plausible deniability has a recent history of doing some serious work on the political right. The white supremacist Richard Spencer concluded a 2016 speech by shouting “Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory” into an auditorium of Nazi



The “Let’s Go Brandon” slogan can thus be a locus, for some, of gleeful affective energy that bespeaks resentment toward the very idea that one might have to mince words.

salutes, then contended he had done so in a “spirit of irony and exuberance.” Neo-Nazi websites have urged their followers to create a gap between signifier and signified by using a light tone in online comments, so that the “unindoctrinated” reader can’t tell whether they’re joking. Trump, of course, became well-known for his indirect, racist dog-whistles; provocations that are superficially not about race but still communicate negative messages about racialized groups.

Most famously, the mysterious oracular figure known as “Q” signaled for a couple of years in cryptic fashion about the coming violent “Storm” waiting to overthrow the Democrats for a Trump-led totalitarian state. Q’s signaling was so opaque that “digital armies” of “Anons” dedicated hours, weeks, and months of time on social media to collectively decoding what they thought were Q’s thrilling underlying meanings. In all these cases, the gap between signifier and signified is exploited, hinting at imminent right-wing power and violence while attempting to skirt charges of hate speech or incitement.

Elsewhere, I have given the name “alt-signaling” to the right-wing pattern of using indirect or cryptic semiotic forms to gesture toward sinister meaning. But alt-signaling isn’t just about dodging accusations. When the speaker’s deeper meaning takes clandestine form—sometimes even in plain sight—it benefits from the status of secrecy, a quality that, as Graham Jones elaborates, can bring the frisson of power. Alex Pillen has described a flirtatious, fun, and sometimes aggressive joking register in Sri Lanka called *boru* that is based on “obvious pretense.” The speaker says something that isn’t quite what they mean, but because the pretense is so obvious, Pillen argues, “[the speaker’s] superiority is confirmed by the power to deceive without having to hide it or fear its consequences.” Similarly, the “Let’s Go Brandon” slogan traffics in (to use Pillen’s words) “revealing and accentuating the liberty and the power to deceive.”

In a more sinister vein, though, the power of this peekaboo from behind the ramparts sometimes stems from its intimations of violence. The US right-wing “militia-sphere” has ramped up its activities on social media, stoking a “martyr myth” that they are imperiled by liberals, gun control, and COVID-19-related restrictions. Brandishing their weapons has become a widespread response to this feeling of disempowerment. And so, for instance, the right-wing clothing and gift store BringAmmo.com sells “Let’s Go Brandon” wrapping paper, with their menacing web address interspersed in smaller font.

The veteran-owned “Bottle Breacher” company sells a bottle opener shaped like a grenade, called the “Let’s Go Brandon Freedom Frag.” The term “frag,” short for a fragmentary grenade, may to some on-lookers drag with it a colloquial meaning from the Vietnam War era, when frustrated GIs would “frag” or kill unpopular senior officers. Through semiotic transfer, this product appears to map the “Let’s Go Brandon” slogan onto the notion of mutiny.

Still more directly, gun vendors like My Southern Tactical now sell ammo and gun components stamped with “Let’s Go Brandon.” Sometimes the words are flanked by an image of Biden wearing a mask, which (to its intended audience) indexes feminized liberal cowardice and the oppression of freedom. Through such repeated associations, the phrase “Let’s Go Brandon” becomes saturated with the notion that the right wing is—or will be—in combat with an existential enemy.

Evidently, such whispers about the preparations of a violent alternative state appeal to those on the outermost reaches of the right wing. A grainy photograph posted to Twitter in early 2022 shows a “Let’s Go Branon [sic]” banner draped at an overpass, flanked by swastikas.

Semiotic moments like this intensify the contrastive stances of “Let’s Go Brandon”: one enthusiastic and jocular, the other sinister and deadly. Such strategic contradictions resonate with other semiotic patterns on the alt right. In Arthur Jones’s *Feels Good Man*, Joel Finkelstein, director of the Contagion Network Research Institute, suggests that the white supremacist “Pepe the Frog” meme appeals because “he combines this impossible mixture of innocence and evil. Like, he has this kind of knowing smile while he performs acts that are really atrocious.” Military memes sometimes make the same move, winking in ludic fashion while alluding to violence in combat.

Such repeated stances of levity in reference to hostile acts encourage a mindset of moral anomie. Arguably, dehumanization becomes easier in such a semiotic context.

Pillen’s discussion of Sri Lankan *boru* jokes suggests that two tones, aggressive

Through such repeated associations, the phrase “Let’s Go Brandon” becomes saturated with the notion that the right wing is—or will be—in combat with an existential enemy



and playful, can “feed off each other,” and that “their aesthetic maintains a unitary (and therefore ambiguous) power.” Each use of “Let’s Go Brandon” could imply enthusiastic endorsement *and* aggressive hostility. It can be made suitable for dressing up a child—a young girl on the store’s Facebook feed in February 2022 wears a “Let’s Go Brandon” sweatshirt while giving a double thumbs up—and for dressing up a bid to bring ammo. Its ambiguity gives it broad affordances; there’s something for the whole family here.

Like the store I visited, the “Let’s Go Brandon” slogan provides a gathering point for a community that currently feels itself in a state of frustrated imminence. As affect theorists have made clear, political

life is substantially driven by moods and atmospheres, and “Let’s Go Brandon” has an abundance of affective possibility, all of it able to travel through memes and their affective contagion. The slogan is funny and fun, it offers the pretense of a widely shared secret, and it enacts the power of not having to keep the secret altogether hidden. It makes a mockery of left-wing sensitivity, and it points toward the possibility of a roaring political comeback. Some of the contexts in which it’s used suggest gleeful hostility as it hums in resonance with all the signs surrounding it, be they swastikas or the “Make Liberals Cry Again” flag on the store wall. It may seem juvenile, but it’s semiotically effective, genuinely galvanizing, and—in some hands, anyway—potentially sinister.

Still, some Biden supporters recently found a way to keep laughing. The new genre of “Dark Brandon” memes feature Biden carrying out heroic political feats with glowing eyes. The images reappropriate the Brandon concept while mocking the “Dark MAGA” memes that earnestly feature an infernal-eyed Trump. Semiotic vengeance, then, is hardly the sole purview of the right—but as the FBI raids Trump’s Mar-a-Lago, we can only brace ourselves to see whether the right wing’s response will include material violence. 🌀

Janet McIntosh, professor of anthropology at Brandeis University, has conducted cultural and linguistic anthropological research in East Africa, South Africa, and the United States. She has written two award-winning ethnographies, *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood, and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast* (2009) and *Unsettled: Denial and Belonging among White Kenyans* (2016), and is the coeditor, with Norma Mendoza-Denton, of *Language in the Trump Era: Scandals and Emergencies* (2020). She is currently writing a book on embodied language and necropolitics in the US military.

Colleen Pesci is a visual artist, educator, and curator/founder of The Casserole Series. www.casseroleseries.com

Homesick

By Kate Rowberry

i. FERTILIZE MY FIELD

in that town, i was baptized
with a watering can. cold droplets
traced rivers down my shivering back.

when i was young, we boxed our belongings and took them
elsewhere, and i was a sapling being grafted. i became too
scared to speak, so i penciled my troubles onto paper and
gave the wooden curses to my mother with tremorous hands:

*i cannot be grafted, i cannot be grafted, i cannot be grafted,
and please repot my perennial fright.*

shyness was planted into my third-grade soul. i am still
pruning away the brittle leaves,
hacking at its trunk, clawing at the rot.
sap clings to my fibrous fingers.

i combatted rainy tears
during my piano lessons as i dragged my bloodied fingers
across the thorny keys, or in classrooms where i was
nailed to a crucifix of fear, or with the
judas people i wanted to be my new friends.

ii. WEED MY FLOWERBED

if i were blessed, i would not sometimes be an
etiolated eve drifting through the garden of eden.

i visit my built-up hometown and
remember i am not a local
anymore, even if that was the
holy loam i first trod on.

imagination invades reality and the idea
germinates: *that could have been me.*

that could have been me. and i have a vision:

wandering that school's redolent halls and
mingling with that petaled crowd and
never knowing the difference.
my hometown friends are merely
faces in my chlorotic yearbook:
have those trellis kids with
tendrils hearts forgotten me yet?

iii. POLLINATE MY BLOSSOMS

it's ridiculous that i cultivate nostalgia for that home
but i feel wilted when i see the people who also grew there.

the last time i saw them, the taste of *goodbye*
lingered on my lips like bread and wine and
i don't know how to resurrect
hello after eight years of silence.

wandering through my old, ivied neighborhood,
i wonder if it missed me, and i kneel in my gethsemane,
and i trowel a hole through the memory of my home.

cultivar people in my new town
talk about *that place* and i think about
how the soil nourished me in *that place*.
but i don't know *that place* anymore,
and after so long, it doesn't know me.

even though i have sprouted since i got here,
i am still taking root because i am still floral homesick.

This piece was selected as a winner of the AAA's **AnthroDay Student Unessay Competition** in the high school division. Inspired by the *World on the Move* exhibit, this year's unessay competition focused on migration. Selected prompt: "Do you or your family have any stories about moving? If so, share one."

Kate Rowberry is a high school junior who has studied anthropology through Sierra College. She enjoys writing and loves linguistic anthropology because it embodies the intersection between words and people. Her work has been recognized by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers and appeared in the *Global Youth Review*.



An aerial view of trucks waiting in the long queue to cross the river over the Kazungula bridge between Botswana and Zambia, May 10, 2021.

TikTok, Truckers, and Travel Bans

WHEN COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS BROUGHT CROSS-BORDER TRANSIT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA TO A STANDSTILL, LONG-HAUL TRUCKERS DEPLOYED SOCIAL MEDIA TO BYPASS THE TRAFFIC BACKUPS, BUILD COMMUNITIES OF CARE, AND KEEP THEIR SUPPLIES MOVING.

By Rebecca L. Upton

TRUCKS STOP

The line of long-haul trucks seems endless, stretching several miles from the South African border; a few engines idle but most are switched off in the effort to conserve fuel and are tacit recognition that no one will be crossing anytime soon. The air is hot and dusty. It is September 2020, and medical workers in hazmat suits make their way down the line of trucks, swabbing throats and noses, distributing masks, and checking cargo. Frustrations are running high, as the usual backups along the Tlokweng border have been exacerbated by confusing COVID-19 protocols and delays that put drivers in precarious positions, weighing personal health and safety with the need to deliver freight across the region.

Ernest Bongaka is a 35-year-old long-haul trucker who has been driving for almost 10 years but who has never encountered anything like the traffic back-up along the border. He works for a large local company, headquartered outside of Gaborone, Botswana, and transports everything from building materials to perishable goods, traveling across multiple borders several times each week. Ernest and his friend Macdonald, who drives for a different company based in Gauteng, South Africa, grew up together in the small village of Malolwane along the border of the two countries. Fascinated by engines and trucks of all sorts, the friends became certified drivers and worked locally in Botswana for a beverage distribution company in Gaborone before finding jobs in the international long-haul industry. As Ernest shares via text as they sit in the same, seemingly interminable line of trucks that day, “The border control think we are all carrying COVID, they don’t see the rest of the cargo, or the reasons we need to move, they just see us as sick.” Both Ernest and Macdonald have been accused of being vectors of the virus, border officers and even their family members shouting suspicions and sharing concerns that truckers were and are still spreading disease across the continent, fears of COVID-19 mapped onto the drivers themselves.

In many ways the concern was warranted: cross-border traffic and travelers were significant factors in COVID-19 transmission throughout Africa and in particular along borders in the eastern and southern regions. In Kenya and Uganda, along with Botswana and Zimbabwe, truckers tested positive at rates much higher than those in the general populations (though lack of access to regular testing may explain some of those data) and were characterized in the news and conversation as literal carriers of the pandemic. International borders were closed or tightly restricted. Fear led some to close before any cases had been reported.

Although early in the pandemic, conditions varied across the continent, initial reports on social media suggested some real

barriers to movement—as Ernest described, “One day, Tlokweng was at a standstill, nobody moved, it was like we were statues. On my regular route I would go through there many times, at least once a day, they knew me there, but then, full stop. That border would close for a day, close with no warning, with nobody telling us anything.” Prior to the pandemic, some trucking companies in the region advertised that with their own in-house clearing operations and bonded transfer agents, drivers and clients would easily move through customs without facing delays, VAT, or unexpected fees. As Ernest told me, “If you work for one of those companies you get a nice cab and an easy haul, things would be pretty seamless, no penalties for anyone, they weren’t stuck hanging around Beitbridge or Kazungula [border posts with notoriously long lines for truckers and tourists alike]... but after COVID, everyone became the same...all of the drivers, all of the trucks, nobody moved.”

