29 January 2020
Dr Maggie Bolton

The Fragility of Relations of Domestication: Humans, Llamas and Unseasonal Snowfalls in Sud Lípez, Bolivia.

Abstract: This paper takes the context of an unseasonal severe snowfall in the highlands of Bolivia in 2002, to examine relations between Andean people and their llama herds. The approach taken here brings together two strands of anthropological writing on human-animal relations and the environment. The first emphasises animal domestication as a material and spatial relationship, drawing on the work of David Anderson who has worked in northern herding societies. Anderson writes of architectures of domestication, examining how the attention of many different species, and the artefacts of that attention, come to work together in a particular setting. The second strand of writing I use concerns the weather. Tim Ingold writes that rather than consider human and other life unfolding in a landscape, which suggests features of and things on the surface of the earth, we should speak of a ‘weather-world,’ for this conveys something of the medium in which life unfolds. Considering the ‘weather-world’, how it was transformed by snow in the Bolivian highlands and its influence on human-animal relations adds a temporal dimension to Anderson’s emphasis on architectures. It also highlights the fragility of relations of domestication – how the bonds between humans and animals can be broken and only re-established with effort. Given that extreme weather events appear to be on the increase, the ethnography presented here demonstrates one way in which climate change appears to be threatening the lifestyle of indigenous people in the high Andes.

Bio: Maggie Bolton came to anthropology after a first career in physics and engineering. She gained her PhD in social anthropology from the University of St Andrews in 2001, having carried out fieldwork in highland Bolivia on mining and camelid herding. She has since
Sociology Seminar Series 2020
4:00 on every other Wednesday (with a few odd dates thrown in)
Yudowitz Seminar Room, Wolfson Medical Building

Lectured in anthropology at the Universities of Manchester and Hull and has been based at the University of Aberdeen since 2009. Her postdoctoral research returned to camelid herding, focusing on attempts to rationalise and commercialise Andean llama herds, and her current research has returned to mining with a historical study of the contributions of Aberdonian entrepreneurs to Bolivian silver and tin mining in the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

PhD coffee & chat suggested readings:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/55ojz7emn0n4yt5/Bolton_Andean%20dogs%20June27.pdf?dl=0

12 February 2020
Dr Liana Chua

Witnessing the unseen? On extinction, spirits, and anthropological responsibility

Abstract: In this paper, I draw on two research projects—one on orangutan conservation, and the other on religious change among indigenous Bidayuh communities (Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo)—to reflect on the relations and processes involved in producing both witnesses and witness-able truths. I compare two forms of witnessing—dominant visualizations of environmental crisis and extinction on the one hand, and ways of encountering spirits, deities, and other invisible entities among Bidayuhs on the other. Both involve a knotty challenge: how to make that which cannot be seen visible or somehow knowable, and thus addressable. I argue that the first entails a crisis-laden visual imaginary that treats witnessing as a form of human stewardship over the environment. Conversely, the second involves a more relational encounter in which witnessing and bearing witness are the outcome of commitments and obligations shared by both humans and nonhumans. I suggest that this latter mode of witnessing can help ‘slow down’ the crisis logic of environment visualizations, pushing us to ask what is rendered both visible and invisible in witnessing processes. Finally, I contemplate what the juxtaposition of these two modes of witnessing can bring to ongoing conversations about the roles and responsibilities of the anthropologist as witness.

Bio: Liana Chua is Reader in Anthropology at Brunel University London. She has worked with an indigenous group in Malaysian Borneo since 2003, looking initially at religious conversion and ethnic cultural politics, and later at development, resettlement and environmental transformation. She currently leads the ERC-funded project, Refiguring conservation in/for ‘the Anthropocene’: the global lives of the orangutan, which explores the social, political, affective, and aesthetic dimensions of orangutan conservation. Her other research interests include visual and material anthropology, anthropology of the body and anthropological knowledge-practices and politics. Brunel University London

**The Past, Present, and Future of Anticolonial Nostalgia**

**Abstract:** The present wave of Brexit-era imperial nostalgia in popular and political discourse has been widely remarked and critiqued. Frequently, condemnation of imperial nostalgia extends to nostalgia at large, framing the concept as inherently regressive and incompatible with progressive social movements. Yet nostalgia, as Bonnet (2010) has argued, also shapes the articulation of leftist thought and the imagination of utopian futures. Drawing from Bonnet, I ask how nostalgia has been deployed in the service of anti-racist and anticolonial thought, and how it might counter racialised, populist nationalism. I identify, and historicise, three moments in anti-racist and anticolonial nostalgia: a past-orientated nostalgia of return, a present-orientated nostalgia of solidarity, and a future-orientated utopian nostalgia. I conclude by considering the place, and the promise, of nostalgia in the anti-imperialist climate movement.

