CARGO

CARGO
Journal for Cultural and Social Anthropology 2|2023

CARGO is a peer-reviewed journal published by the Czech Association for Social Anthropology (CASA).

CARGO focuses on theory-and-practice of ethnographic research, critical discussion of anthropological theory, and on ethical issues of producing anthropological knowledge. The journal publishes academic articles, interviews with key scholars in anthropology, and texts debating methods of teaching anthropology.

CARGO seeks to present materials that are innovative, challenging, and sometimes experimental. Texts are published in Czech, Slovak, and English.

CARGO is listed in the European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH), category NAT.

CASA
CZECH ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

In the second issue of Cargo 2023, we focus on theoretical reflections in social and cultural anthropology.

In the first reviewed text, we find ideas for the further development of the discipline as well as historical reflections from one of the leading figures of contemporary anthropology, João de Pina-Cabral. This co-founder and former President of the Portuguese Association of Social Anthropology was also the co-founder of the European Association of Social Anthropologists. The author of the recently published books *World: an anthropological examination* (Chicago: HAU Books 2017), *Transcolonial* (Lisbon: ICS 2023) and articles in *Anthropological Theory* (26, 3, 2028 and 22, 3, 2022); *Anthropology Today* (34, 2 2018); *HAU* (8, 3, 2018; 10, 1, 2020; 11, 1, 2021; 12,1, 2022); *JRAI* (25, 2, 2019; 28, 4, 2022); *Social Anthropology* (30, 1, 2022); *Social Analysis* (66, 2, 2023); *Critique of Anthropology* (43, 1, 2023) revisits the first steps of this organization, which had its second biennial conference after Coimbra, Portugal, in Prague. In his text, we find remarks on the development of social anthropology, which, among other things, discuss the contribution of Central European scholars to the innovations of the discipline and show that contemporary social anthropology benefits from a plurality of academic sources, the further inspiration of which allows for a variety of approaches. In his own vision, he then places anthropology in the category of sciences of life alongside other disciplines that study humans and nature.

The second text was written by Joseph Grim Feinberg, who completed his PhD studies in 2014 at the University of Chicago and now works at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences on Czech philosophy of the 1960s and, more generally, on Czech philosophical outputs of the 20th century. He not only writes about professional philosophers but also studies contextual art and other scholarly works. Together with Sezgin Boynik, he recently co-edited the book *Karel Teige, The Marketplace of Art* (Helsinki and Prague: Rab-Rab and Contradictions, 2022) and with Ivan Landa and Jan Mervart the book *Karel Kosík and the Dialectics of the Concrete* (Leiden: Brill, 2022). Joseph Grim Feinberg is also

the author of *The Paradox of Authenticity: Folklore Performance in Post-Communist Slovakia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2018), which, especially in Slovakia, has attracted a great deal of attention. His text for Cargo is an enriching contribution to the self-reflection and contextualization of anthropology from the perspective of someone working at the edges of several disciplines.

The third text is a report on one's own research in Slovakia and its misinterpretations. It focuses on sexual behaviour as captured in the field and on the testimonies of other, usually widely read, and quoted anthropologists. The text was written for Cargo Journal by David Scheffel, a Canadian anthropologist of Czech origin. We have included the report, which has the potential for later extension into a broader theoretical-methodological study, in the unreviewed section. It is a scholarly text rich in literature and full of scientific erudition. However, there are also passages of a personal nature that should not be interfered with by reviewers. Thus, the text has undergone only linguistic proofreading and technical editing. We include it as one of the short texts, the research reports, whose publication we have announced in previous editorials, and we invite other authors to follow with their contributions. We are very pleased we can welcome David Scheffel, who, as he shows in his text, has been forced into inactivity for some time, and now his fortunes in life are hopefully turning around again.

In other unreviewed sections, we included a report on the conference of the History and Anthropology Network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists, a review of Zdenka Sokolíčková's book *The Paradox of Svalbard: Climate Change and Globalisation in the Arctic*, and a review of a publication edited by Petr Skalník, *Ernest Gellner's Legacy and Social Theory Today*.

We highly appreciate that our journal can publish texts of personalities who set the direction of world anthropology and provide our readers with works that can be starting materials for broad disciplinary and interdisciplinary discussion and sources of inspiration for other top publications.

Zdeněk Uherek

Anthropology in a New Era:
A Conjunctural Assessment

João Pina-Cabral

Abstract: The conditions for the practice of anthropology as a social science in Europe have again changed considerably since the beginning of the new century. In this paper I was asked to make an assessment of what are the contemporary conjunctural constraints that mould our practice as anthropologists. I start by considering the political environment that frames our institutional practices on opposite sides of Europe. Then I go on to propose that we need to be more explicit about the slow and silent erosion of the background assumptions that used to underly our anthropological thinking throughout the twentieth century. I propose that, both in methodological and theoretical terms, we are facing today a new anthropological synthesis—using this last word to refer to the broader analytical parameters that frame our discipline.

Keywords: Anthropology, social and cultural; European anthropology; Durkheimianism; Franz Baermann Steiner; anthropological synthesis; embodied

Over the past twenty years the conditions for the practice of anthropology as a social science in Europe have changed considerably—not only politically, but also methodologically and theoretically. It is perhaps time again to cast our gaze forward and seek to understand what our present conjuncture expects of us in our practice as anthropologists. I came to Prague from Portugal and Britain, on the other side of Europe, where I have worked for the past four decades. Thus, my more established grooves of thinking are strongly influenced by the Durkheimian tradition which, in any case, has followed me since the days when I was trained as an Africanist anthropologist in Southern Africa in the mid-1970s. I feel, therefore, that it is indeed a privilege to come to the Czech Republic to dialogue with you,

at a moment when Europe, and the world more broadly, are again undergoing such major and rapid change.

Anthropology in Europe

I am unavoidably reminded of two other moments that deeply marked my career—both professionally and intellectually. The first was the Fall of the Wall of Berlin and the parallel founding of the European Association of Social Anthropologists. I will never forget the sheer elation of being able to welcome in Coimbra in 1990, for the first time, anthropologists coming from Eastern Europe. There was a strong Czech presence at that meeting who went on to organize the following EASA meeting in Prague, in 1992, of which none of us who participated will ever forget. Václav Hubinger, Ernest Gellner, and others played a significant role at that meeting. Memorably, the Rector of Charles University started the proceedings with a speech in Latin, signifying thus the sense of shared historical heritage that we were celebrating. These were heady moments on the one hand, but they were also uncertain moments, on the other. Czechoslovakia was splitting just as our meetings were taking place. You will excuse if I quote the famous aphorism of Voltaire, but we were pregnant with the future.