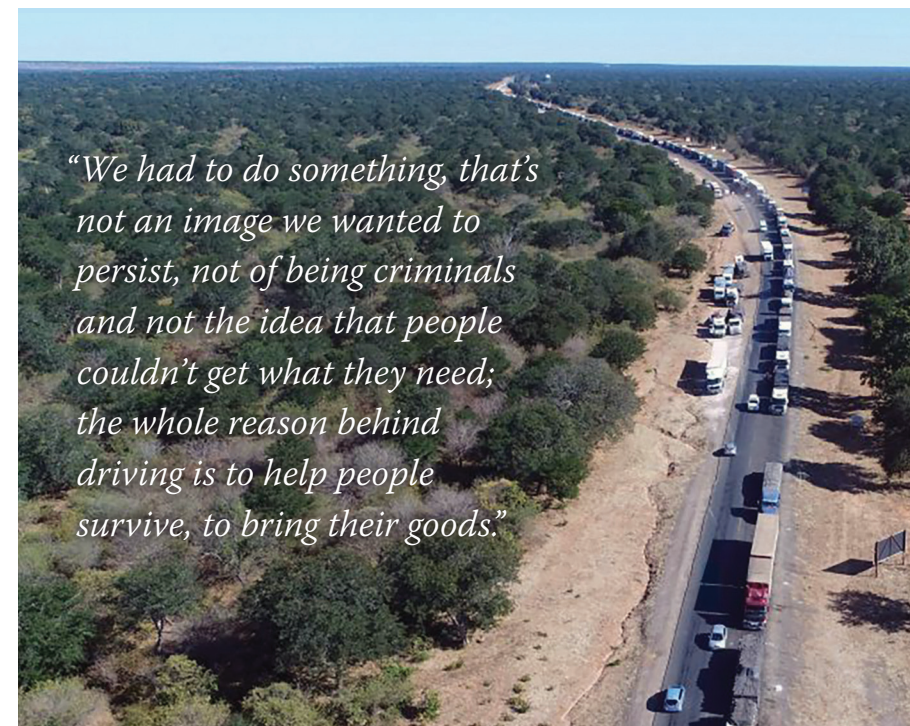
Other barriers to movement were even more profound. Macdonald and Ernest both described days-long quarantine periods while awaiting test results and without sufficient running water, toilets, or adequate space to socially distance from other drivers, adding to the public health crisis. As Ernest says, “It was so ironic, we were treated like we were carrying the disease and yet they had no ways to keep anyone safe; we had to figure it out ourselves, take it into our own hands to stay healthy.” According to the SA Long-distance Truckers Facebook page in May 2020, trucks were queued for nine days or more and “[P]olice...escorted trucks into Lusaka and parked off...[a]ll the drivers were loaded into a bus and taken to a university building and left there under heavy police guard to quarantine in inhumane conditions.” This despite drivers not showing any symptoms of the virus. Trucks were also not allowed to offload for that fear of “carrying COVID.”

The vilification is reinforced in varied national testing and contact-tracing policies. For instance, instead of general community testing, Botswana implemented

a “sentinel testing” strategy, with a focus on points of transit, villages close to its borders, and points of entry, meaning that truckers and other migrants were tested most routinely. Tswana officials also implemented a color-coded permit system where holders could only cross into certain geographic zones during certain times a day to keep contact and the coronavirus at bay. Eventually, and similar to reports of what was happening in eastern Africa, Ernest and Macdonald began to follow posts online offering drivers negative COVID test results for sale, bribes to bypass the restrictions, lengthy interviews at customs, decontamination processes, and temperature and vaccination checks that were disrupting the flow of goods as well as individual driver paychecks.

TIKTOK

Even with COVID restrictions in place, informal cross-border trading activities continue, and people communicate. Borders are porous along these transportation corridors and images such as those of financially strapped Zimbabweans crossing the Limpopo River near the Beit Bridge border post into South Africa, exchanging cigarettes and beer for groceries and other household items with Musina residents, were shared widely on social media. For Ernest and the other truckers, these images sparked wide debate and their own social media (mostly Twitter and TikTok) discourse. For them, these informal crossings (framed as “illegal” by law enforcement officials) fed into the continued, problematic, and growing narrative that *anybody* crossing the borders, including truckers, were dangerous COVID-laden criminals. As Ernest says, “We had to do something, that’s not an image we wanted to persist, not of being criminals and not the idea that people couldn’t get what they need; the whole reason behind driving is to help people survive, to bring their goods.” Truckers often frame what they do on the road—their jobs—as a responsibility to protect others. For example, bokangbokang935, a South African trucking industry TikTokker, posts often about the need for truckers to



help track down and even punish thieves who steal cargo off flatbeds.

Since its launch, TikTok’s popularity has grown rapidly across Africa. In October 2018, it was the most-downloaded photo or video app and currently has over 500 million monthly active global users. In Botswana, the number of people using social media for daily news doubled in the years just prior to the pandemic, from 2014 to 2019 over a third of the population gained access to those news sources. And throughout the continent, TikTok’s popularity and usage grew exponentially during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to grow.

Truckers claim this technology as something of their own. Ernest and Macdonald and many other truckers on social media leveraged their own growing social networks (once the purview of CB radios, most drivers now communicate and share information on social media platforms) to speak up against unfair treatment at the borders and in the process, created a more effective distribution system of essentials, COVID information, personal protective equipment,

food, and water. As Macdonald proudly describes, “We are the essential workers now, we can move, even its difficult, we can move when everyone else has to sit still. We tell other drivers what load we’re carrying, what extras we can take and where it all needs to be. So if I know I have a free pallet and can take water, cans, and masks that are meant for Polokwane but might be held up back in Pretoria, then I will, all I have to do is post something on #southafricatruckdrivers and things will move.”

During the first year of COVID, when personal protective equipment was hard to find, when supply chains stalled, and even simple masks were limited or nonexistent, particularly in remote areas, Ernest made certain that boxes of sanitizer, hand wipes, and soap were included in his load. In Francistown, Botswana, along the eastern corridor of the country and a highly trafficked route for transport throughout the entire region, much of the local population were without reliable boreholes or plumbing and using “tippy taps” instead. Made by attaching a jerry can of water to a stick, dowel, or branch and operated by a

foot pedal connected by a rope, tippy taps are ways that even those without running water could increase handwashing and contactless cleaning. But in Francistown and villages outside of Dukwi, near the border, it became clear that cans, soap, and twine were in high demand and low supply. Ernest and two of his colleagues brought a load of cans (there are often excess jerry cans in Gaborone or NGO headquarters, as they are seen as an essential yet easily donatable item), Sunlight soap, and rope to the community. As Ernest describes it,

We got the idea from those local guys on motorbikes, kids really, who were selling drinks, cigarettes, snacks...they’d bring you takeaways, any kind of food, *seswa*, *pap*, *biltong* or chocolate, sometimes beer, and definitely Fanta while you were in the border queue...they were weaving in and out of the trucks as we were lined up, delivering it all since we couldn’t move. You could yell to them to stop if you needed something, but mostly they began to just deliver things to people from online...nobody wanted to be face to face then anyway...so, TikTok, Insta, WhatsApp if you were in a group, the motorbike delivery guys would get your message and find you in the queue...sure they made money but it was the *idea*, that they had organized all this to help bring us things when we were stuck... we liked that and so did the same on a bigger, international scale.

In this way, the rise of TikTok as a traveler’s or trucker’s aid is a necessary means through which communities of care, safety, and supplies continue to travel even as physical cross-border movement grinds to a veritable halt. Technologies such as this are familiar as social movements and political organization (from the 2011 Arab Spring to Kenyan artisans entering a global economy using iPhones) are facilitated through such tools. Mobile phones are essential, and it is not surprising that the uptake of social media and mobile apps have been so tremendous in Africa. In Botswana, landline technology has been

quickly outdated, eclipsed a decade ago by mobile phone usage. As Ernest reminds me, “If I didn’t have my phone, I wouldn’t have family, nobody would have food, and I’d be lost [laughs] literally...” The “family” he refers to are mainly other truckers and people on the road with whom he connects with along the way each week (girlfriends, friends, business partners). Ernest doesn’t use the phone to actually make calls; like many in the continent, he uses SMS, TikTok, or Twitter to communicate.

With their physical mobility restricted, drivers use other hashtags such as #truck_driver_south_africa, #truckersof-southafrica, #africantruckdrivers, among others, as ways to update people on their well-being, travel status, and road and border closures. Truckers and their communities create social networks of care and encouragement and even help one another combat disease through sharing resources and bringing them to hard-to-reach communities. Where once truckers used CB radios to connect, they now deploy TikTok to broadly (and visually) share experiences and information, voice opinions, and film the impact of the pandemic on personal and professional lives.

THE LAST MILE

In a region where HIV/AIDS has been part and parcel of everyday life for generations, there are roadmaps for how to protect communities through behavioral change. Donor agencies and governments have long strategized how to best disseminate medicines and improve health literacy. HIV-awareness strategies are far from the early “ABC” (Abstain, Be faithful, and Condomize) campaigns of the Bush era and recognize the role of gender and sexual decision-making in negotiating perceptions of risk that surround health and illness. Edutainment strategies, such as the wildly popular *Magkabaneng* radio soap opera in Botswana, work well in addressing the impact of HIV in everyday life. Yet national, international, and NGO supply chains are fraught with challenges that continue to make the provision of medicine, care, and consistent messaging to people in their


Ernest doesn’t use the phone to actually make calls; like many in the continent, he uses SMS, TikTok, or Twitter to communicate.

communities persistently difficult, a concept in global public health that is captured by the idea of going “the last mile.” In 2016, Project Last Mile (PLM) was rolled out by USAID in partnership with Coca-Cola, in the effort to draw on best practices in the private sector, coordinate community health efforts, and achieve medical access for all in Africa.

The question driving the development of PLM remains, “If you can find a Coca-Cola product almost anywhere in Africa, why not life-saving medicines?” With the aim to leverage Coca-Cola’s best practices in providing products and creating “pick up points” for medications, their efforts have been successful. In 2021, COVID-19-specific efforts reached over 27 million people in South Africa in just five months through a mixed-media campaign about the importance of vaccinations. From September 2021 to January 2022, vaccination rates in South Africa increased from 10 percent to almost 30 percent, considerably greater than across the continent as a whole.

It appears that the informal, social media driven (and literally driven) goods and information that truckers in southern Africa are bringing to communities, mirrors much of what larger, international and ministry of health offices are trying to do. The strategies that truckers are using are fodder for those thinking about how to reach the millions of African populations without access to vaccines, PPE, or communication about COVID-19. For example, in early 2022, Director of External Communications for the South Africa Department of Health, Nombulelo Leburu, stressed the need to continue these efforts and shift the focus to “identify more innovative, nontraditional communications approaches to motivate

vaccine uptake, especially among the youth.” Ernest is therefore understandably proud when he talks about how the USAID and Coca-Cola partners “had the same idea that we did” and describes the latest “viral” (he always puts it in air quotes) TikTok video about vaccine uptake, viewed over six million times in one month. Today, Project Last Mile is focused on exploring other strategies to motivate vaccinations and health precautions and improve awareness, mostly through incentives such as airtime for mobile phones, electricity, or cash vouchers. Ernest and Macdonald on the other hand, continue to carry COVID-related goods (tests, vaccines, medical equipment, PPE, sanitizer, wipes, and masks) alongside their regular loads. They are literally closing that gap, going that last mile so that others (local community members, NGOs, volunteers, practitioners, and others) may not have to.

With the Africa CDC efforts to enact “digital disease surveillance,” truckers like Ernest and Macdonald find themselves somewhat unintentionally at the forefront of innovative global public health interventions. The CDC site describes their next efforts as the “aggregation and analysis of data available on the internet, such as search engines, social media and mobile phones, and not directly associated with patient illnesses or medical encounters” but rather an approach to tracking behaviors and movements of people. There is clearly interest in developing digital surveillance strategies for public health actions worldwide, and arguably the informal networks and strategies of long-haul African truckers may again provide the best insights about how to create community, combat disease, and move essential consumer goods where they need to be. 

Rebecca L. Upton is professor of global public and environmental health at Colgate University. She received her PhD in medical anthropology from Brown University and her MPH degree from the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory. She researches and teaches the intersections between reproductive health, gender, and migration in southern Africa.



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Herding Heritage

IN SEARCH OF MONGOLIA'S DEEP PASTORALIST PASTS.

By Oula Seitsonen, Jean-Luc Houle, and Jamsranjav Bayarsaikhan

Back in 1909, Finnish archaeologist Sakari Pälsi became the first to document many of Mongolia's iconic archaeological monuments. He travelled through the vast steppes on an expedition with the famous linguist G. J. Ramstedt, and along the way they recorded ancient sites, such as the 3,000-year-old Bronze Age khirigsuur burial mounds and deer stones carved with depictions of flying deer, as well as Mongolian pastoralist customs and folklore. Inspired by Pälsi's journey, Oula Seitsonen and Jamsranjav Bayarsaikhan retraced their 1,000-mile-long route through the expansive landscape 110 years later, with the aid of some state-of-the-art archaeological methods.

A herder family migrating from their winter camp to summer camp in the Mongolian Altai, with their disassembled ger (yurt) packed on top of an old Soviet truck.

OULA SEITSONEN

While some of the monuments had been lost in the turmoil of time, and others recently reconstructed and reused as sacrificial sites, over 200 new archaeological sites were located along the way. These point to fascinating continuities in nomadic herder <practices> and rituals in the deep past and in the present, but also to some major changes in social and economic landscapes.