**Bio:** Meghan Tinsley joined the University of Manchester as a lecturer in the Department of Sociology in September 2018, after receiving her PhD from Boston University. Her research explores the consolidation of nations through racialised state violence. She recently held a Visiting Fellowship at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (CRASSH) at the University of Cambridge. She is working on three research projects, 'We Will Re-Member Them': Muslims in the British and French World War I Centenary, 'Race and Police Violence: Causality in Global and Individual Perspective' and a third on nostalgia that is tracing the history of nostalgia as theory and practice.

**PhD coffee & chat suggested readings:** Tinsley, M. 2019. Memory and melancholia in the garden of tropical agronomy. Memory Studies. 1-16. [https://www.dropbox.com/s/mq07xd44syf5jme/Tinsley%20Reading.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/mq07xd44syf5jme/Tinsley%20Reading.pdf?dl=0)

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**Kinneret Lahad**

**Bio from her webpage:** Kinneret is a senior lecturer at the NCJW Women and Gender Studies Program at Tel-Aviv University. Her “research and teaching interests focus on gender and social theory, family, queer and feminist time studies, singlehood and popular culture, friendships and aunthood. In the course of the recent years, I wrote my first monograph, A Table for One: A Critical Reading of Singlehood, Gender and Time (Manchester University Press). The book is an open access which can be downloaded legally and without any cost at this link: [http://www.oapen.org/search?identifier=635870:keyword=lahad](http://www.oapen.org/search?identifier=635870:keyword=lahad) In the book, I juxtapose two theoretical fields that are rarely linked: the social study of time and the study of female singlehood.”

[https://www.tau.ac.il/profile/lahadk](https://www.tau.ac.il/profile/lahadk)
11 March 2020
Dr Marguerite Schinkel

‘I feel like I don’t belong anywhere, but I belong here’. The meaning of persistent short-term imprisonment.

Abstract: This talk uses the concept as belonging as developed in migration studies and applies it to the experiences of 37 men and women who have served many short prison sentences. While the meaning of these sentences changed over time, they were influenced by feelings of belonging and non-belonging in both the prison and community throughout. While focusing on the emotional definition of belonging, the talk will also take into account how this is influenced by its political dimension and interacts with institutional and societal arrangements.

Bio: Marguerite Schinkel is a lecturer in Criminology and a member of the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research. She joined the University in October 2013 as an ESRC Future Leader Research Fellow. She was awarded a PhD from the University of Edinburgh in 2013 and previously worked as a researcher for the Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland. She is the author of a book, Lives Sentenced: Punishment, Adaptation and Desistance, published by Palgrave in 2014, and lots of journal articles (see publications).


25 March 2020
Prof Bill Hughes

Of Swine and Men: A Historical sociology of disability in the late Medieval moral economy

Abstract: In 1425 four blind men, armed with cudgels, were put in a field with a pig. If they killed the pig, it would be theirs to keep. The contest was billed as an amusement. I use this scenario – a leisurely, Parisian Sabbath afternoon entertainment - as a launch-pad for an examination of the role and place of disabled people in the moral economy of late Medieval Europe. By their presence in the pleasant fields on the outskirts of Paris, the audience had already drawn a sharp ontological dividing line between themselves and the involuntary participants in this rustic ‘theatre of the absurd’. The gap between audience and ‘comic players’, is one between subject and object. Tendentious humour – its bile targeted at powerless people - is deeply embedded in western culture; most emphatically in Aristotle’s claim that disabled people are ‘lusus naturae’ or jokes of nature. In this paper, I trace the dehumanisation of disabled people in the Middle-Ages as it is manifest in the expropriation of their dignity and agency. Disabled people are invalidated in the culture of Christendom where their use-value as objects of charity and repositories of sin, makes them morally central to the non-disabled community. Disabled people are both good to mistreat and good to be good to but have no intrinsic value.