In 1986, Portugal had entered into the European Economic Community, soon to become the European Union, finally making feasible the democratic and anti-colonialist project that had driven the 1974 Carnation Revolution. For us, Portuguese academics, after half a century of intellectual and political oppression, the early 1990s were moments of great responsibility, when we felt that it was finally the time to build modern universities, create up-to-date research centres, and launch adequate postgraduate programmes. We knew we had no time to lose. For us then, the company of the Eastern margins on the other side of Europe felt like an indispensable balance in a Europe that, as an ecumenical field of communication, might otherwise have been too heavily weighted towards the North.

The second moment that I need to remind you of was when, indeed, our worst fears were validated. As a consequence of the 2008 financial crisis in New York, the central European countries who controlled the Euro decided to let the financial dogs loose upon us—utterly failing to understand that Europe had become an integrated whole. The Portuguese felt this as a deep betrayal, as indeed, and contrary to other countries, our national financial accounts and our economic performance had been perfectly adequate by international standards. Only we were small, and we were made to pay for that. Our universities were left in a sorry state, our students no longer had grants, our libraries could no longer afford to pay the fees of access to the scientific journal databases, and an obscurantist prime

minister made a speech telling our graduates simply to emigrate if they wanted to get a job. By 2012, it looked like all that we had built over the previous two decades might have been cast to the winds.

In that year, I was invited to be the head of the School of Anthropology and Conservation at the University of Kent in Canterbury (UK), a challenge I could not turn down. The years that followed that move were not in any way less perplexing. As a result of my change of address, I had a first-row seat to observe the unfolding of the Brexit debacle. By the time I returned to Portugal in 2020, it was clear to all of us that British universities had suffered a major setback of which they might not be healed for many decades to come. To this day, British universities, which were normally the top recipients of European research funding, remain outside the European funding system, with all the damage that that implies to their international standing. We hope that coming governments see through the sheer suicidal stupidity of that, but the harm done may not be retrievable in the medium term.

Coming to the present moment again, then, the Russian War against Ukraine is beating at our walls and the situation seems to be increasingly giving rise to harsh political divisions in Eastern Europe. From the perspective of one who visited Ukraine in 1996 and saw the sorry state that one of Europe's richest countries had been left in by the Soviets, I feel deeply sympathetic to the fate of its people.

I must stress, however, that the matter presents itself to me yet in another light; I feel that we have to look at this from our *own* perspective. You and I are not just anybody, we are academics. This means that we have a vested interest; we have a professional point of view. It is like saying that sausage makers have an interest in the fate of pig farming. As much as we might regret many aspects of European politics, we are interested in our particular kind of business and that means that we, academics that we are, must fight for freedom of speech, a politically independent court system, a healthy education system, safe and humane academic employment, easy international circulation of scholars. In short, a political system that favours academic excellence. I still remember vividly what Portuguese universities were like before the mid-1980s when none of that existed. Whatever misgivings many of us may have about NATO politics, as social scientists we can only thank our gods that we still live under the kind of institutions that the European Union fosters, and no other neighbouring country even mildly provides.

I want to return, then, to what this means for anthropology in our present conjuncture. Perhaps I should start by explaining that I use 'conjuncture' here to mean "an emerging social condition, which identifies a constellation of politico-economic-cultural forces that correspond to a particular condensation of contradictions" (Pina-Cabral and Theossopolous, 2022). In particular, I seek to

dialogue with Johannes Fabian's distinction between coevalness and contemporaneity (1983). He argued that mid-century Euro-American anthropologists, who supposedly studied Other peoples (with a big O), were unwittingly generating asynchronous temporalities that produced duplicitous standards of analysis. Suppressing the coevalness of their subjects of study, social scientists were banishing exotic cultures and underprivileged classes to an 'other' time, generating what he called an allochronic condition. Fabian's critique of primitivism brought together a concern with personal experience with an engaged awareness of the history of globalization. For him, being 'coeval' is not only a condition, but an ethical injunction; more than living at the 'same time', it means addressing similar affordances in one's world. It presupposes substantial commensurability, an ability to share nuanced comparisons, a sense of cohabitation and co-responsibility.

To sum up, as Europeans, we are coevals. You and I share both a common time and a common worldly engagement. In Europe, the Russia-Ukraine War is probably the last battle of the wars that founded Europe—from the Franco-Prussian War to the Cold War. But it is also surely, at the same time, the warning siren of the coming of a new geopolitical era. (Since I delivered my lecture in Prague on the 6th of September, the tragic events in the Middle East only confirmed this.) The processes of change we are witnessing move in a deeply uncertain direction. And we should remember that this necessarily affects not only what we think, but also *how we do that thinking*.

The Durkheimian background

During the second half of the past century, Durkheimian social anthropology was the main driving force behind anthropology in Europe. This carried with itself a particular tradition of accounting for our disciplinary history that based it on exotic research upon imperial lands. Note that I am not here reproducing the totally unfair claim that anthropologists of the past were all 'imperialistic'. That was primarily a trick that American culturalists invented in the 1980s to establish their newly found hegemony. Having first come across our discipline in South Africa in the middle of the *apartheid* era, I can personally assure you that the anthropology we learnt at the University of Witwatersrand or the University of Cape Town at the time was anything but imperialistic. My teachers and their own teachers were and had been since the 1930s deeply engaged anti-segregationists, anti-racists, and anti-colonialists (see Hammond-Tooke, 1997). One of my lecturers, David Webster, was even shot by the regime, one morning, as he left his front door (Webster, 2009). Their teaching was precisely what made me adopt anthropology as a vocation in the first place.

The story that we were hearing from the anthropological historians that came of age in the 1970s—brilliant thinkers like Adam Kuper (e.g., 1983) or George Stocking Jr. (e.g., 1995)—was one that associated the kind of ethnography we wanted to do and the kind of theory we wanted to address to exotic, imperial, faraway lands. In fact, people whose research took place closer to the imperial homelands were treated with disdain and not allowed to enter anthropology departments—as was the case in Oxford with my own doctoral supervisor, John K. Campbell (see MacClancy, 2020).

In 1977, when I arrived in Britain, I was asked what I wanted to study and I responded that, having been raised in Africa, I was keen to get to know better my own European country of birth. 'That means you have to go to Oxford to study with the Mediterraneanists there', I was told by Michael Gilsenan, no less. And this I did. The discipline to which I was introduced there framed its own history in strongly Durkheimian terms, as a product of Radcliffe-Brown's theoretical inspiration and of Evans-Pritchard's Maussian deviations from it.

Imagine my surprise when, twenty years later, at the end of the 1990s, I finally discovered that the real inspiration behind British Mediterraneanism in the post-War period had not been that one at all. When he wrote his famous ethnography of a Spanish mountain town Julian Pitt-Rivers was not dialoguing with the social anthropologists we were taught to read, but with Georg Simmel, Alfred Schütz, and Erving Goffman. Actually, he had tried to explain that in his book, but he had been discouraged from doing so by Evans-Pritchard. Then, two decades later, he tried timidly to redress the error, but no one cared to listen (1971 [1954]). Only in 1999, did it emerge by the hands of Richard Fardon and Jeremy Adler that his supervisor had not been Evans-Pritchard or Meyer Fortes, as we had been told, but Franz Baermann Steiner, a Czech Jew who had been trained in Prague, Vienna, and Palestine and whose work had simply been erased from history because he had died too young and left it largely unpublished (Steiner, 1999a and 1999b and Adler and Fardon, 2022).