Together with Jean-Luc Houle we have been digging for Mongolian pastoralist heritage since 2010. Our archaeological surveys and excavations have highlighted the resilience of local herding lifeways in the face of numerous socioeconomic and environmental changes throughout the millennia.

FOLLOWING IN SAKARI PÄLSI'S FOOTSTEPS

Mongolia is a pastoralist country. The majority of its immense landmass is used for herding purposes, and about half of its inhabitants are actively engaged in pastoral livelihoods on the steppes. It is a country of geographic and cultural contrasts, ranging from the snow-covered Altai Mountains in the west to the barren Gobi Desert in the east. The other half of the country's population lives in and around its capital Ulaanbaatar, which is characterized by the juxtaposition of modern glass-walled skyscrapers and sprawling *ger* (yurt tent) neighbourhoods. Migration from the countryside to the capital is also one of several threats to the durability of herding life in Mongolia and the cause of many socioeconomic problems, such as unemployment and displacement.

Pastoralist cultures in Mongolia have millennia-long roots. Owing to the sheer size and diverse geographies of the country, archaeological fieldwork is slow, costly, and patchy, and archaeologists have only recently started to uncover the remains of ancient herder settlements. There are still vast blank spots in the archaeological distribution maps. Also, making strict research schedules and plans is typically pointless in Mongolia, as fieldwork is unpredictable, requiring great patience and a readiness to improvise.

Fieldwork in Mongolia habitually necessitates moving over great distances. Most places are without mobile phone connection, which demands preparedness to overcome all kinds of unanticipated challenges by oneself. The often-nonexistent infrastructure, unpredictable weather, and extremely long distances and travel times place great stress on vehicles, typically old and rundown Soviet vans and trucks. Pälsi and Ramstedt trekked their journey for three months on horseback, and although we managed to make the same trip in about half that time, it included seven car breakdowns, with improvised repairs sometimes in snowstorms, and driving through a flash flood that washed the tracks away.

It is not uncommon to experience all four seasons within a 24-hour period. You might wake up on an early June morning to warm summer weather that suddenly falls to sub-zero temperatures, then struggle through a snowstorm with eight-foot visibility through the day, before finally setting up camp in melting snow puddles. On some occasions, this weather cycle can even take place twice in a day. Strong winds, rain, and thunderstorms are common.

Travelling across the steppes is also a delightful experience that reminds us of human resourcefulness, friendliness, and goodwill. Navigation in the roadless terrain often takes places on a kind of macroscale, with just an approximate idea of the probable directions based on general landscape features such as mountains and valleys or following telephone lines. Of course, Global Positioning System (GPS) and satellite imagery assist in navigating but are often inadequate on a local level. In our experience, the traditional “Mongolian GPS” (Ger Positioning System), which involves accepting generous invitations to drink tea and eat with the herder families in their gers while asking directions, is often the most effective means to find your way across the steppes.

Pälsi and Ramstedt relied fully on the local ways of living, travelling, and clothing, and this is a useful approach even today. Horseback travel was and is a flexible, and sometimes the only, way to traverse the rugged terrain, as it has been for the past



A modern pastoralist ger (yurt) camp in the Mongolian Altai.
OULA SEITSONEN

three millennia. The traditional gers offer a durable and comfortable choice for accommodation. And directions are best found by asking around and chatting with people.

In 1909, Pälsi became the first professional archaeologist to record many archaeological site types in Mongolia. During his trip, he developed field research techniques, such as photography and detailed mapping, which then formed a basis for Finnish archaeological documentation methods. Some decades later, he also wrote the first manual for archaeological fieldwork in Finland. A century on, many field methods in the harsh steppe conditions are similar to those used by Pälsi, coupled with state-of-the-art approaches such as drone mapping, laser scanning, and 3D-modelling.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY PURGES AND NOMADIC REVIVAL

Besides archaeology, Pälsi and Ramstedt made insightful ethnographic observations

and photographed the built environment, customs, religious beliefs, and herding practices of the people they met. We photographed many of the same places just over a century later to compare changes and continuities. The largest visible change in the Mongolian built environment and cultural legacy took place during the Great Repression—the Communist purges of 1937–1939 (in Mongolian, *Их Хэлмэгдүүлэлт*). During the purges, most of the Buddhist monasteries that had until that time acted as havens of civilization, culture, trade, and administration on the steppes were destroyed and nearly 20,000 monks were murdered. This caused massive changes in the socioeconomic dynamics, cultural environment, and spiritual and cultural heritage of the steppes. Many people were forcibly moved and resettled on collective farms, where rather unsuccessful attempts to farm the unsuitable steppe lands were made.

It was only after the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 that Mongolians were able

to revitalize their long-silenced religious legacy. They commenced a vigorous spiritual revival that included restoring temples, and uncovering many Buddhist treasures, such as statues and monastery gates hidden by locals in caves and wells since the 1930s. Ancient Mongolian shamanistic beliefs were also invigorated. This religious renewal has also included locals reconstructing some archaeological monuments recorded by Pälsi, which have been modified to become part of modern ritual complexes.

Today, many newly rebuilt temples and monasteries mark the Mongolian landscape. During our 2019 trip we were able to return the photographs taken by Pälsi in 1909 to some communities, who were able to witness for the first time these spiritual sites as they had been before their destruction. We also tried to locate the descendants of the shaman Ötsir-böö, immortalized by Pälsi in his world-famous

photographs, but this turned out to be impossible owing to the large-scale relocations of people during Soviet times.

Alongside the spiritual restoration, the collapse of Soviet rule in Mongolia allowed people to get back to their traditional nomadic lifeways, moving out from the collective farms and spreading on the steppes in family and clan groups. Today, herders live in their gers and move according to an annual nomadic settlement pattern. Caravans between their summer and winter camps typically include the herders driving animal herds on horseback and their families following in old Soviet-built jeeps or trucks loaded with gers and other gear. The length of the annual migrations varies in different parts of the country depending on local conditions, from less than 10 miles to over 100 miles. This appears to have been the situation since Bronze Age times, based on our settlement pattern analyses.

FINDING ANCIENT PASTORALIST SETTLEMENTS

Past pastoralist habitation sites the world over are typically ephemeral and poorly visible, and appear to the untrained eye as an “invisible” archaeological record. Jean-Luc was among the first archaeologists to focus, about two decades ago, on Mongolia’s ancient herder settlement sites, starting in the Khanuy River Valley in north-central Mongolia.

Khanuy Valley was also visited by Pälси and Ramstedt on their 1909 survey, which was one reason why Oula joined Jean-Luc and Bayarsaikhan there. The area is best known for Mongolia’s largest khirigsuur monuments, Bronze Age burial ritual sites that date to about three millennia ago and display a similar architectural vocabulary over great distances. Khirigsuurs exhibit a central burial mound surrounded by a rectangular or circular fence and have an array of characteristic satellite features, such as small sacrificial mounds on their eastern side that typically cover a horse skull facing eastwards and sometimes hooves, and on their western side stone circles containing burnt fragments of sheep or goat bones. Their general geographical orientation is similar across their large distribution area, suggesting the structures might have been oriented according to some celestial features. It seems possible that rituals at khirigsuurs were seasonal and related to nomadic migrations and to emerging social complexity since the Bronze Age. Especially fascinating, is the way that khirigsuurs continue to have a place in the local spiritual landscape and carry heritage importance and value for local people. For example, it is not uncommon to find recently sacrificed horse heads on top of these ancient burial mounds, telling of locals’ strong ties to these ancestral ritual sites.

The habitation site surveys in Khanuy Valley were based on a combination of ethnoarchaeology and systematically digging thousands of shovel probes over vast areas. The material dug up from the shovel probes, such as millennia-old ceramic sherds and faunal remains, allowed us to



JEAN-LUC HOULE

A 3,000-year-old Bronze Age khirigsuur and a herder with horses in Khanuy Valley.



OULA SEITSONEN

Our colleagues Batsuren Byambadorj and Tuvshinjargal Tumurbaatar excavating at Züünkhangai.

make a connection between the monumental landscape and ancient pastoralist seasonal mobilities between winter and summer campsites. In the past, the requirements for fitting seasonal settlement sites on the steppes were largely analogous to those of the modern pastoralists. These included suitable, water-absorbent soils on gentle slopes, protection from the harsh elements such as strong northerly winds, access to water and firewood, and, most importantly, good pasturelands. Modern

pastoralist winter camps are typically situated in sheltered locations inhabited throughout the long Mongolian winter, which can last over half a year. Our studies show that many modern winter camps have acted as wintertime settlement sites for over three to four millennia.

Following the settlement pattern studies in the Khanuy Valley, we decided to test the lessons learned further afield. This was the starting point for our ongoing Western Mongolia Archaeology Project (WMAp).

We shifted to work at the Altai Mountains in the westernmost tip of Mongolia at the border of Mongolia, China, and Russia in 2012–2014, and after that in the Züünkhangai region in northwestern Mongolia that was a blank spot in the archaeological distribution maps.

DEEP PASTORALIST PAST

The most remarkable example of the lengthy and deep resilience of Mongolian pastoralist habitation was encountered at one of the sites we excavated in Züünkhangai. Altogether, we have recorded over 1,000 sites in Züünkhangai since 2015, ranging from Palaeolithic find locations that predate the last glaciation to ancient settlement sites, modern campsites, and sky burial places. Many Mongolians practice the ancient sky burial tradition, where a body is left to lie on the steppe so it can return into the great circle of life. Such sites are recognizable by their low grave markers and occasional scattered bones.


Most ancient habitation sites in Mongolia have little soil to excavate, typically only about a foot of archaeological deposits. This was what we anticipated to find also when digging a Bronze Age find location at one modern winter campsite, dubbed ZK513 (ZK refers to the study area and 513 is the running survey site number). After

digging about a foot deep we noticed that the deposits at ZK513 kept on going, and as we continued exploring them, they just went on deeper and deeper. We reached the permafrost about three feet down, and in the end the archaeological layers reached nearly six feet deep!

Based on the radiocarbon dating of charcoal from various features and the material culture, these layers cover 4,000 years of recurring habitation at the same spot. Finds include ceramics connected to different periods of the past, lithic artefacts, and faunal remains in well-deposited contexts. Permafrost and the advantageous soils have preserved the find materials remarkably well. For instance, the bone finds are in excellent shape, which is very rare in Mongolia where archaeological bones are typically found in poor and fragmented conditions. The melting of permafrost and glaciers due to climate change is one of the major threats faced by archaeological materials in Mongolia.

ZK513 is the first such deeply stratified multiperiod pastoralist habitation site in Mongolia and an outstanding and unique example of the endurance of ancient herder lifeways. Based on geoarchaeological analyses by our colleagues Natalia Égüez and Juan José García-Granero and zooarchaeological bone analyses by Lee G. Broderick, we now know that the site acted as a pastoralist winter camp also in the past. The narrow valley at ZK513 with its protective cliffs on three sides and accessible pastures below has offered a good seasonal settlement site for herders through time. Our finds from ZK513 highlight the long-term adaptive strength of Mongolian herders over the past 4,000 years, despite major changes in their wider sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and environmental conditions.

The millennia-long use of same habitation and ritual sites is one of the most intriguing observations across the country and demonstrates continuities in land use, attachment to place, and the heritage value of past monuments for modern-day herders. This illustrates the robust resilience and day-to-day persistence of local herding

practices, despite the coming and going of past and present empires, wars, pandemics, and nations in the wider world. This local-level long-term cultural endurance might also offer a key for the survival of Mongolian pastoralist lifeways in the turbulent twenty-first century. 

Oula Seitsonen, Sakarin-Pentin Ilarin Oula, is the chair in Finnish studies at Lakehead University, Ontario, Canada, and an archaeologist and geographer at University of Oulu, Finland (PhD 2018). His research interests cover a wide geographical and temporal range, from the early pastoralists in Mongolia, East Africa, and Fennoscandia, to Svalbard mining heritage. His recent book *Archaeologies of Hitler’s Arctic War* (2021) discusses the heritage of Nazi German presence in Finnish Lapland during the Second World War. Besides Mongolia, he has followed Finnish archaeologist Sakari Pälси’s travels elsewhere, from northern Fennoscandia and western Russia to Alaska and Canada.

Jean-Luc Houle is a professor of anthropology in the Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology, Western Kentucky University, United States (PhD 2010). His PhD dissertation was one of the first to deal with the ancient pastoralist settlement site archaeology in Mongolia, and he has directed archaeological expeditions in Mongolia for over 20 years. His research interests include the social and ritual landscapes and territoriality of mobile pastoralists and the development of complex societies in Inner Asia.

Jamsranjav Bayarsaikhan is an archaeologist currently working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Germany, and at the National Museum of Mongolia (PhD 2016). He has widely studied the history of Mongolian pastoralists and especially Bronze Age deer stone monuments. His recent monograph *Deer Stones of Northern Mongolia* (2022) offers an overview of this exciting cultural phenomenon in English.

Walking Women Evolve

FOR SUPEREFFECTIVE LOCOMOTION, LOOK TO WOMEN. THEIR ENDURANCE MOBILITY HAS SHAPED THE EVOLUTION OF OUR ENTIRE HUMAN SPECIES.