Bio: Bill Hughes is Professor of Sociology at Glasgow Caledonian University. He was co-editor (with Dan Goodley and Leonard Davis) of Disability and Social Theory (2012) and has
published over fifty articles, mostly on the subject of disability. A regular contributor to and member of the Editorial Board of, Disability & Society (1999-2019), Bill’s other editorial responsibilities have included Membership of the Editorial Review Board of Disability Studies Quarterly (2015-Date) and Editor of the Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research (2012-16). Bill has been working on a two volume historical sociology of disability for the last few years. The first volume was published in October: Hughes, B. (2019) A Historical Sociology of Disability: Human validity and invalidity from Antiquity to Early Modernity, London: Routledge. Bill is on the Board of Trustees of Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA), the UK’s largest Disabled People’s Organisation (DPO) and he was a Member of the Executive of the European Sociological Association (ESA) from 2007-2013

Glasgow Caledonian University


01 April 2020
Prof Magnus Marsden

Commodities, merchants and refugees: inter-Asian circulation and Afghan mobility

Abstract: This paper analyses ethnographic material concerning Afghan trading networks involved in both the export of commodities from China to a variety of settings across Eurasia and the movement of ‘refugees’ from Afghanistan to Europe. Much recent work on trading networks has deployed the concept of trust to understand the functioning of such social formations. By contrast, this article seeks to understand their durability through combined recognition of the ways in which Afghan networks are polycentric and multi-nodal, successful in transforming their collective aims and projects in changing shifting political and economic circumstances, and made-up of individuals able to switch their statuses and activities within trading networks over time. It argues furthermore that a focus on the precise ways in which traders entrust capital, people and commodities to one another, reveals the extent to which social and commercial relationships inside trading networks are frequently impermanent and pregnant with concerns about mistrust and contingency. Recognition of this suggests that scholars should focus on practices of entrustment rather than abstract notions of trust in their analyses of trading networks per se, as well as seek to understand the ways in which these practices enable actors to handle and address questions of contingency.

Bio: Magnus Marsden is Professor of Social Anthropology and Director of the Asia Centre at the University of Sussex. His research focuses on the Asia’s Muslim societies, especially on intersections of religion, ethics, and economic life. He has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in South and Central Asia (especially bin Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan) and, with traders from these countries, in China, Ukraine, Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula. He is currently the PI of ERC Advanced research project exploring the role played by the city of Yiwu in the global trade in low-grade Chinese commodities.

PhD coffee & chat suggested readings:
https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-asian-studies/article/interasian-concepts-for-mobile-societies/F58D3749DAA9A4FE268183DB205EA425
https://www.dropbox.com/s/sjeqrqaht2scr3w/Marsden%20Reading_%20Ho_interasian_concepts_for_mobile_societies.pdf?dl=0
15 April 2020
Dr Anamik Saha

Diversity, media and racial capitalism

Abstract: Within the cultural industries the business case for diversity is in ascendency. Media and cultural organisations understand that if they are to survive into the future they need to reach what are referred to as new audiences. But how does this understanding translate into the symbolic goods made by media? This paper will present some initial findings from an AHRC project entitled Rethinking “diversity” in the publishing industry. Focusing on a range of interviews conducted with agents, publishers and editors, it will explore some of the rationales and logics that feed into the search for talent from BAME communities. In doing so it develops further arguments on how black and Asian symbol creators in particular have become commodities within this neoliberal conjuncture. In turn it considers what this reveals about the governance of race in the context of racial capitalism.

Bio: Anamik Saha is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London. His research interests are in race and the media, with a particular focus on cultural production and the cultural industries, including issues of ‘diversity’. He is the author of Race and the Cultural Industries, published by Polity in 2018. In 2019 he received an Arts and Humanities Research Council Leadership Fellow grant for a project entitled ‘Rethinking Diversity in Publishing’. Anamik is an editor of European Journal of Cultural Studies. He is currently working on a new book entitled Race, Culture, Media (Sage).

PhD coffee & chat suggested readings: TBA

22 April 2020
STUDENTS LED: David Wizner and Amanda Ptolmey

Amanda’s Title: ‘Zine-making as a creative feminist method for researching with disabled young women’

Amanda’s bio: Based within Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research, Amanda's research develops creative feminist methods to engage routinely excluded participants. Amanda also facilitates young women focussed events including conferences and workshops. Prior to her doctoral research, she worked in community development and peacebuilding education for over a decade, designing and leading projects in Scotland and internationally.

Other info: TBA