This was more important than it might seem because, contrary to what we were being told, the methodological inspiration in Pitt-Rivers and his early Mediterraneanist colleagues (like John Campbell or Paul Stirling) had not been an attempt to prolong to Europe the kind of theory that Malinowski had fostered. No, the direct inspiration was, via Steiner, the European ethnological tradition of studying the marginal populations of Europe—as Steiner himself had done in the Carpathian Mountains, not too far from Prague (Pina-Cabral, 2020). And then it turned out, that Mediterraneanists were not the only ones that needed to re-write their intellectual history. Mary Douglas' concept of pollution, Louis Dumont's concept of hierarchy, Srinivas' conception of caste, Paul Bohannan's theory of

substantivist economics, Laura Bohannan's visionary discussion of the plurality of what we usually call marriage—all of these were directly suggested to them by Franz Steiner. The Durkheimian history of British social anthropology that was being taught at Oxford, Cambridge, and Manchester throughout the lives of Evans-Pritchard, Meyer Fortes, and Gluckman and their immediate disciples was not wrong, but it was sadly incomplete. It wiped out the Germanic/Jewish/Central European inspiration of whole aspects of our field. We are now having to trace the evidence of those continuities and influences.

Anthropology and participation

This matters because we are presently witnessing a major change in our own condition as producers of anthropological knowledge and of ethnographic research. In this regard, I first want to argue against the widespread notion that the social sciences are necessarily unscientific in some way. This claim is based on an inferiority complex that resulted from mid-century positivistic background assumptions. By 'background assumptions' I mean all that we take for granted without very explicitly addressing it. The mid-century anthropologists that had a tremendously important role in divulging the notion of ethnographic research assumed a founding distinction between 'culture' (which was supposed to be a rule-bound system) and 'nature' (which was supposed to be causally determined). The philosopher Peter Winch, a close friend of Evans-Prichard, wrote in 1958 a deeply influential book—*The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*—which proposes an anti-scientistic view of social research explicitly inspired by the thinking of his anthropological friend.

Yet, just a few years later, when Donald Davidson demonstrated that norms were causes after all (Davidson, 1963: 691), the whole epistemological edifice upon which the mid-century notions of ethnographic methodology were based came tumbling down. While many philosophers were noting this by the 1990s, few anthropologists ever did. The primary reason for this is that, by then, the major influence in the field were the culturalist students of Parsons at Chicago—namely Clifford Geertz and David Schneider (cf. Sahlins, 2011: 6–7). In fact, of late, it is the very philosophers of science themselves, that have come to let us know that, and I quote one of the most inspiring contemporary philosophers of biology, John Dupré: "there is nothing in the rule-governed nature of social facts that presents any particular object to their scientific investigation.|" (Dupré, 2016: 15)

As it happens, the power of background assumptions runs far deeper than even Dupré managed to realize. According to him, what makes knowledge scientific is its dependence on empirical evidence: which he clarifies by saying that "scientific

knowledge must ultimately be to some extent answerable to some aspect of our experience." (2012: 5) On the whole, I agree with him, but then I take a corollary of his view that, as it turns out, he does not agree with. For me, in the social sciences, the ultimate source of empirical examination and evidence gathering is social encounter itself. The very root of all social scientific research is what I call 'the ethnographic gesture'—that is, the decision by a person to move towards a form of human life that he or she determines as 'different' and addresses it in its conjunctural specificity (Pina-Cabral 2023). It is not the only method, but it is the foundational methodology for addressing all human differentiation empirically.

To my surprise, however, Dupré disagrees. This is how he puts it:

> "I mean no disrespect to the tradition of cultural anthropology that does pursue a certain kind of participation with the societies it aims to investigate, and there may be a particular kind of knowledge that requires this kind of methodology. But surely it is not the only kind of knowledge possible of an unfamiliar culture? (…) And even if participatory anthropology gains a certain depth of understanding that is not available to other methods of study, it surely pays a price for this in breadth, or generality?" (2016: 16–17)

I find this argument is based on two false assumptions: (a) Dupré is ignorant of the history of ethnography—and the people to blame for that are anthropologists themselves, who settled comfortably to a kind of myth, a comfortable mid-century legend of how ethnography arose in the beaches of Kiriwina and (b) this legend carries with itself a set of implications that, as it turns out, are contrary to the very theories that Dupré sustains by reference to biology, which is his area of expertise.

I have outlined this point in greater depth in a recent article in *Critique of Anthropology* (Pina-Cabral, 2023). So, I will make my point here summarily. We have to assume that what Dupré means by 'participant anthropology' is the Geertzian defence of 'participant observation'. In what turned out to be one of the most widely read texts in the anthropological canon (*The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973), Geertz defends a view of ethnographic research that is based on a semiotic notion of culture as disembodied information. This individualist and substantivist view of meaning and sense-making is of a piece with the mid-20th century era in which it arose, and it has echoes in other sciences as well. Again, by relation to the science he dominates, evolutionary biology, Dupré makes a very similar point critiquing the focus on meaning as information. For example, he argues that "The assumption that the genome merely stores information is becoming untenable, and it now appears rather as an object in constant dynamic interaction with other constituents of the cell." (Dupré, 2012: 265)

Yet, when he comes to ethnography, which is not his field of expertise, he just allows the silent background assumptions to take over. The cause of this, I want to argue, is our own lack of information concerning our anthropological history. How many of us are aware that Malinowski *did not* invent the method of 'participant observation', as it is said in the Wikipedia entry for the term, and that he never even used the expression in any single one of his texts? How many of us know that the first use of the words 'participant observation' in the late 1920s by American sociologists did not apply to an ethnographer going out into the field, but to a trained informant—that is, a 'participant' that was taught to 'observe' (see De Walt and De Walt, 2011)? The expression only started being used by anthropologists in the United States, and later around the world, by the mid-1950s.

It is our fault that most of us believed the mid-20th century culturalist legend and did not check the actual history behind it. One day, having lunch with George Stocking, I too voiced that legend, and it was him that corrected me, saying that Malinowski had not invented the method and that he never even called it that. I went to do some research and I soon discovered that Stocking was absolutely right: Rivers had been the one to theorise the method one year before Malinowski went to experiment with it in the field (Rivers, 1913). Furthermore, Malinowski was not the only one at the time using Rivers's suggestions. The people surrounding Robert Park studying urban Chicago during the same period were also experimenting with it.[1]

At that time, they called it the 'intensive research method' and they had in mind the need to actually expose the ethnographer to the everyday life and the modes of living of the people they studied. Evans-Pritchard has a passage explaining that it is not enough to know that Azandes hunt with arrows. It is actually necessary to try to fire an arrow, even if initially with little success (1973). This type of research demanded a kind of engagement in terms of time and effort that anthropologists elsewhere were not willing to undertake. Intensive ethnography necessarily affects the ethnographer's own ontogenesis as a person. That is troublesome and some may not be willing or capable of undergoing it.