By Cara Wall-Scheffler

Belittling women and girls' athletic ability is routine in American culture. "Throwing like a girl" and other phrases create a cultural norm of suggesting that women and girls' physical process is severely lacking. Women are paid less in all fields, but athletes have the worst gender pay gap, with some data showing that men are paid 150 percent more than women. There is a growing body of evidence from people working in sports media, from people working with children's physical education, and from people working in biomechanics, that athletic ability generally, and the value we give to certain kinds of athleticism has a strong cultural component: being encouraged to throw leads to better throwing abilities regardless of sex or gender identity.

As more funding has been moved into girls' and women's sports, women have begun winning all-gender competitions, particularly in competitions that have a strong endurance component. When we actually look at women and "women's work," we find that women move constantly and consistently across the lifespan, they walk in groups with people of varying ages and genders, and they are always carrying something. Furthermore, we know that women have been doing this not just for decades, not just for centuries, but for millennia. By understanding our evolutionary history, we get a special insight into

these "new" victories, and why women's endurance mobility has shaped our entire species.

Two crucial evolutionary approaches to women's bodies (among many) are: looking cross-culturally at what humans seem to do regardless of culture (e.g., all cultures have protocols for teaching children), and experimentally testing how human variation might excel under conditions that exist in all human populations (e.g., energy consumption during load carrying). Both these pieces are vital because there are aspects of performance that might matter in the United States today but are rare

among human populations cross-culturally (e.g., running quickly), and are probably not representative of characters that exist based on the Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness (EEA). The EEA helps us to refocus our research questions to the ecosystem and behaviors of our evolutionary ancestors. Humans have incredibly variable phenotypes both within and between populations but the meaning of these patterns of variation make sense only within the context of the EEA. So, tying what people actually do universally with potential (reproductive or heritable) benefits of that activity help us better understand our evolution.

When we look at what women do across cultures, numerous features of their activity patterns are striking. In addition to daily walking across long distances, women also tend to walk with others while balancing numerous loads around their bodies. Children are only one load that women consistently carry cross-culturally. Women carry a wide range of toolkits and baskets, household goods, and food materials. While women do seem to walk slowly while carrying these loads, the loads themselves can be 20–40 percent of their total body mass, and they are more likely to be walking while carrying than doing almost any other daily task. It seems reasonable then that it is probably important to understand something everyone does all the time and also is most likely representative of our EEA. Given this environmental framework, what specific aspects of locomotion can help us understand human mobility from an evolutionary perspective?

Once we have established our EEA, modelling how much energy people use when doing these key tasks is one of the best ways to understand how humans might have evolved. Energetic methods of understanding locomotion bring people into a lab or have them walk around outside to measure their metabolic energy expenditure. Under typical workout-style cultural interpretations, people are interested in which activities use the most energy; when we are considering tasks evolutionarily, we look for which activities use the *least* amount of



Turkana women carrying firewood in Marsabit, northern Kenya, July 2022. When performing endurance walking, women are typically walking together while carrying loads.

energy and which morphological elements can help us reduce energy even more—like long lower limbs or having a lower center of mass (COM). This is because when we save energy while walking—the task we do more than any other—we have extra energy for other tasks we must accomplish. From an evolutionary perspective that would be making gametes and, ultimately, building a fetus. We know that when women are able to reduce the amount of walking they do—for example, when a well is built in their town—they can also reduce the amount of time between pregnancies, which helps sustain the population and prevents it from going extinct. Similarly, providing women with help for their tasks—alternating who walks, who carries, and who makes the tools—increases the communal energy available to a reproductively active population.

When we're looking at energetic models of human mobility throughout our evolution, we are thus interested in how women might be able to save energy doing locomotion that allows them to continue to gain access to food, water, and community, as well as to reproduce (the alternative being extinction). One option evolutionarily is to

be smaller—this is because absolutely smaller bodies use absolutely less energy. Human females are smaller on average than males in any given human population for exactly this reason—females use less energy to walk overall, and thus can simply allocate any additional caloric intake to their fitness. But this comes with a trade-off. Even though you might use absolutely less energy, most small endotherms use relatively more energy to do specific tasks. The clearest example of this is maintaining body temperature—because small endotherms have a relatively high surface area to volume ratio, they lose heat at a high rate and so must have a higher metabolism to maintain the same body temperature as a large endotherm. This is the general framework of understanding why a mouse lemur must eat high quality insects, whereas a gorilla can sit around eating low quality grass—the mouse lemur must eat relatively more calories to maintain its mass and activities than a gorilla. This paradigm has generally been used to downgrade women's bodies as susceptible to unfortunate trade-offs—women use relatively more energy to walk (or run) and therefore are less efficient at locomotion than men. Yet when women walk with loads—even

the exact same load as men (which means the load is a relatively larger percentage of women's mass since they are absolutely smaller)—they use both absolutely less energy and relatively less energy. This means that by every energetic measure, women are able to carry loads more effectively than men, which makes sense given that women carry loads universally. This might explain why women can outperform men during ultramarathons as well—the combination of efficiency and economy allows them to have increased endurance.

Understanding the basis for this potentially astonishing outcome takes us to another way of investigating locomotor mobility from an evolutionary perspective. This second approach looks at parts of the body preserved in the fossil record, such as bone shapes, sizes, and lengths, and measures these variables on living people. Then we investigate whether there are correlations between how people with certain body measures use their limbs. For example, do people with longer lower limbs gain some sort of advantage over people with shorter lower limbs? Does this matter if the limbs are absolutely longer, or just in proportion with overall stature? What is it about longer

limbs that might convey a locomotor advantage? Is there something about women's bodies that might convey an advantage, particularly while carrying loads?

Now, women are not a totally different species! I hope it is obvious that almost everything you might measure on a woman overlaps with the variation among men—variation occurs along a continuum. So, we are interested in averages and ranges of variation—women are on average smaller than men, but of course there are women who are bigger than the man by whom they are currently standing. This being said, on average, women have relatively wider pelvis than men, at least in a few measures. While their lower limb lengths are similarly proportioned to men in overall length, women tend to have less variation in their lower limbs in a given population—that is their limb length tends to be more stable and less variable than men's.

How do these patterns matter for mobility? And do they help us in explaining the patterns in energetics? It is true that people with relatively and absolutely longer limbs do have some advantages—they can cover more ground with a single stride, and they do seem to use less energy to perform that movement. What ends up happening when women pick up a load is that their extra pelvis width gives them a little bit of extra stride length. So, for a given lower limb length, women get a longer stride because they have a slightly wider pelvis to carry their lower limb through the stride cycle and forward a longer distance. This difference only pops up when women and men pick something up; when people are not carrying loads, stride length is driven entirely by lower limb length. Having that longer stride length while carrying loads allows women to cover more ground without taking more steps, thus saving them energy.

Women also carry their mass in a slightly different arrangement than men (on average), with more of their mass in their lower limbs (whereas men have more of their mass in their upper limbs). This means that women have a lower center of mass than men (all those different backpack choices at REI really do come in handy!). Having a

lower center of mass increases a body's stability, which is particularly important when carrying loads, especially loads that might stick out away from you, like a pregnant belly, a spear and tubers, or a toddler held on one hip. Many studies have shown that increasing stability reduces the metabolic cost of walking, because the small perturbations to remain stable can actually be quite metabolically costly; women's low center of mass reduces the need to spend energy constantly restabilizing.

Women aren't just walking effectively when they are by themselves, they are walking effectively when they are walking with others.

This increase in stability also appears to allow women to vary their walking speed, at least within a reasonable range, with no change in the metabolic cost to do so. When we consider human mobility from an ecological perspective, we often consider how people move between key locations for their success—between their home and where they will get food and water for the day. Interestingly, the relationship for endothermic mammals between walking speed and the metabolic cost to go a given distance is a u-shaped curve. If you can imagine a graph of this u-shape, with speed on the x-axis and cost to go to the place you need to get to on the y-axis, you will see that there is a speed at which you can walk to your destination for the least amount of energy. Most people will choose to walk at this speed when they are walking by themselves. It is also true that people with relatively wider pelvises have a very broad base to this curve (very u-shaped), whereas people with narrower pelvises have a more v-shaped curve. Smaller people also have a more u-shaped curve. This means that, on average, women can walk at a relatively wide range of speeds without any

change to their metabolic cost for walking a given distance.

This saving of energy is a key part of being an excellent endurance athlete. Athletes who use less energy are often the ones who win races that combine speed and endurance. Because of their evolved body shape, women are the ones who can travel long distances for the smallest amount of energy. We can be confident then that women are excellent movers by any measure, and that the EEA which includes load carrying and sociality has selected for women's particular morphology. Women aren't just walking effectively when they are by themselves, they are walking effectively when they are walking with others, which helps groups maintain social cohesion and is a crucial aspect of humans' success as a species.

We should also note that many of us are no longer in our EEA—we don't walk to work, we don't carry our babies, and we don't gather our water from wells (or water holes!). Humans, of course, are much, much more than their bodies. This means that tossing your backpack to the women in your group might not be the best use of your social capital, but it does mean that coaxing a woman to be on your ultramarathon team is definitely a wise decision, especially when the race involves carrying your own gear. If you identify as a woman, know that you can economically walk in community with others—for example, racing to your next class, perusing produce at the farmer's market, or marching together for reproductive rights! Our evolutionary history has shaped our morphologies and correlated mobility patterns but how we choose to spend our energy is strongly influenced by other cultural factors. 🌀

An anthropologist of the role that women play in driving human evolution, **Cara Wall-Scheffler** has observed, measured, and followed people walking, dancing, and skipping her whole life. She will be traveling to Prague on a Fulbright this year to dive more deeply into how managing body temperatures changes people's choices about when to carry and how fast to walk.

Grandfather Experience

By Dani Halperin

THIS IS A DIARY OF MY GRANDFATHER'S TRUE EXPERIENCE OF ESCAPING THE HOLOCAUST.

November 9, 1938

Dear Diary,
Today, Mother said, "You don't have to go to school."
"Why?" I questioned.
"They burnt it down."

I think she means the Nazis, the ones who've been mistreating the Jews. I guess it makes sense that they burnt down the school; it's all Jewish students, and has my synagogue connected to it. When I looked outside this morning, a couple of houses' windows were shattered, with the glass littering the street. I assume this was also the Nazi's fault.

Mother gave me this diary to practice my writing, since I won't be at school for a while. She's looked unsettled all day. I just feel surprised—I never thought the Nazis would affect me.

November 15, 1938

Dear Diary,
What a night I've had. Rumors have been circling all through Freiburg im Breisgau, that the Nazis were deporting Jewish children to some sort of camp. Since I'm only 11, I would go to that place, which is supposed to be very bad.

So, Mother hired a professional smuggler who picked up me, her, Father, and my brother, Gene. She brought us across the border, from Germany to France, where we have relatives. The smuggler winked at the border guards, and we thankfully made it across without getting caught.

May 10, 1939

Dear Diary,
I've been living with my cousins for six months now in Alsace-Lorraine. I don't go to school or know anybody besides family. I haven't stepped foot outside once, because if the police see me, I'll be sent back to Germany and then to one of the camps.

Gene is with a different part of the family, and there's only one other cousin my age that I live with. But she's always mean and bullying me about having no friends. So, my best friend is their pet, a beautiful bulldog. He's what's keeping me from going insane is this very changed world.

May 15, 1939

Dear Diary,
Today is a wonderful day! Mother and Father managed to obtain visas and buy tickets on a ship to Cuba called the MS St. Louis! It's a stunning luxury liner, and we have just boarded in Cherbourg, France.

So far, Captain Schröder has shown unbelievable kindness towards Jews. He makes sure that the Gestapo on board don't mingle with us and has even covered up all pictures of Hitler. I can't wait to start fresh, away from Nazis and my cousin's house.

May 27, 1939

Dear Diary,
After 12 pleasant days at sea, we've arrived in Cuba. There's a one-day delay to get off the boat.

May 28, 1939

Dear Diary,
There's been another one-day delay to leave the ship.

May 29, 1939

Dear Diary,
This is the third day we've been in Havana's harbor. On the ship, I overheard people talking about the camps. I now know what they are. I hope we don't return to Europe. 🌀

Author's note: The St. Louis returned to Europe, and the passengers could choose whether to go to England, France, Belgium, or Holland. My grandfather's family went to France, where around 50 percent of the passengers who returned there were murdered. He lived in a French orphanage for a year. Luckily, he and his family obtained tickets to New York on the final boat from France to the United States. He worked his way up from selling toothbrushes door to door to attending New York University (NYU). Later, he was accepted to the NYU Grossman School of Medicine and became a dermatologist.

This piece was selected as a winner of the AAA's **AnthroDay Student Unessay Competition** in the high school division. Inspired by the *World on the Move* exhibit, this year's unessay competition focused on migration. Selected prompt: "Do you or your family have any stories about moving? If so, share one."