This is why Marcel Griaule felt obliged to justify himself in his lectures on the ethnographic method, proposing an easier alternative to it, which he called the 'extensive research method' (published posthumously in 1957). He knew that the kind of expedition-type ethnography he practiced was a totally

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[1]   And why do we fail to consider today as one of our best methodological predecessors Nels Anderson, whose masterpiece *The Hobo* (1923) is almost contemporary with Malinowsky's *Argonauts* (1922)?

different methodological proposal from Rivers's. Griaule's was the mould for Lévi-Strauss' expeditions in South America. My point here is that, at a moment when other social scientists are turning what they call 'the ethnographic method' into a sort of quick fix based on a few interviews, anthropologists should return to the pure waters of Rivers's inspiration and seek to be more 'intensive' in their research.

Why then must we drop the convenient but misguided notion of 'participant observation'? Because of the very reason biologists give for rejecting information-based, semioticist explanations in biology. See the example given by Nick Lane: "Biology is not only about information. Just as human delinquency cannot be blamed on individuals only, but partly reflects the society in which we live, so the effects of oncogenes said to cause cancer are not set in stone but take their meaning from the environment." (2022: 458). When I go to the field, I do not go there only to gather words, texts, rules, and laws—discourses, as culturalists call it. Ethnography is *not* 'a discourse on discourse', as Viveiros de Castro famously put it (2002: 113). Discourse is only the means of what I go there to do, because what makes the research ethnographic is that it is intensive—that is, it engages the ethnographer not only with discourse but also with what Heidegger used to call *Das Man* (the public aspect of life)(1962: 165) and we, following Marcel Mauss and Bourdieu, have taken to calling *habitus*. What is the habitus? It is the very set of worldly affordances that, in a certain social context, frame the meaning-making activities of the participants but which they do not carry at the tip of their tongues, as it were.

If I ask someone to describe to me her society's habitus, she will simply laugh at me. Discourse is an aspect of ethnographic research but, without being able to frame it within practice and its implications, the ethnographer will never be able to make sense of it. And this is why Pitt-Rivers used to insist that, when I want to understand some recurrent practice, I cannot limit myself to what the people say about it. I have to go beyond that and search in history, in the material objects used, in the texts that framed these concepts but that those who use them never even read. As he put it:

"The meanings which a single word has in different contexts, or had in the forgotten past, are guides to the premises which underlie its daily conscious usage, but daily usage is indifferent to contradictions arising between its various senses, and leaves them to be sorted out at the level of action. (This is the case of honour also). Thus it is not necessary to analyse a word in order to know how to use it correctly." (Pitt-Rivers, 2017 [1992]: 72)

That was the kind of ethnography that Pitt-Rivers carried out when, influenced by the lectures of Steiner on Simmel's notion of personhood (1999a: 208–298, see 1999b: 225n1), he went to Andalusia to research forms of personal valuation (honour and shame), or the cosmological implications of the notion of grace (see Pina-Cabral, 2022b).

The ethnography of the present and the foreseeable future, as it happens, is less and less characterised by distant exotic fields and increasingly engaged with peoples and topics that are everywhere around the world to be observed. Human differentiation starts at home and, in many ways, we are back to the condition in which people like Steiner were in the 1930s, when studying Jews, Roma, and Ruthenians in the Carpathian Mountains. In fact, as I observe daily these days, we can show empirically that Dupré is wrong in his prejudices. Ethnographies of our contemporary world—fully coeval in their reach—have been coming out of late that address brilliantly and creatively the sort of concerns that our world produces for us (e.g., Sanabria, 2016 or Grohmann, 2022). It is, after all, a world whose social constitution is changing profoundly right in front of our very eyes.

But then, to get to my second and final topic, so have changed the background assumptions that inform our theoretical discussions as anthropologists. Dupré fails to understand that it is in the small details that the most universal observations can be made—ethnographers do not suffer and have *never suffered* from a lack of 'breadth or generality', as he put it. Only, we seem to have been a bit lazy and we have often failed to observe that the cosmological background on which present-day scientific discoveries depend has changed very radically since the 1990s.

A new anthropological synthesis

I find that many important theoretical changes of context have been taking place, which confirm much of the work that the post-structuralist anthropologists of the 1980s were pointing to. I propose that, both in methodological and theoretical terms, we are facing today *a new anthropological synthesis*—using this last word to refer to the broader analytical parameters that frame our discipline. There are at least four main areas of theoretical change that directly affect the anthropology we do today. These may seem to be rooted in such a broad range of fields of expertise that they are too much for any one of us to grasp. That would indeed be the case, were it not for the fact that a large number of philosophers have emerged over the past twenty years (such as Karen Barad, John Dupré, Nick Lane, or Shaun Gallagher) who have done that work for us and have come to decipher the major lines of innovation that are emerging, namely in the area often called the 'sciences of life'.

The first change to notice is the new *processual philosophy of biology* that has come to the fore in the first decades of the new century. Anthropology's hegemonic view is based on a substantivist, materialist cosmology that biology has largely left behind (e.g., Nicholson and Dupré, 2018). We should no longer focus on things (or 'material culture', as it is often called) but on processes—that is, on changing frames of energy. For example, this implies a profound change of aspect in the discussion of the old problems concerning the nature of 'substances' and their circulation in the constitution of persons (e.g., Marriott, 1976). Anthropological substantialist suppositions (what Sahlins called his 'materialism', 2017: 117) have to be thoroughly overhauled.

The second is the impact that *quantum physics* has had in broader cosmological aspects of our scientific background assumptions. As Karen Barad (2007) among others has demonstrated, we are observing daily how a de-substantialised and processual nature of quantum physics is affecting our notions of presence and of being. Consequently, an ontology of human existence must address complexity and entanglement and how organisms and personal entities are *emergent entities* created by what philosophers call 'downward causation' (e.g., Dupré and Nicholson, 2018: 27). This casts a shadow on the individualist and atomistic conception of persons and organisms that we inherited from mid-century Parsonianism. The notions of persons and organisms as partible (not individual) and as developmentally emergent impose themselves (see Pina-Cabral, 2017).

The third is the way in which a *contemporary view of evolution* has emerged that no longer corroborates the hyperindividualist ideology that characterised the so-called Neo-Darwinian Synthesis at mid-20th century, characteristically exemplified by Richard Dawkins' famous book *The Selfish Gene* (1976). Recent philosophers of evolution have taught us to see that complexity is also a feature of evolution, that the tree of life model is fallacious, that epigenetics is far more important than it seemed, that environmental adaptation is the norm and not the exception.[2] Once we get rid of the older models of evolution, the very primitivism that founded anthropological theory at the end of the nineteenth century and that continues to be our background assumption to this day can just be summarily dumped. Our new focus must not be on organisms as entities but on entities as emergent phenomena (see Lane, 2022). A view of the person as a process in constant development, destitute of mental or physical essence, imposes itself. We have to work out how sociality operates not only between different so-called 'cultures', but also in different scales of human life: person, company, and community operate differently, even as they interact constitutively.

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[2] Concerning the extended evolutionary synthesis, see Laland et al., 2015.

Finally, *philosophers of cognition* inspired by phenomenology have made deep inroads ever since the turn of the century into the kind of post-structuralist critique that emerged with figures like Foucault, Derrida or Merleau-Ponty. They propose a view of cognition that goes way beyond the bounds of the representationalism that characterised the 1990s American culturalists of the so-called 'semiotic turn'. Cognition does not take place only in the brain, for it is embodied, embedded, enactive, and extended by way of extra-cranial processes and structures. For example, Shaun Gallagher has been explaining very convincingly for a while that 'embodied cognition can be expressed by the general hypothesis that cognitive processes are fundamentally rooted in the morphological traits and affective systems of the human body.' (Viale et al., 2023) This means that, finally, we can give a response that is at least partly satisfactory to the quandary that Rodney Needham left with us when, in 1972, he concluded that he did not know what it meant 'to believe.' Or when, in 1987, he noted that, having studied binary opposition, he could only see it as based on an affordance provided by the very sidedness of our bodies. For years his *Belief, Language, and Experience* (Needham, 1972) and his *Counterpoints* (Needham, 1987) were like timebombs about to explode over our anthropological theoretical certainties.

Furthermore, largely as a development upon Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'the intercorporeity of primary intersubjectivity' (see Gallagher and Miyahara, 2012), mental processes have started to be seen as thoroughly social phenomena: all meaning is ultimately 'participatory sense-making' (see De Jaegher and di Paolo, 2007). This radical new outlook on intentionality sees it as essentially plural (and not only the intentionality of persons but also the intentionality of all life forms). As Gallagher and Miyahara put it, "To the extent that we are all born into a community, our environment is full of intentional practices from the very beginning of our lives." (2012: 139).

This means that the world is not passively out there for the taking; it is built out of a dynamic of social engagement (Pina-Cabral, 2017). "I see the other's actions as an affordance for my own possible action (which may be very different from hers); I see the other's action as interactionable or as calling forth a response on my part." (Gallagher and Miyahara, 2012: 137) What this means is that my own emergence as an organism, and my own postulation of a world with which I interact as a person, never come unmoored from my social inherence, since all sense-making is ultimately participatory (see Pina-Cabral 2018).

Conclusion: one of the sciences of life

In light of all that, I conclude that not only is anthropology a science, but it is part of the broad field of the 'sciences of life', as it is necessarily rooted in the study of the processes that shape the essential embodiment of all human experience. The implications that such a major change in analytical expectations will have in anthropological practice are not really possible to predict. There are some central aspects, however, that can immediately be discernible. Firstly, the sociocentric oppositions between *individual* v. *group* and *participant* v. *observer* will reveal themselves to be deeply insufficient to describe the complexity of processes of social engagement, with major implications both in analytical terms—where metaphysical pluralism will run its course through most areas of anthropological theory; and in methodological terms—where the groupist, identitarian approach to the ethnographic encounter, which has led to a multiplication of 'codes' of supposedly 'ethical' practice, will reveal its ultimate perversity.

Secondly, the new, non-representationist framework for understanding cognition will open up at least two new areas of analysis: the difference between *human* and *animal* will not disappear, of course, but it will assume a greater sophistication, namely in terms of more complex notions of evolution and of a new approach to ethical concerns; and the polarity between *conscious* and *unconscious* will also be re-examined, leading to new approaches to the relation between habitus and history. Indeed, the emergentist framework that now offers itself allows for the development of a kind of neo-structuralist analysis which has much to offer anthropological theory once the groupist and primitivist assumptions that we inherited from the modernists are progressively eradicated. Thirdly, in terms of an approach to the process of constitution of political and economic forms of hegemonic domination. The notions of emergence and entanglement have much to offer in this regard, namely in terms of the analysis of environmental concerns.

I am aware that what I can leave here are merely pointers for what are necessarily going to be long and largely unpredictable processes, but I think that it is worthwhile to show how we are indeed before an exciting moment of theoretical and methodological renewal, where anthropology will again be able to grasp its long-term universalist themes, presenting them in a newly illuminating fashion. I believe that, if we have to learn anything from the amazing impact that ethnography had on mid-twentieth century intellectual life, it is the precise contrary of what Dupré ignorantly believes. Our particularist ethnographic methodology and our universalist anthropological theory have always been combined (see Pina-Cabral, 2008). As a matter of fact, they were combined precisely because they feed each other.

From the beginning, studies such as Firth's work on Tikopia (1936) or Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer (1940) were both long-lasting theoretical references in analytical discussions in philosophy, politics, and the social sciences and works of deep local import for the populations studied. It is the very emphasis on detailed and intensive encounter that provides the clue to their universalist import and their particularist relevance. If not *intensive*—that is, if they had not affected ontogenetically the person of the researcher—these ethnographies would have lacked that which makes them so foundational.

Thus, I sustain that, more than merely relevant for anthropology as a discipline, ethnography is the ultimate and primary means of empirical evidence-gathering for all of the social sciences, without which more distanced and mediated approaches will quickly glide down the ideological scale. In fact, I believe that ethnography carried out in 'intensive' fashion, precisely because of its intensity, will be increasingly indispensable when faced with the challenges that AI is presently posing to all social research. Intensive ethnography will ever remain the very root of the sociological encounter, which the scale-hopping that AI necessarily implies will always be dependent upon if it is to remain tied to actually humanly relevant concerns.

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Anthropology, Philosophy, and the Challenge of Barbarous Universalism[1]

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Abstract: There is rich tradition of interaction between anthropology and philosophy. This article reflects on the character of this interaction, arguing that it is not a case of two separate, parallel traditions that mutually influence one another, but rather of two interconnected disciplines that have become necessary to one another's development. Both disciplines aim at a universalistic understanding of the human being, but each does so by different means. Philosophy allows the autonomous work of reason to criticize established categories of thought, positing new concepts of the human; but it risks becoming too autonomous – too self-sufficient and self-referential – thus allowing its categories to become resistant to criticism, established as marks of "civilization" that distinguish philosophical ideas from ideas that are non-philosophical, irrational, and barbarous. Anthropology, for its part, reveals the limitations of premature universalism, pointing to forms of reason excluded from dominant systems of thought. Philosophy can turn to anthropology in order to expand and bring in new concepts. Anthropology can turn to philosophy in order to recall its original impulse toward conceptualizing the universal, in an expansive form that I call "barbarous universalism".