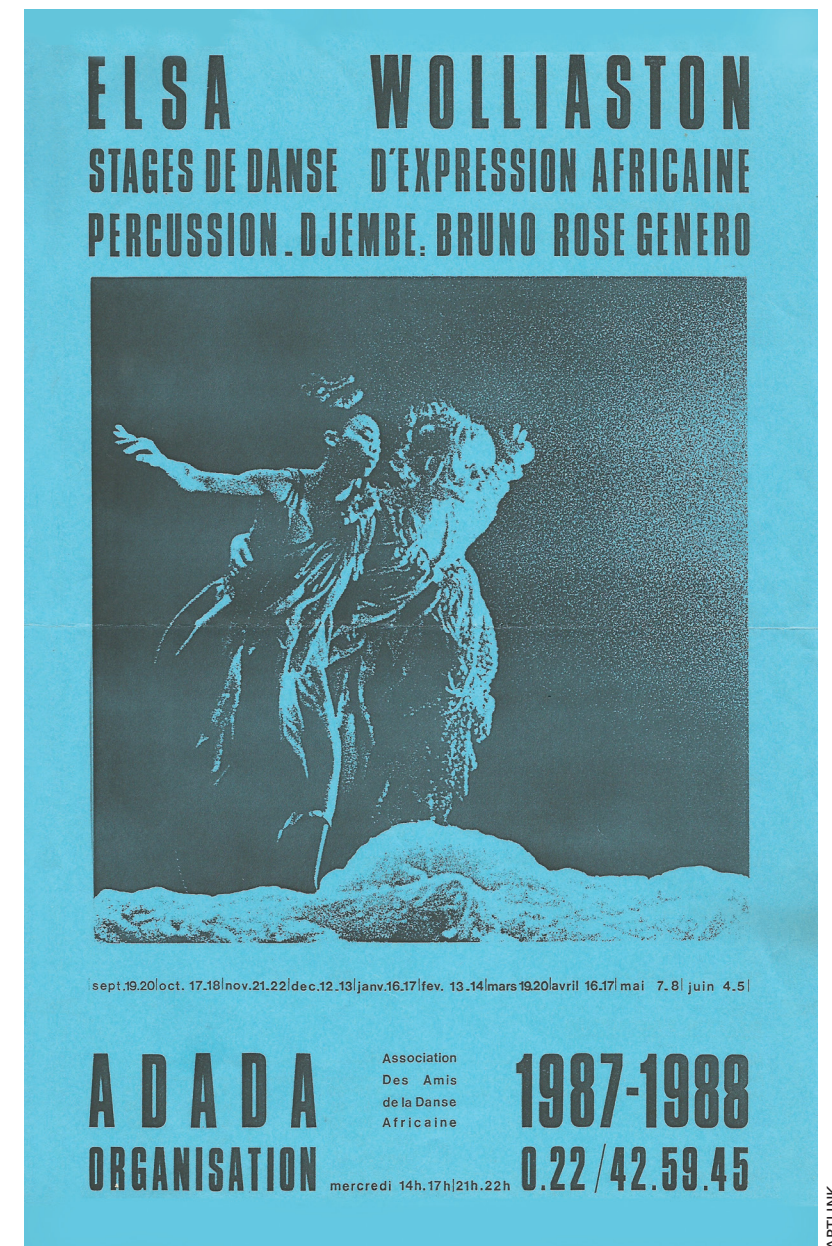
Dani Halperin is a sophomore at Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua, New York. Anthropology interests her because she can learn about other people's societies and cultures in different time periods. Outside of anthropology, she enjoys playing varsity field hockey.

Counter-Exotic Moves

DANCING ACROSS THE ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN WORLDS, AFRICAN CHOREOGRAPHERS AND DANCERS CHALLENGED REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRICA IN EUROPE IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

By Alice Aterianus-Owanga

A street in the busy Parisian neighbourhood of La Chapelle echoes with the cracking of wooden sticks and clapping of palms on *sabar* drums. The vibrating sound escapes from the ground floor of a sports hall where 40 women and one or two men are watching Yama Wade with extreme concentration, executing the dance moves she demonstrates. Tall, slim, and dressed in a light colourful boubou that flows with her steps, Wade walks around the group of students, holding a sabar stick in her hand, scrutinizing each dancer with careful attention to correct a mistake, poor posture, or hesitant arm gesture. Half a dozen musicians sit behind a line of sabar drums in the corner of the room, accompanying the class with their polyrhythmic phrases, dissecting some sabar phrases to ease the students' understanding—attentive to Wade's indications, following her instructions.



Poster for a workshop on "African Expression" by Elsa Wolliaston, organized in 1988–1989 in Geneva by the Association of African Dance Friends.

Wade, who has lived in Paris since 1992, is a highly respected master of the Senegalese music and dance performance, sabar. Dozens of students from all over Europe flock to learn its steps and rhythms by attending dance classes or travelling to Senegal for intensive workshops. On this day of her annual workshop in Paris, Wade teaches a complex dance rhythm called *mbabass*, that has now faded a bit in Dakar sabar ceremonies, but that sabar enthusiasts in Europe appreciate for its roots in the old sabar traditions. She explains that in recent years, she has reconsidered the way she teaches this step and stopped marking the beginning of the dance move by tapping the right foot twice on the floor: “We [sabar instructors] used to say that to teach white people, we will mark the time with two taps on the floor like in *dagañ*, because Western people need to have the rhythm on the floor. But mbabass is not like that, that is *dagañ*.” She then shows the subtle difference between mbabass and *dagañ*, which are often confused and presented as similar in dance classes, but that should, in her opinion, remain differentiated.

Wade is committed to maintaining what she calls the “original tradition” of sabar as it was back in the days before she left Senegal. She aims at transforming the pedagogy and visions of African dances that have been built to fit the expectations of Western audiences in France, and she defends the need to teach the real rules of this improvised circle dance. Standing against the consumption of sabar and other African dances as a way to let off steam or as a choreographic form, she tries to teach her students the language and vocabulary of the dance that will allow them to improvise, develop their own style, and experience the freedom of creating their own conversation with musicians, as the dance is danced in Dakar sabar ceremonies.



From the 1970s onward, several African dancers settled in Paris and other French or European cities, where they participated in the development of a market for “African dance” classes (then spoken of in

the singular). The majority of attendees were white middle-class women, and those classes aimed at transmitting moves, gestures, and musical and cultural knowledge stemming from a wide range of dances from Western and Central Africa. This market is often criticized for the exoticism and stereotyped representations of Africa that it conveys, or for disrespecting the aesthetics and meanings of those dances.

Yet this dance world also cultivated, from its inception, the development of pedagogy, discourses, and ideologies that criticized exoticization and attempted to valorize the aesthetics, meanings, and specificities of some dances gathered under the label “African dances.” Before Wade, several dancers moved both across this transoceanic cultural matrix that Paul Gilroy seminally conceptualized in 1993 as the Black Atlantic, and a more precise route that several current scholars describe as a Black Mediterranean. Through their moves, they took part in reforming the images of African dances and their transmission abroad through dialogues with global Black and African political struggles, former Senegalese President and poet Léopold Sédar Senghor’s ideology of Négritude, Katherine Dunham’s dance anthropology, or, more recently, through projects of de-Westernization of movements and pedagogies.

REPLACING AFRICA AT THE HEART OF THE BLACK ATLANTIC IN THE 1970S

The emergence of African dance classes in Paris on the cusp of the 1970s, arose in connection with the post-1968 era of bodily liberation and with a particular moment of reconfiguration in Franco-African relationships, which led to a renewed interest in Africa. This was perceptible politically and economically with the establishment of the political construct that Jean-Pierre Dozon described as “Franco-African state capitalism”—the paradoxical reinforcement of a reciprocal political and economic integration between France and its former colonies, for example, through the attribution of big markets and influential positions to French companies

in African independent states or by the exponential growth in African workers called to work in French industries—and by a considerable increase in mobility between France and its former colonies.

African music, moves, and aesthetics were introduced and appropriated as part of a growing enthusiasm for non-Western bodily experiences. This market first developed in richer areas of cities, in venues such as the *Maison des Jeunes Saint-Michel*, the *Cité Internationale*, and above all the American Center on Boulevard Raspail. It is there, apparently, in 1968, that Elsa Wolliaston organized parties where artists from Europe, the Americas, and Africa improvised jam sessions, and where she was invited to give the first African dance classes in Paris.

Born in Jamaica and raised between Kenya and the United States, Wolliaston first trained in piano, ballet, and contemporary dance, notably with Merce Cunningham and the dance anthropologist Katherine Dunham. Influenced by Dunham’s interest in African repertoires, she decided to move to Paris in 1968, when she was 22 years old, to develop her career. During an interview in a Parisian café next to her dance studio, she recounted to me how this move to Paris represented above all a way to get “closer to Africa.” She felt distant from the roots of African dance while in the United States, and she saw Paris as a platform for her personal research project. Speaking about this arrival in France with the historian Nelcya Delanoé as part of their conversation about the American Center, she talks of how she met the “black world” gathered in Paris:

I am a black American and yet I knew nothing of the jazz world or the black world, I discovered them at the [American] Centre—for example Leroy Bibbs, who read his poems to music by Archie Shepp. The Haitian Herns Duplan and the American Suzan Buirge started giving dance lessons, and I started too, with Congolese musicians, with Lucky Zebila, with Guem. I shuttled between Paris and Africa, because I wanted to teach not



Sabar instructor Yama Wade watches students dance, correcting their movements and posture. Paris, July 2017.

ALICE ATERIANUS-OWANGA

steps, but peoples, ethnic groups, spaces; I wanted to show that African dance, with its rituals and ceremonies, can meet contemporary dance and vice versa.

This wish to teach African dances in relation to their social and ritual context led Wolliaston to make frequent trips back and forth to Africa, to the villages that she considered to be the source of her knowledge. In parallel with her performances on institutional stages, she quickly made a name for herself through her classes (and she teaches up to this day). She taught a dance called African Expression (in French: *Danse d'expression africaine*), which aimed at reflecting on the power of innovation and cultural dialogue contained in traditional dance forms. Inspired by the undertakings of African American intellectual and political figures such as Dunham, but also by her family and personal history with Africa, Wolliaston’s classes and performances contributed to a gradual placing of Africa and African dances at the centre of a transatlantic current of reflections and collaborations about the Black world.

At the same period, other artists from the African continent developed classes and performances through which to assert

alternative pedagogical outlooks and influences to Wolliaston’s approach—artists like Lucky Zebyla from the Congolese National Ballet or Ahmed Tidjani Cissé who created the Grands ballets d’Afrique Noire in Paris. These dancers were influenced by African national ballets and built new circuits, following the migratory routes between France and its former colonies. Gradually, dancers and choreographers wove routes between specific localities and dance repertoires, reflecting the issues at stake in the construction of national cultures and heritage in independent African nation-states. This would be particularly clear in the pathway of the dancer who created the first sabar classes in Paris and in the route he threaded between Dakar and Paris.

BRINGING SABAR TO PARIS IN THE 1980S

Born the thirteenth in a family of 38 children, Doudou Ndiaye Rose Junior is the son of the famous percussionist Doudou Ndiaye Rose. Early in his childhood, he distinguished himself from his siblings by rejecting the practice of sabar, preferring school to the musical training that his brothers and sisters pursued. Even though he had no real passion for dance, he

nevertheless ended up joining the famous school Mudra Afrique in 1980, attracted by the bursaries it offered. As the African branch of choreographer Maurice Béjart’s Centre de Recherche et de Perfectionnement de l’Interprète, Mudra Afrique had been created by Senghor in 1977 in Dakar. As described by Annie Bourdié in her research about this institution, Mudra Afrique responded to the Senghorian project of “modernizing” Black African traditions and promoting Négritude, a notion that the “president-poet” defined as a set of cultural, economic, and political values shared among Black peoples of the African continent and the diaspora, and that was meant to be proudly assumed, updated, and shared with the world. For five years, dancers from all over the continent would be trained at Mudra under the supervision of its famous directress Germaine Acogny, before becoming directors of national ballets in their own countries or instructors of African dances in Europe.

At Mudra, Rose Junior soon discovered his skills in ballet and contemporary dance. After leaving the school, he eventually joined his father’s sabar band as a dancer and musician, which allowed him to travel and perform during big concerts. He

decided to stay in Paris after a tour in 1988, and he was soon asked to give African dance classes at the *Cité universitaire*. Eager to learn more about this repertoire, his students asked him to teach elements of sabar, which was barely spoken of in Paris dance classes at the time. Talking with me about this first experience of teaching sabar, he described his total disappointment:

It was so mediocre... To the point that I almost yelled at my students. [...] Because I thought it was innate, that you are born with it. I put something together [choreography], and I couldn't remember what I had put together. When I changed the steps, people said "no!" It was a class that went wrong. I went home and called my father. I just understood that being a good dancer is not only about dancing in sabar dance circles, when the whole Medina [Dakar district] and everyone else are cheering for you, that girls think you are handsome. In fact, I've just understood that it's as technical as ballet, or as complex.

From then on, Rose Junior decided to learn more about the different dances of the sabar repertoire, their origins, and ways of performing the movements, under the guidance of an elderly aunt. While gradually focusing on sabar, his teachings remained framed by the pedagogy acquired at Mudra Afrique. In later explanations he recounts advocating the purification and embellishment of these dances, which he intended to present in their most refined version. Denouncing the overpopularization of other African dances and music, his pedagogy aimed both to preserve the traditional "purity" of sabar and to enhance it through Western creative techniques. His emphasis on choreography and the decomposition of movements remained in line with Acogny's and Senghor's ideologies of modernizing traditional arts through the use of classical and modern Western choreographic techniques.