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[1] This paper is based on a lecture given at the biennial conference of the Czech Association for Social Anthropology (CASA), online, April 17, 2021.

A few years ago I helped edit the Czech publication (Tamás, 2016: 202–18) of a remarkable essay by the philosopher G. M. Tamás. In it, Tamás sings praises to the emancipatory potential of his discipline (Tamás 2014), writing, "Philosophy as a discipline is hostile, because of its conceptual and unavoidably universalist nature, to difference – and thus to inequality and hierarchy". (2014: 229) "Difference", in Tamás's understanding, implies "division, distinction, differentiation", all of which are "aspects of force" (2014: 218), elements of social order that classifies people and distributes value and suffering to those who are superior or inferior, according to the anti-egalitarian principle known as "justice".

When people struggle for justice, Tamás goes on, they are often tempted to "go to the people", uncritically registering and accepting the views of the excluded and oppressed. With the best of intentions, such fighters for justice abandon the universalist project of philosophy in favor of communalisms and tribalisms (2014: 228–29). Like Christians displacing transcendence into another realm, they take temporal and temporary solace in the degraded life of those they defend (2014: 229); they advocate for peoples just as they are, instead of imagining a new world for everyone. Philosophy, Tamás says, is not a champion of one set of people or another, or of one part of society set against another, but is "an enemy of any and all societies based on distinction and justice" (2014: 223). All particular principles of categorial exclusion crumble under philosophy's critical gaze.

In framing the project of emancipatory thought this way, Tamás offers a particular challenge to anthropology, a discipline known for its attention to difference, its fascination with structure and categories, its tendency to study not universal inclusion and ideal states, but excluded voices and actually existing conditions. And if we take anthropology together with its sister fields of folklore and ethnology, surely there is no scholarly discipline that holds more in common with the revolutionary project of "going to the people". If the mission of philosophy were to renounce the divergent thoughts of different peoples in favor of radically universalist reason unbounded by particular conditions, then what could anthropology ever have to do with it? What could it possibly mean to combine anthropology and philosophy?

The love of wisdom and the study of the human

Whether the effort is theoretically founded or not, I've been mixing anthropology and philosophy for a long time now. After studying sociocultural anthropology in graduate school, I found a job at an institute devoted to philosophy, and I've spent the last ten years trying to show that I really know how to practice my institute's nominal discipline. Even if I've been grappling with the same fundamental

question all along – how to understand the human being in the world – my two disciplines approach the question by different means, and this compels me to ask what the disciplines have to say to one another.

Anthropology and philosophy, then. I am far from the first person to reflect on their interaction (see, e.g., Giri and Clammer, 2013; Das et al., 2014). Anthropologists have borrowed ideas from philosophers ("ontology", "dialectics", "discursive regimes", just to name a few), and philosophers have borrowed ideas from anthropologists ("culture", "structure", the concept of "the gift", and others). But insofar as the disciplines do different things with the ideas they develop, borrow, and adapt, each keeping to its own purposes, there is no conceptual problem to address. There is only a problem – a question worth answering – if we consider that the disciplines, even when their approaches diverge, are still doing *the same things* and cannot be so easily separated. Then the disciplines' divergent approaches may come into conflict with one another, and we can ask what the resulting tension produces.

My intent, then, is not to define the difference between the disciplines so that each might keep to itself and focus on its strengths. Rather, I want to suggest that by understanding the difference between the disciplines, we can better understand what brings them together. Each discipline, when left to its own devices, is limited in just the way that the other discipline excels. And these limitations have historically driven each discipline to turn to the other (though less often than it might have) for help. If this essay diverges, then, from previous approaches to the relationship between anthropology and philosophy, it is above all in this respect: I want to emphasize and explore this divergent affinity between the disciplines, which I take to be the key to understanding their interrelation, not only as a relationship between two mutually fertilizing but independent traditions (shown well by Giri and Clammer, 2013), nor as an encounter taking place primarily in a special "ground between" (Das et al., 2014), where practitioners can step out of disciplinary isolation to explore both disciplines, but above all as a relationship of *inseparability*. Anthropology and philosophy have been drawn historically together, and they separate themselves from one another only at the risk of undermining their own purposes.

Let's begin, provisionally, with the common notion that philosophy is the art of abstract thought, generalization, and universalism (which criticizes problematic forms of particularism), while anthropology is an art of understanding cultural[2]

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2   It will be clear to readers that I have in mind *primarily* the kind of anthropology known as
    cultural or sociocultural. But I take this form of anthropology to be paradigmatic of the
    field as a whole, which attempts to understand the totality of the human being through

particularity (as it "goes to the people" to learn from them, instead of relying too heavily on aggregate data and the abstract reason of elites). A critically oriented philosopher might object that philosophy also concretizes its abstractions, specifies the conditions of its generalizations, and identifies the particular context of its universal stipulations. A critically oriented anthropologist might likewise point to the universal similarities among different human practices and experiences, and to the conceptualizations of the world and humanity that emerge in differing local contexts. And this is the point: each discipline appears inadequate to its idea of itself, so long as it pursues only the approach that is typically identified with it. Philosophy only becomes capable of conceptualizing a truly universal subject, overcoming oppressive divisions, when it recognizes what it has left out, and when it begins (if you'll permit the neologism) to anthropologize. And anthropology only gives due to the marginalized and overlooked people it studies if it also looks beyond their particular contexts, philosophizing on their place in the universe. Their starting points and endpoints may appear to be opposite – philosophy tends to reach from the universal to the particular, anthropology from the particular to the universal – but they pass through the same territory in the middle.

This generalizing about the disciplines (a very philosophical move, perhaps) calls for specification. I should temper it with an anthropological attempt to situate the fields in their unfolding social context. I'm convinced that only an anthropological approach can adequately situate philosophy in society, but I also think it's worth giving anthropology a dose of philosophy, in order to speculate on what essential substance might lie beneath its surface appearances – *what kind of philosophy* anthropology can do.

The contradictions of philosophy

Although I eventually left anthropology for philosophy, it was initially philosophy that led me to anthropology. In this respect, my personal trajectory followed the trajectory of anthropology as a whole. Anthropology could be born because philosophy had already spent centuries posing a series of compelling questions that anthropology could answer in new ways. When philosophy's answers ceased to appear adequate to its social context and historical moment, anthropology stepped in.

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its particular manifestations (which may be physical and ecological as well as cultural), origins (which reach back to times before the existence of *Homo sapiens*), and ecological vicinity (which has taken anthropology beyond the realm of the strictly human, without abandoning anthropology's fundamental interest in humans).

But before discussing how anthropology reacted to philosophy's questions, we should try to understand those questions in their own terms. How did some questions come to be posed in a peculiar way that would be considered "philosophical"? To be clear: I am not interested in the intellectual-historical question of how Great Ideas were born in the minds of Great Thinkers, but in the anthropological question of how a specific sociocultural practice made it possible to think that some ideas and some thinkers were Great. And I am interested in the question – at the crossroads of anthropology and philosophy – of how philosophy's attachment to Great Thinkers has repeatedly undermined its ability to realize the great potential of its ideas, and has made (something like) anthropology necessary to philosophy.

If philosophy were defined only by its propensity to abstract thought, generalization, and universalism, this would not seem to go far in clarifying philosophy's cultural specificity. Not only are the same qualities found in other academic disciplines, but, as anthropologists have observed, they are dispersed far beyond the walls of the academy: people everywhere engage in abstract thought, look for meaning that transcends their immediate experience, and generate ideas to express their wonder at the nature of the world (e.g. Radin, 1927; Arola, 2011; Dismas, 2016). The issue is to determine how abstraction, generalization, and universalism come to be applied in a sustained way, creating new concepts (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 5) or systems of concepts (Ilyenkov and Korovikov, 2019: 72) that develop semi-autonomously, according to a logic that is self-contained and therefore not wholly dependent on already-established categories of thought. This is what enables philosophy, at its most radically critical moments, to appear as an "enemy of any and all societies based on distinction" (Tamás, 2014: 223): it sets aside a little field of practice where the distinctions of the rest of the world matter less (or seem to matter less, are declared to matter less) than the inner workings of reason, speculation, contemplation, meditation.

It is not necessary to accept at face value the traditional account that philosophy was born independently only in ancient Greece, India, and China,[3] from where it was disseminated around the world. Paul Radin's anthropological classic, *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (Radin, 1927, esp. chs. XV and XVI), points

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[3]   It was of course only the Greeks who called their practice philosophy (*filosofia*), because their concept became the basis for the words used in modern intellectual traditions. In the ancient Indian world, the term *darshana* covered a similar range of activity—similar not least in the fact that neither ancient Greek nor ancient Indian tradition distinguished clearly between philosophy, literature, and religion. Ancient China, for its part, may have had no word for philosophy as such, but it is clear that an analogous genre of practice was recognized and highly valued (Cua, 2008: 43–46).

to a more dynamic understanding: all societies have systematic thinkers, and all societies have many more people who shun systematic thought. Philosophy (if I may freely develop Radin's insight) develops through a process of *setting apart*, which can begin in almost any society, but which has historically developed into extreme forms only in specific historical situations. In this process the technology of writing has played an important, though not indispensable, role, not only because it leaves a record for later historians of philosophy, but also because it allows multiple generations and geographical centers to participate in the same philosophical process, making it easier to accumulate the critical mass of philosophically inclined people needed to keep a tradition alive. While every generation in every village may have its musicians and storytellers, and thus no need of writing for effective transmission, systematic philosophy might be forgotten and might skip generations, and a philosophically inclined individual might have to go far or reach far back in time to find someone else with whom to engage in disputation. Nevertheless, the core of philosophical practice does not lie in writing as such (and sometimes not in writing at all), but in a certain approach to ideas.

What had to happen so that some of the world's immense wealth of ideas could be set apart, debated, and recognized as philosophical concepts? The Greek term for this practice, "*filosofia*", suggests one possible answer.

According to Cicero (who claimed to be reporting a widespread legend), Pythagoras distinguished philosophers from other people on the basis of what they "loved". While some people sought glory and honor and others sought wealth, philosophers sought only wisdom, "earnestly look[ing] into the nature of things" (Cicero, 1877: 166). And this love of wisdom, this eagerness "to be a looker-on without making any acquisition", he said, was "the most reputable occupation of all", because the contemplation of things "greatly exceeds every other pursuit of life" (Cicero, 1877: 166). From the start, then, according to this ancient legend, philosophy was defined not by the content of its ideas, but by an attitude and a way of interacting with the world. Philosophers know that they love wisdom. They know what wisdom is (that is, they talk about it and define it); they actively pursue wisdom instead of pursuing other things; and they know that they are the ones who pursue it. They have a name for themselves, and they express pride in their "occupation".

It is a certain economy of desire, by this account, that enables the pursuit of wisdom to be recognized as an autonomous activity: by not loving other things, philosophers could love wisdom. Plato's *Symposium* marks the connection of philosophy to Eros still more deeply, presenting the famous theory that love of particular bodies should mature into love of universal forms (210a–212a). By

redirecting desires, renouncing competing social practices like the competition for glory or money or sex, philosophers were supposed to contemplate things disinterestedly, observing the world from a position of remove. In this respect, the notion of a "discipline" perhaps applies better to philosophy than to any other academic field. In its moments of origin (and elsewhere at least as strikingly as in Greece), philosophy declares its independence through a process of self-discipline.

This demonstrative denial of social engagement, of course, contrasted starkly with much of actual philosophical practice, in the ancient world as much as today. (Already Pythagoras and his followers – just to follow the characters in Cicero's story – were reputed to be powerful political players in the cities where they lived.) And philosophy's repeated denial of its social positioning, its insistence that it is independent of the world around it, would be the source of an ongoing contradiction in the history of the field. But at crucial moments the declarative renunciation of other worldly interests and desires can be understood as a significant founding gesture: philosophers cut themselves off from the world in order to change themselves, to establish a new way of living (an "ethics") that could make them better people, capable of observing the world, understanding its nature, and then returning to advise or criticize the world's rulers and to show how the world could be changed.

So, it is not the pursuit of wisdom alone that defines philosophy. As long as wisdom, in any given context, is pursued in accordance with pre-established codes of ethics or belief, or if the pursuit of wisdom is obtained through unique personal experience or otherworldly revelation, then it does not become philosophy. But if pursuers of wisdom believe themselves to be working through the inherent logic of wisdom itself – if they ask, for example, whether the existence of gods or souls or kings can be reconciled with reason, or whether the world really is the way it appears – then we can say that philosophy as a distinct field has come into being.[4]

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[4]   It may be worth commenting here on the genre known as "wisdom literature" that was prevalent throughout the eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamian regions even before the beginnings of Greek philosophy. Insofar as this literature points to tensions between competing moral principles and sometimes develops established principles to surprising and contradictory conclusions about the fundamental nature of things, it no doubt contains philosophical elements, and it might have influenced the first self-conscious philosophers. (For example: the literary power of *Ecclesiastes*, probably the best-known representative of wisdom literature, lies largely in its mastery of contradiction, its depiction of life's beauty contraposed to the insight that "all is vanity", or, literally, that "all is vapor/breath" (Eccl, 1:2). This bears striking resemblance to Anaximenes's contention that all things are composed of air, and to Heraclitus's contention that all is flux.) But at other moments, when wisdom literature propagates already-accepted principles of wisdom, without interest in

Once the pursuit of wisdom or analogous concepts was set apart from other pursuits – a similar setting-apart took place in India with concepts like "enlightenment" or "liberation" (*moksha*) and in China with concepts like "the way" (*dao*)[5] – philosophers could develop the implications of their concepts in their own terms, without immediate reference to other culturally established principles, but according to their own method of reasoning or disputation, which Greek tradition called *logos*, *analytika*, or *dialektike* (see e.g. Bobzien, 2020), Indian tradition called *nyaya* (e.g. Gillon, 2023), and Chinese tradition called *bian*, among other names (e.g. William, 2023). And philosophers would often find that logic led them to positions that contradicted prevailing attitudes and beliefs. The validity of philosophical knowledge, then, did not depend on the articulation of specific substantive truths, or on special access to newly revealed truth (as was the case with prophets and oracles), but on adherence to certain methods, which might yield different results at different moments and to different practitioners.