Like Rose Junior, some of the artists who arrived in Europe in the 1980s



Yama Wade instructs dancers at her annual sabar workshop in Paris, July 2017.

ALICE ATERIANUS-OWANGA

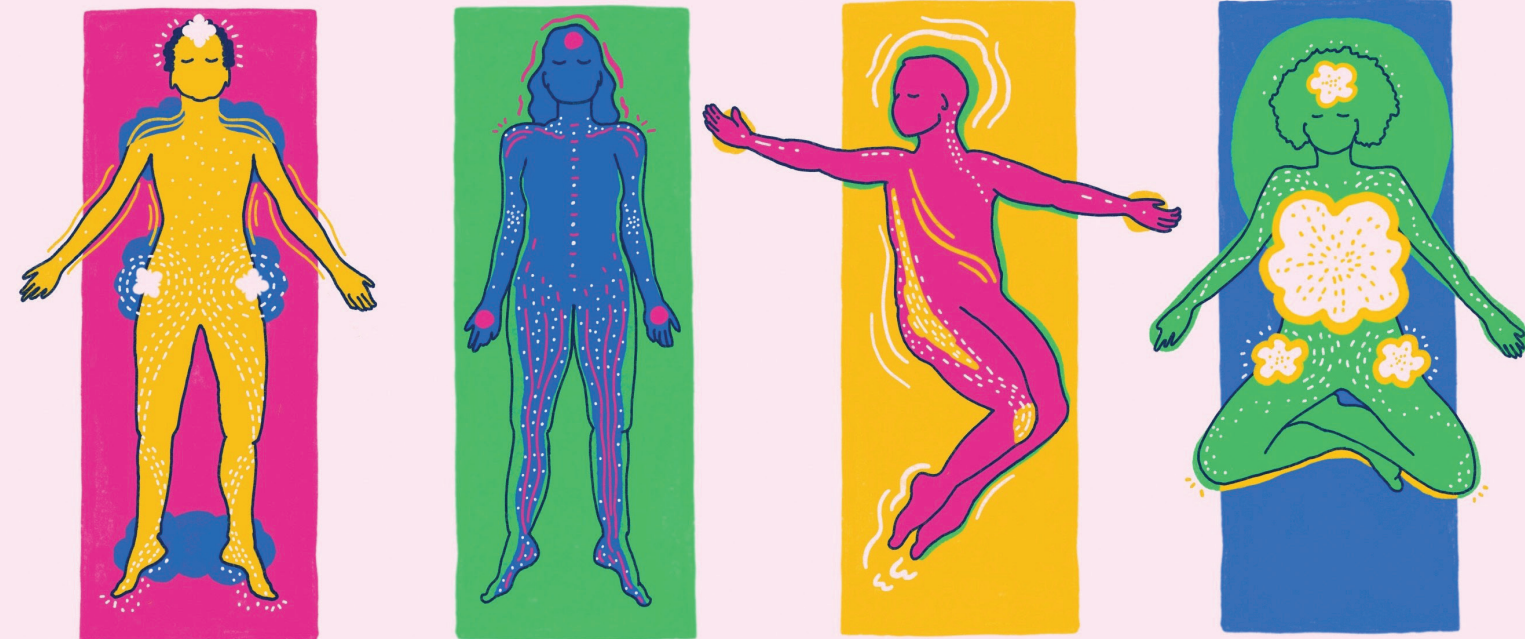
were still strongly influenced by the knowledge and ideologies conveyed by post-independence African choreographic formations, such as Mudra Afrique and its adaptations of the theories of Négritude. Their distinction between a cultivated and a degrading way of approaching African dances, and their wish to differentiate themselves from exotic visions denying the technicality of these dances, would be renewed by generations of sabar instructors who settled in Paris and other European cities in the following decades. Indeed, the 2000s saw the diversification of the field of African dances and the rise of a sector devoted to sabar. It was at this time that Wade became famous and developed her project of de-Westernizing dance pedagogy by criticizing the choreographic approach of these dances and teaching her students the unrestrained way to dance sabar and interact with musicians.



The transmission of African dance repertoires is a complex and much debated product of histories of mobility, relationships, and cross-fertilizations between Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

These classes for African dances, although partly reproducing an exoticizing fascination for Black bodies, cultures, and traditions, also and paradoxically fostered many attempts at creating visibility for Black and African artists in French and other European cities. Counter-exotic practices emerged from conversations between travelling artists, Black political leaders and intellectuals, and ordinary dancers and enthusiasts who moved throughout the Atlantic and, increasingly, Mediterranean worlds. These transoceanic movements still infuse neighbourhoods like La Chapelle with sabar moves, and link Paris and Dakar within a common translocal sonic and kinaesthetic landscape. 🌀

Anthropologist **Alice Aterianus-Owanga** is currently a Marie Curie Fellow at the University of Cape Town. Her PhD dealt with hip-hop music, politics, and identity in Gabon. She then developed a four-year research project about dance, migration, and identity constructions in "African dance" classes between Europe (France and Switzerland) and Senegal. Her current research deals with the social practice of Afro-Latin dance genres and the tactile production of urban identities in Cape Town.



CHARLOTTE CORDEN

Somatic Agitations

FOCUSING
ANTHROPOLOGY'S
METHODOLOGY ON
THE SOMA COULD
HELP US UNDERSTAND
HUMAN BEING MORE
KEENLY. WHAT CAN
WE DISCOVER BY
ENGAGING OURSELVES
IN OUR INTERIOR
BODILY EXPERIENCES?

By Mitra Emad

How to bring the anthropological enterprise into the *soma*, that specific internal experience of the human body?

—Fieldnotes, June 4, 2019

Ethnography starts with immersion in settings, experiences, and people. For me, currently, such immersion proceeds from the rubbery tread of a lavender-colored yoga mat. I wonder if it is possible to engage our interior experiences of our body as a kind of "somatic anthropology." Might I conduct an ethnography of the inside of my body, to seek the stories and experiences of my own internal bodily being?

I find this question agitating. Interestingly, the root of "agitate" from the Middle English *agitat* borrowed from Latin *agitare* is to set in motion, to move, drive ahead, arouse, or disturb. It captures the forward thrust of airline travel and the ah-ha moment of a new thought, discovery, or insight. The story begins at the onset of this agitation.

I am engaging the possibility of turning anthropology’s methodology to the soma in order to understand more vividly. Could it be that everyone is an ethnographer of “the field” of the human body? I’ve come to understand that these somatic experiences are never devoid of anthropology, in all its rich capacity to agitate human stories and meaning. The tales we tell ourselves and each other—particularly about the body—create meaning, lasting and naturalized.

SOMA ON THE MOVE

.....
Agitation begins when we are just about to do something.
What’s the beginning of the story? What happens when we move our bodies with the attention to the internal experience of that movement (soma)? What is anthropological here? Mostly anthropology has reminded me to practice and deepen the act/capacity/phenomenon of noticing.
—Fieldnotes, June 3, 2019
.....

I begin by focusing on what has come forward in the experience of movement. First there is a sense of preparatory movement—muscles in a state of persistent low-level contraction. In some places in my body (my abdomen, quadriceps, and pectoral muscles) the muscular contraction is a more acute bracing, gripping, or holding. This feeling of being *just about to do* something is an agitating feeling. Then there is a fluidity or release even in fully making a movement, stepping out wider and lifting my arms parallel to the floor into hatha yoga’s Warrior II pose. I notice that the preparatory movement of low contraction or bracing relaxes as I engage a fuller movement. Yoga is supposed to be relaxing, but in this state of anthropological attentiveness on my yoga mat, I find that being still is definitely not as relaxing as moving. Getting myself *into* Warrior II is much more fun, pleasant, and relaxing than *staying in it*.

It’s much harder to notice anything once I am in the pose. Is it actually easier to move than to be still? What’s the story here at the beginning of the story?

After three falls, two spinal disc herniations, and one impinged spinal nerve, I’ve become very protective of the layer of my being commonly referred to as “my body.” This protective comportment is habitual. Before coming to my yoga mat, I brush my teeth and suddenly notice my shoulders hunch and my upper back curves, my abdomen tucks in, my abdominal muscles in a low state of consistent contraction. None of this is required to get my teeth clean. I even reach for the toothpaste with my upper body curved inwards, the back of my neck contracted, and my head carriage leaning forward past my body and over the sink. I move my shoulder blade away from my spine so that I can reach the toothpaste in the medicine cabinet and still maintain this comforting hunch. But ultimately, it’s not comforting at all. My neck hurts, my shoulders end up tight and painful, even my lower back gets sore. And my hip flexors get angry, triggering the same muscle spasms in the big muscles of my legs that occurred during my disc herniations. A scary reminder. So, I hunch even more. None of this is particularly conscious.

Now that I am studying yoga and somatic movement, I start to track my comportment, my bodily sensations, my movements. My skills as a cultural anthropologist seem commensurate with this new noticing of the inner workings of my body that my yoga teachers call *interoception*.

ENTERING LIMINALITY

.....
Sometimes I have the where-withal to ask myself, So, what would it feel like to notice the energetic field from your tailbone to your crown?
—Fieldnotes, June 3, 2019
.....

I feel my feet more firmly planted on the floor. Or if I’m sitting, I notice my sit bones making contact with the chair. I can even

press my feet and my sit bones down a little bit to get that sense of connection to the chair, the floor, the earth. Usually there’s a heavy sigh. Suspiration. And... everything is softer. Wow. The back of my neck is softer, my shoulders have glided down, my lower back is eased, my abdominal muscles are softly engaged. This is so much more comfortable! Why don’t I do this all the time?

When you fall, you engage the most powerful parts of your nervous systems. There are parts of our bodies that are designed to protect us, to keep us alive, and they don’t always turn off when we decide we might be done with them. While I think the worlds of somatic health care practitioners can get scientific, I have also learned more about the inner workings of my body in these last five years than in all the 52 years before that. And it’s not just that I was ripe for an anatomy lesson. This engagement with interoception as a regular practice, brought me into the body directly and clearly, in a way that I had never experienced.

And I still get scared. Last autumn, when muscles in my right leg and hip started to spasm again, threatening to lock up, I called on my yoga therapist. She didn’t persuade me not to be scared or reassure me with platitudes; she brought me back to the mat and to movements I was familiar with. She guided me slowly, softly making the movements smaller, visually connecting parts of my body that had become disjointed from fear. In the process, she used the word “balm,” and I began to cry. Tears running down the sides of my face as all the muscles in my legs and hips softened. No more spasms. She showed me that I could take care of myself. That I could soothe and care for the wounded parts of myself.

In polyvagal theory, the ventral vagal system engages through connection with others. Others who share their vagal system with you through their facial expression, tone of voice, eye contact. You know you are safe when the person or people near you are smiling, speaking in soft or easy or fluid or low tones of voice,

making engaging eye contact, perhaps even offering a light touch on the hand or arm.

That session with my yoga therapist and teacher occurred over Zoom. I couldn’t see her eyes sparkle, but I could hear her voice—steady, kind, full of compassion, but not particularly emotional. When she said the word “balm” it was almost an afterthought. As she spoke, I wasn’t even looking at the computer screen, just listening with my gaze softened and my eyes sometimes closing. But there is resonance. From her house five miles away to my little quarantine home yoga studio and office. Through a laptop. Technology mediates but doesn’t control the connection that allows her ventral vagal system to resonate with mine. And perhaps this resonance is also built from memory. I remembered her eyes sparkling during yoga therapy sessions before the onset of pandemic restrictions, her hand on my shoulder, her voice asking me as she applied light pressure, “Can this soften even further?” Even now as I write this, I experience that softening.

IN THE LIMINAL SPACE

.....
Quiet the body (posture, breath, progressive [body scan style] relaxation)
Quiet the breath (low & slow, awareness at the nostrils, sense withdrawal)
Quiet the mind (concentration, mantra, “witnessing”)
—Fieldnotes, June 4, 2019
.....

On the first day of the three-day therapeutic yoga workshop, I find myself laying down on a heavy rubber yoga mat laid over a sparkling clean hardwood floor. My knees are bent, my feet flat on the floor. I am with a group of 10 women, representing every decade of life from 40 to 80. This particular training is not oriented towards turning us into yoga teachers. It’s called SomaYoga CPR and it’s a sort of emergency medicine approach to yoga. We are all tired, in some degree of pain, and have spent swaths of

time in our lives in the service of others. We are teachers, nurses, social workers; we are mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts; and we are lesbian, bisexual, and straight. We are mostly white, mostly middle-class women with \$300 to spend on a three-day workshop in this northern Minnesota town.

Our instructor cues, “Close your eyes or soften your gaze. Sense where your pelvis is in relation to your spine. Notice the curves of your spine—where is it touching the mat and where not? Sense your breath flowing. Arch your low back a little. Soften back to neutral.”

“Wait a minute,” I think, “What is neutral?”

She mentions a sense of comfort, but before I can wonder what comfort feels like in this position, other cues from the yoga instructor: “Press your tailbone down into the mat. Notice your lower back muscles contracting. Now release that contraction, slowly and consciously soften those muscles.” I follow along and suddenly notice that the fairly consistent pain in my lower back has disappeared. I didn’t know I could do that; interesting to consciously contract and then consciously release that contraction, to soften the muscles that I didn’t even know I had. Now she cues us to tuck our tailbone upwards by curling the pelvis, softening the low back, and drawing the navel down towards the spine: “What do you sense as you open up these glands and tissues?”

Later the instructor talks about a kind of amnesia. It seems that there is a forgetting that goes on in the body and therefore I couldn’t connect with parts of my body when I first laid down on the yoga mat. Our instructor describes the habits of modern life that make possible a kind of forgetting of the trunk of the body. This particular yoga training process invites us to engage in moving from the periphery to the core of our body. Our instructors discuss digestion, of not only foods, but of actions, thoughts, emotions. The phrase “rest and digest” is embodied fully in action as we begin to familiarize ourselves with the slow movements of the extensor

muscles of the back body, followed by the core or abdominal muscles of the front body. This “arch and flatten” movement is ideally combined with breath awareness.

Then we move on to “arch and curl,” a bigger movement with elbows and shoulders involved. The teacher begins her cues here focused on the curl originating with movement of the abdominal muscles, which causes my head to start to come up. We hold the curl, then focus intently on the slow release back down. I find that making the arch that follows this curl to be a continuation of the release and when I let that arch go and fully relax, I hear myself audibly sigh.

After the mat practice, we sit together in a circle and talk about what we found in our exploratory quest.

“I met my shoulders.”

“After working on my shoulders, I could stretch my stomach muscles and hips.”

“Increased awareness.”

“Release of hypervigilance, my eyes feel softer, no longer watching [out].”

“All of the nurturing attention made me want to cry.”

“My feet felt nourished with a sandbag.”

“Taller, I feel thoracic freedom!”

“Unmasking, connected to source/spirit.”

“Softer, surrendering to that middle space.”

But agitation is difficult too. Many of us also spoke about a headache or feeling nauseous after practice. Some felt cold and wrapped themselves up in an extra sweater or blanket. Some of us noticed a kind of amnesia and could not feel the body parts to which the instructor cued our attention. Some noticed emotions such as sadness or experienced exhaustion after the practice.

By the end of our workshop, we learn that the specific movements from these practices are *pandiculations*—conscious contractions that involve moving the origin and insertion points of a muscle closer together, on purpose, then very slowly and consciously moving them back into a relaxed, supple state. The longer certain habits have held sway (like crouching over a computer screen, for example), the more

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pandiculation practice and time it takes to release the constant state of contraction (bracing, holding) that we have trained our sensory-motor systems (our body) to engage. Interoception is key to bringing a new mode of being to the body.

I especially like this concept of *pan-diculation* because it makes such a juicy metaphor. Ethnography from the inside out agitates the ethnographer into a state of interoception, of discovery within this new field of the soma. Then those discoveries can be considered, cogitated, discussed, and engaged (cf. agitated!) by consciously contracting *into* the tensions—pandiculating. This is a metaphor for many things: for how we learn, for how we teach, for how we make something new, for how we begin a new practice. If you are trying to hit a ball with a racket, pedal a bicycle, dance a tango, or bake a cake for the first time, you will be learning movements in a specific order, with a specific precision—perhaps entire new movements that you have never done before. This is the means whereby a body accomplishes something in somatics: each small step that builds the cake, moves the bicycle, dances the tango, gets the ball precisely where you want it to go. Perhaps this great big agitating metaphor for discovery, change, new learning, supports the possibility and ground of a *somatic anthropology*, within which each of us is an ethnographer of our own human bodies.

INTEGRATIONS

How can we lay claim to what is our own already, returning ourselves to agency around our own human, gendered, aging, thriving, stumbling, shining bodies?

—Fieldnotes, June 5, 2019

At home after the workshop, I lay down on my back on my yoga mat. Taking a slow, low breath, I close my eyes and

focus inward on the specificity of the body. What does it mean to be in *this* body, right here, right now? What do I notice, turning my attention inward to the soma at hand? Pain in my right hip, sharp, persistent. Constraint in my lower back that eases if I bend my knees. My neck feels stiff. Where are my shoulders? An odd feeling that I can't find my shoulders. My feet are gone too. I remember the instructor encouraging us to press our feet into the mat and I try it. And just like that my whole body comes into the field. I find I miss the others, the voices, the bodies around me, nestled into their own mats and blankets and bolsters. What is it about needing an other—someone to cue the practice, to speak the balm to bring us back into a welcoming house of the body that is a birthright no matter the battering that body has taken at every turn of life. What is it to feel the us-ness of others surrounding us, agitating the same process of discovery, of change? For healing, for growth, for relationality, for trauma resolution, we agitate together. We consider, occupy ourselves with, bring up for discussion, deliberate.

We discover what happens if we apply the ranging, exploratory, questing joy of discovery to our own relationships with our frayed, fragile, stalwart, and sometimes disappointing bodies. Let us enter the field of human bodily being. Beginning, perhaps, on a soft day when curiosity beckons, with our own somatic experience, and in the solidarity of companionship. 🌀

Mitra Emad is a yoga therapist in training and the associate dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

Charlotte Corden is an illustrator and fine artist whose work often centers around what it is to be human. She has an MA in anthropology from University College London and has studied at the London Fine Art Studios and the Arts Students League of New York.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Moving Forward with AAA

Our theme for this *Anthropology News* is *move* and your leadership team and AAA staff are moving things forward! Over the summer we saw several new programs come to fruition and the successful continuation of many others.

A very exciting and much anticipated public education program, *World on the Move: 250,000 years of Human Migration*, opened at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in Washington, DC.

The project has an exciting website (understandingmigration.org) that is filled with online resources for libraries, educators, families, and even children, in addition to a virtual review of the exhibit. Alisse Waterston, in highlighting anthropologists' work on migration and human movement for the "World on the Move: Migration Stories" edition of *Open Anthropology* 3(1) noted, "World on the move is also about activity—the movement and circulation of people, ideas, languages, and things, including food, cloth, oil, wood, weapons, money and these days, investment capital." As we wrestle with the global pandemic, war in Ukraine, and continuing violence and economic breakdown that is furthered by broken supply chains, this public project becomes even more relevant in understanding the movement of humans, animals, and things today. The site hosts documentaries, articles, and projects for communities that are exciting resources and provide a wealth of support for our courses, internships, and service opportunities. I encourage you to dive into this amazing new and timely public project.

In our move toward a more inclusive and transparent organization, we are constantly thinking of ways to open the door to communication, including sharing our work as broadly as possible. We are excited about the movement of the Open Anthropology Research Repository to the



Ramona Perez, President

new open-source platform, Public Knowledge Project, at Simon Fraser University that makes submitting and accessing data, including multimedia formats, easier. We also initiated a new forum for our journal editors to share issues, concerns, and best practices with each other, structured in the same way as the forum for Section presidents. *American Anthropologist* editor Elizabeth Chin and Executive Board member Petra Kuppinger are cochairing this forum along with support from Janine Chiappa McKenna, director of publishing. If you are or have a journal editor in your Section, please join us for our next forum in September. We look to this new forum to be a great resource as we address the many changes in academic publishing and move into a new publishing agreement this next year.

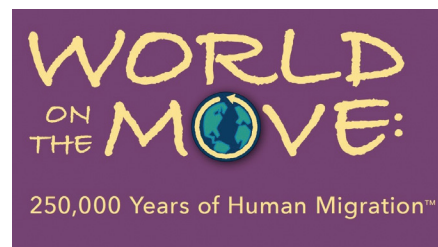
The established Department Leaders Summer Institute, a program for new chairs or directors of anthropology programs, was held over three days from June 22 to 24. Many thanks to Daniel Ginsberg, director of education and professional practice, for once again putting together an information-packed program to support our many department leaders and to our wonderful presenters Elizabeth Briody, Jim McDonald, Denise Brennan, and Timothy Smith. Participants engaged in discussions, case studies, and workshops on work/life balance, establishing

a department culture, implications of accessibility and equity, budgeting, tenure and promotion, alumni relations, working with the administration, and so much more. We were excited to have many chairs who joined us for a second time!

And speaking of leadership, we are gearing up for the AAA nominations season. This is a fantastic opportunity to work alongside your colleagues in advancing our Association's impact and advocacy. As someone who started working with the AAA as a graduate student representative at the Section level, I can attest to the positive impact that serving has had in my own work. Be on the lookout for more information from Gabriela Vargas-Cetina, the AAA's secretary and chair of the Nominations Committee.

For many of us, these last few weeks of summer will be filled with analyzing data gathered over the summer to prepare for publication, evaluating company performance and planning for the fourth quarter, finishing contracts and reports, creating or updating our syllabi, and making travel arrangements or WIFI enhancements for our time at the 2022 AAA Annual Meeting, *Unsettling Landscapes*, in Seattle, Washington, from November 9 through 13. We are very excited about the many activities and enhancements to the Annual Meeting this year and look forward to seeing you all, in person or virtually.

Before moving on, I want to close with a reminder to vote in the national and local mid-term elections on November 8. As the many announcements in our Communities forums note, we are grappling with decisions and pending actions that impact the futures of all of us and our research and advocacy can make a difference. Let's move our voices to as many forums and opportunities as possible, and let's work to assure that we vote and that every vote counts. 🌀



After the success of our first traveling exhibition, website, and publications on *RACE: Are We So Different?*, the American Anthropological Association now brings the same lens of science, history, and lived experience to another timely yet timeless topic: migration and displacement. *World on the Move: 250,000 Years of Human Migration*™ recently debuted at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in Washington, DC, the first stop on a tour of US libraries through 2025, after which it will go on a broader international tour.

World on the Move reframes how we think—and talk—about migration and displacement. It challenges people to consider the scale, composition, and time-depth of human population movements, the variety of reasons that lead people to leave their homes, the range of ways in which migration affects both those who move and those who stay, and the future of human mobility in our changing world. The accompanying website offers resources for libraries, educators, families, and kids to keep the conversation going.

Drawing on a wealth of case studies from across human history and the breadth of cultures, the exhibit encompasses stories, images, and objects that will help people appreciate migration histories—their own and others—and emphasize how migration is a shared human experience that connects us all.

To highlight the different reasons and circumstances behind human mobility in different times and places, the exhibition uses “Crossroads” as a storytelling framework. Crossroads are intersections where people from different places meet. Crossroads also symbolize connections between cultures and moments when crucial decisions are made. Rather than following one group of people on the move, we ground ourselves



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in one location and watch as diverse groups come and go over the millennia.

The exhibition features four very different places as Crossroads: Beringia, The Mediterranean, Central Africa, and East Los Angeles. With this theme, the exhibition highlights human movement, interaction, change, and transformation. It encourages us to compare migration experiences from a wide diversity of times and places, prompting questions about how today's migration stories are similar to those of long ago and far away, and how they are unique.

The *World on the Move* exhibition was developed in partnership with the American Library Association, the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and Smithsonian Exhibitions. Support for planning and developing the exhibition has been provided by the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Office of the Smithsonian Institution's Secretary, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and William Heaney.

Learn more at UnderstandingMigration.org.



Sophie Bjork-James



Gwen Burnyeat



Rick Feinberg



Bharat Venkat



Sarah Wagner

AAA Members in the News

Sophie Bjork-James, assistant professor of anthropology at Vanderbilt University, wrote “Fueled by Virtually Unrestricted Social Media Access, White Nationalism Is on the Rise and Attracting Violent Young White Men” for the *Conversation*, August 2, 2022.

Gwen Burnyeat, junior research fellow at Merton College, University of Oxford, wrote “Petro Wins” for the *London Review of Books* 44(13), July 7, 2022.

Rick Feinberg, emeritus professor of anthropology at Kent State University, wrote “We Must Find Proper Balance to Achieve Reasonable Gun Control” in the *Acron Beacon Journal*, June 26, 2022.

Bharat Venkat, assistant professor at UCLA's Institute for Society and Genetics and in the Department of History, published the



Roy Richard Grinker



Joel C. Kuipers

op-ed “How Historic Redlining Led to Extreme Heat in the Watts Community” in the *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 2022.

Sarah Wagner, Roy Richard Grinker, and Joel C. Kuipers, professors of anthropology at George Washington University, coauthored the op-ed “Why We Need a National Day of Remembrance for COVID Victims” in the *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 2022.

New Fellows and Awards

Irma McClaurin, activist biocultural anthropologist and founder and senior consultant of Irma McClaurin Solutions, won a US Alumni TIES Minneapolis small grant competition for the project “Black Rochester Narratives: A Community Focused Healing and Preservation Pilot Initiative.”

Congratulations to AAA members **Chandana Anusha** and **Dilshan Perera** and to **Oscar H. Pedraza Vargas**, **Carrie Perkins**, and **Omar Ramadan-Santiago** who were named **American Council of Learned**



Irma McClaurin



Chandana Anusha

Societies (ACLS) 2022 Emerging Voices Fellows. The program “supports early-career scholars in the humanities and interpretive social sciences facing a challenging academic job market by

enabling them to take up positions with members of the ACLS Research University Consortium. The program supports a vanguard of scholars whose voices, perspectives, and broad visions will strengthen institutions of higher education and humanistic disciplines in the years to come.”

Got some good news to share? Let us know about your appearances in the news, new fellowships, and awards at AN@americananthro.org.

AAA Executive Board Actions

MAY 2020

- Authorized Executive Director to renegotiate the contracts in effect in St. Louis to postpone the 2020 Annual Meeting until the next available year (2026) with the aim of avoiding contract penalties.
- Appointed an Executive Board Working Group to work with staff to identify a general outline of a plan by June for staging a viable alternative to an in-person Annual Meeting in St. Louis in November 2020.
- Received a final report from MPAAC Working Group on Virtual Attendance and Participation.
- Received the FY 2019 Annual Audit as prepared.
- Accepted the Federal 990 and 990T Tax forms and the Virginal state form for 2019 as prepared by the auditor and recommend it be signed and submitted.
- Approved the creation of quasi-endowments for Society for Humanistic Anthropology for a writing award and Society for Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology for a general award fund.
- Awarded the 2020 Franz Boas Award for Exemplary Service to Anthropology to Carlos Velez-Ibáñez; The AAA Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in Anthropology to Carina Heckert; The Anthropology in Media Award to Hugh Gusterson; Minority Dissertation Fellowship to Ampson Hagan; Gender Equity Award to Deborah Thomas; Robert B. Textor and Family Prize for Excellence in Anticipatory Anthropology to Wendy A. Vogt and Carole H. Browner Latin American Fellowship Fund for Travel to Julio Villa Palomino.
- Approved the updates to the 2021 Strategic Implementation Plan.
- Authorized MPAAC to receive an annual budget of \$10,000 as outlined in their report.
- Revised the name of the Minority Dissertation Fellowship to Dissertation Fellowship for Historically Underrepresented Persons in Anthropology.
- Revised the MPAAC charge so that the AAA President-Elect serves as one of the cochairs on the Committee.
- Adopted the updated 2020 version of the AAA Statement on Human Rights.
- Approved the AAA Statement of Agricultural Land Investments and Socially Responsible Retirement
- Agreed to waive registration for guest presenters for the two proposed Agricultural Investment panels for the 2020 Annual Meeting and arrange for suitable publicity to draw attention to these panels.
- Approved the Section/Interest Group Futures Working Group action plan (Section Health Plan).
- Revised Executive Board Job Description to include the following: “In addition to contributing their time and talent, board members are expected to support the AAA’s fundraising efforts.”
- Reauthorized the Interest Group on Aging and Life Course and Interest Group on NGO’s and Nonprofits for another three years.

- Approved the creation of a AAA K-12 non-voting membership with a \$19 fee.
- Approved proposed journal pricing from Wiley for 2021.
- Agreed to allow the AAA Executive Office to approve any future journal institutional subscription price increases at five percent or below.
- Adopted a definition of “previously published,” as drafted by the Publishing Futures Committee.
- Forwarded the letters of interest to the AAA President for appointment of new editor(s) for Open Anthropology.
- Approved an allocation from AAA reserves up to \$1.77 million to cover the projected 2020 AAA operating deficit due to projected revenue shortfalls and proposed changes in expenses resulting from the global public health emergency and its accompanying economic impacts.

JUNE 2020

- Approve a revised 2020 Gift Acceptance Policy.
- Approved the EB Working Group Report on the fall 2020 Event Series and alternative to the cancelled Annual Meeting and urged the committee to share with the EB a refined proposal as soon as can be done.

NOVEMBER 2020

- Approved the budget for 2021 (with a revision in December).
- Created Working Group to review AAA Nomination Process.
- Agreed to share summary of the editor survey with journal editors, presidents, and treasurers of publishing Sections.
- Authorized the Publication Futures Committee to distribute a questionnaire to publishing Sections regarding publication production.
- Approved the update to the Journal Editor Memorandum of Understanding.
- Approved AAA paying membership dues (but not Section dues) for Editors during the years of an editor’s term, by requesting reimbursement.
- Approved additional language in the Authors Agreement concerning image copyright.

DECEMBER 2020

- Authorized funds (\$40,000) to hire a facilitator to assist the Executive Board, MPAAC, and Section Leadership with planning and updating the 2021 Strategic Plan.
- Received the 2020 Israel/Palestine monitoring report.

JANUARY 2021

- Adopted the 2021 AAA slate of candidates for the spring Election.

MARCH 2021

- Revised the AAA Guidelines for Establishing and Administering Endowment Funds.
- Withdrew funds in 2021 from AAA strategic reserves (up to \$526,327) to pay for the replacement of the Association Management System (database).

- Approved the proposed vote of Society for Urban National Transnational Global Anthropology of their members (by changing their bylaws) to rename their Section to Critical Urban Anthropology Association.

MAY 2021

- Adopted proposed Statement on Anti-Transgender Legislation, which was an update from a previously adopted statement in 2018.
- Established the AAA Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney Book Award.
- Established a quasi-endowment for the Society for Visual Anthropology to fund their annual Field and Media Awards given at their annual festival.
- Accepted the 2020 Federal 990 tax forms and state of Virginia forms as prepared by audit firm and accepted their audit.
- Agreed to pause “land acknowledgments” and “blessing ceremonies” until the issue has been studied by the newly created Task Force that explores the historical relationships between anthropology and anthropologists and American Indian and Alaska Native Nations.
- Commended the work of *Anthropology News* editor, Natalie Konopinski, AAA Publishing Department, and volunteer authors for their excellent work and the EXCEL Awards earned in 2020.
- Commended the editor of *Economic Anthropology* (and SEA) for the hard work to increase the journal’s growth and receiving an Impact Factor based on the first six volumes of the journal.
- Commended the editors of *Feminist Anthropology* (and AFA) for the successful launch of the journal.
- Agreed to look into modeling options and a transition plan for a unified copyediting and managing editor service of the portfolio of journals.
- Authorized staff to begin creation of an orientation for leaders and editors on running a professional editorial office with best practices in managing workflow.
- Agreed that all journals that are part of the current publishing agreement move to standardized templates.
- Agreed to eliminate print subscriptions with the exception of *American Anthropologist* with the next publishing contract in 2023.
- Authorized staff to investigate the potential for partnerships with other publishers, with a report back to the AAA Executive Board by July 2021. Quality, breadth, equitability, and accessibility are the key considerations.

JULY 2021

- Received report of Nominations Process Working Group and approved some short-term recommendations for improvements to nomination process.
- Agreed AAA to work toward a hybrid approach to a publishing model for the next publisher contract, which would allow for some journals to publish as traditional subscription journals and some journals to become open access.
- Approved the AAA Strategic Plan for 2021–2026

AUGUST 2021

- Approved an exception to our policy not to hold meetings in Georgia until such time as HB87 is either repealed or struck down as constitutionally invalid. This would allow AES and

APLA to hold a spring meeting in the state and an event with voting activists to address the issue of HB87.

SEPTEMBER 2021

- Established quasi-endowments for SMA to support the MASA (Medical Anthropology Student Association) Graduate Student Mentorship Award, the MASA Undergraduate Student Mentorship Award, the Steven Polgar Paper Prize, Student Travel Awards, Contingent Faculty Travel Award and biannual awards (the George Foster Practicing Medical Anthropology Award, WHR Rivers Undergraduate Student Paper Prize, SMA Dissertation Award, New Millennium Book Award, Hazel Weidman Award for Exemplary Service to the Society for Medical Anthropology, Career Achievement Award and the Charles Hughes Graduate Student Paper Prize.
- Established quasi-endowment for the Society for the Anthropology of Religion to finance the Clifford Geertz Book Award.
- Approved the recommendation of the joint AAA/SfAA Margaret Mead Award Committee selection of Amber R. Reed to receive the award in 2021.

OCTOBER 2021

- Agreed to proceed with the 2021 Annual Meeting in-person participation under thoughtfully planned health and safety protocols, offering a virtual participation option as well.
- Approved the acceptance of funding and establishment of the Ina Rosenthal-Urey Award and thanked Elizabeth Briody and Marc Robinson for their outstanding generosity and support of undergraduate anthropology majors.

NOVEMBER 2021

- Accepted funding from Carole Browner to establish SLACA’s quasi-endowed “Art Rubel Book Award” and AAA’s Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and thanked her for her generosity and support to both AAA and SLACA.
- Accepted funding from Setha Low for endowing of AAA’s “Setha Low Award for Engaged Anthropology” and thanked her for her generosity and support.
- Accepted Funding by the Dubal family for a new (provisionally named “Sam Dubal Memorial Award for Anti-Colonialism and Racial Justice in Anthropology”) and thanks the Dubal family for their generosity and support.
- Adopted FY 2022 AAA Consolidated Operating Budget.
- Accepted recommendations of Border Walls Working Group.
- Approved immediate recommendations for the Working Group Reviewing AAA Public Policy Statements.
- Commissioned a Task Force to consider the long-term recommendations from the Working Group Reviewing AAA Public Policy Statement Policy report.
- Commissioned a Task Force (now a Commission) on Ethical Treatment of Human Remains.
- Made changes to the charges for the Association Operations Committee and Anthropological Communications Committee to allow incoming members to serve as chairs for either of these Committees.

- Agreed to a transfer of ownership of *Transforming Anthropology* pending resolution to Executive Board questions.

JANUARY 2022

- Authorized a withdrawal from AAA reserves to make an advance payment on exhibition fabrication and touring services for the *World on the Move* exhibit. These funds are to be paid back by the end of 2022.

FEBRUARY 2022

- Raised the minimum corpus size for named AAA awards from \$10,000 to \$25,000.
- Approved endowment fund to support the Gender Equity Award and thanked Virginia Dominguez, Susan Greenhalgh, and others who made it possible.
- Approved the Council for Museum Anthropology’s acceptance of \$50,000 to establish the Ivan Karp Endowment Fund for Workshops in Museum Anthropology and thanks to Cory Kratz for her generosity.
- Approved the Society for Economic Anthropology acceptance of \$12,000 to establish the Kate Browne Creativity in Research Award and thanks to the family of Kate Browne for their generosity.
- Approved the proposed update to the Protocols Governing Creation and Maintenance of Association Interest Groups.
- Approved a policy and process for Sections transitioning into Association Interest Groups.
- Approved the removal of the moratorium on formation of new Association Interest Groups and Sections.
- Approved the request by the Association of Latina and Latino Anthropologists (ALLA) to put to a vote of their members a bylaws change necessary to change the Section’s name to the Association of Latina/o Latinx Anthropologists.
- Made recommendation for a process regarding AAA membership for those sanctioned by Harvard for inappropriate behavior.
- Authorized the Executive Director to negotiate a new publishing contract with Wiley for an initial term of 2023-27.

Unessay Competition Winners!

In spring 2022, AAA invited students to join us in celebrating Anthropology Day by participating in the inaugural AnthroDay Unessay Competition. Inspired by the *World on the Move* exhibit, this year’s unessay competition focused on migration.

The contest was open to students in grades kindergarten through twelfth. Unlike a traditional essay competition, an unessay invites students to choose the format and product they submit. Students were asked to think creatively about the topic and respond to one of several prompts in a way that is meaningful to them. We are proud to publish the winning entries as part of this “Move” issue of *Anthropology News* in print and on the *AN* website.

MARCH 2022

- Authorized appropriation of funds from the Opportunity Project funds to support and in-person Spring Executive Board Meeting in Arlington, Virginia, and accessibility support for Anthropology Live Event Series pilot.

JUNE 2022

- Approved the proposal from Society for Psychological Anthropology to establish a quasi-endowed fund of \$125,000 for the establishment of and SPA Editorial Associate Fellowship.
- Approved the proposal from Society for Psychological Anthropology to establish three endowed awards: the Ashe prize (from a \$12,500 donation from Susan Greenhalgh) and two mentoring awards (funded by a \$50,000 donation from Carole H. Browner) with thanks from the Executive Board for their generosity.
- Approved the Federal and State Tax forms for 2021 along with the 2021 Audit Report.
- Approved the Revised Strategic Implementation Plan.
- Approved “equity” as a new core value of the AAA publishing program.
- Approved the Biological Anthropology Section’s proposal to create a new journal: *Quarterly Biological Anthropology Review*.
- Approved a revised allocation structure for distribution of revenue to journals to provide editorial support to all journals.
- Established a new Association Interest Group-the Climate Change Interest Group.
- Approved the Section Health Plans as proposed by Society for the Anthropology of Science, Evolutionary Anthropological Society, and the Anthropology of Consciousness, which establish a timeline for raising their membership or becoming a Association Interest Group.
- Approved the recommendation of the Awards Committee for the AAA award recipients for 2022.
- Received the interim report of the Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native Nations and agreed to share this report with the Section Presidents.

Congratulations to **Dani Halperin**, a sophomore at Horace Greeley High School in Chappaqua, New York, for her diary-style entry “Grandfather Experience”; to **Kate Rowberry**, a high school junior who has studied anthropology through Sierra College, for her poem “Homesick”; to **Angela González**, a sixth grader at Bettye Myers Middle School in Denton, Texas, for her Flip video entry about her “Las Cajitas Project”; and to **Gabriella Valdez Hasselstrom**, a sixth-grade student at The Classical Academy in Colorado, for her poem “If I Could Only Imagine.”

ALICE ATERIANUS-OWANGA, “COUNTER-EXOTIC MOVES”

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