But at the time philosophy was coming into being in this distinct form, it was not the only thing that presented a challenge to the established order. Several authors have noted that the first sustained and recorded stirrings of distinctly

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the contradictions between principles or in the development of new principles, it is not acting philosophically.

In the Indian world, the connection between philosophy and earlier wisdom-oriented literature is still clearer: the first philosophers inscribed themselves in the tradition of the Vedas, whose name can be literally understood as "writing on knowledge/wisdom". Over time the systematic pursuit of knowledge led to competing schools or worldviews (*darshana*), which show all the basic characteristics of philosophy.

5   I am aware, in writing this, that in the process of identifying Indian and Chinese analogies to Greek concepts, I am interpreting those other intellectual traditions through the lens of Greece (which, in turn, I interpret through the lens of my own modern-Western-philosophical formation, which anachronistically takes ancient Greece to be "Western"). It would be at least as enlightening to interpret the Greek and Western traditions through the lens of non-Greek and non-Western concepts, but my present purpose is to understand the conceptual genealogy of a field constituted on the basis of the Western interpretation of the Greek model, which has been gradually expanding toward the rest of the world. I only hope this kind of approach, which at least questions the uniqueness of supposedly Western accomplishments, can encourage others to take the next step. One telling missed opportunity: The *Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy* (Edelglass and Garfield, 2011) has no section on the Greek or Western traditions, as if little would be gained by rethinking these traditions in relation to other traditions. (The editors, aware of this omission, write, "most contemporary academic philosophers in the world are acquainted with the European tradition, and so take 'world philosophy' to be like 'world music'—everything but European. There will, we hope, come a time when the European case is so unmarked that this would be an inexcusable exclusion. But that time has not yet come." [Edelglass and Garfield, 2011: 6])

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philosophical practice in ancient Greece, India, and China coincided with the emergence of coinage in the same locations.[6] They suggest that the minting and exchange of coins suddenly presented people with a substance that seemed capable of turning into anything, ruling over anything, underlying anything. At the same time, this substance radically disrupted the accepted moral order, competing for allegiance with gods, kings, and kin while throwing masses of once-free people into indentured servitude. Although few preserved texts of early philosophers definitively prove the hypothesis that coinage directly inspired their ruminations on metaphysics, the historical-geographical coincidence appears too striking to ignore – and the writings of Plato and Aristotle, at least, are rife with lamen-tations about the effects of money (as are many contemporaneous theological texts, where the language of debt and redemption was explicitly appropriated and given eschatological meaning). Alongside this outrageous newcomer, philosophers began to propose other bases of nature and community – more morally adequate substances that could ground alternative conceptions of the world.

A second, equally disruptive force came from the rise of empires, whose expan-sionary political claims opened space for expansive conceptual claims. When a single political order could plausibly aspire to govern the whole world, the intel-lectuals of the realm would also be spurred to imagine the nature of the world, not only as it appeared in their immediate environment, but also as a global totality (Baldry, 1965; Heater, 1996, chap. 1; Chun, 2012; Halim, 2013; Lavan, Payne, and Weisweiler, 2016). Philosophers' universalism became both a logical principle (that the world is composed of basic substances or operates by fundamental rules) and a human-geographical principle connected to a concept of cosmopolitan commu-nity (the idea that all people in the world might live together, in a shared moral or political system). Such ideas could justify imperial expansion, but – as Tamás argued – they also articulated protest against existing orders that divided people irrationally and unfairly. Philosophy became associated with what modern Europe called "civilization", the elite cultural accompaniment to imperial expansion. But in many ways philosophy was less civilization's champion than its bad conscience. In all three regions classically identified with the origins of philosophy, larger states began to emerge, replacing systems of small "warring states" (as Chinese historiography calls them), and many of their philosophers began to ask: *What*

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6   This has been recently argued compellingly by David Graeber in his book on *Debt* (Graeber, 2014: 244–47), which draws on the work of Mark Shell (Shell, 1978) and Richard Seaford (Seaford, 2004). But roughly the same idea was already put forth in the 1950s by George Thomson, a Marxist historian of ancient Greek philosophy (Thomson, 1949, II: The First Philosophers:94–96), and it was suggested in the 1920s by György Lukács (Lukács, 1971a, 111).

new moral, political, or ontological principles would it take for emerging polities really to be justified when they claim the right to include everyone?

Philosophy reacts to the loss of old ways, which had become irretrievable, and to dissatisfaction with new ways, which had become unbearable. György Lukács has characterized this contradictory tendency of philosophy strikingly: "The happy ages", he writes, "have no philosophy, or […] (it comes to the same thing) all men in such ages are philosophers, sharing the Utopian aim of every philosophy" (Lukács, 1971: 29). Philosophy, born to confront a problematic world, tends to imagine a world without problems. But if such a world ever came to be – if all people ever began to accept a certain philosophical ideal – philosophy would cease to exist as a struggle between "soul and deed" (Lukács, 1971: 29) or, as I would put it, between universalist ideals and a reality that contradicts them. Philosophy, then, is also compelled to step back from this precipice of perfect conformity between concept and world – a perfect universalist ideal that recognizes nothing outside itself – lest it undo itself as philosophy.

Philosophy repeatedly finds itself at a fork in the road.

One path leads from its initial refusal of the social world back toward engagement with it. Having questioned established authorities, philosophy conducts its own, independent investigations into the nature of the world. Different resulting ontologies are then taken to imply different ways of living or different ways of organizing political life. Eventually, philosophy develops branches known in the Western tradition as ethics and political theory, and these in turn give birth to social science, when figures like Marx, Durkheim, and Weber deepen the empirical foundation of philosophical investigation by confronting abstract philosophical concepts with their usage in society.

But another path leads philosophy farther away from the social world. When philosophy demonstrates that established beliefs are false, that immediate sense perception is unreliable, that appearances betray essences and prevailing opinion obscures the truth, philosophy is tempted to withdraw from all these sources of error, seeking consolation in non-empirical meditation, which promises access to deeper Truths, immutable Ideas, ultimate Being – essences less flawed than worldly, human communities with all their intellectual caprices. In this process of withdrawal, philosophy pulls certain ideas out of their prior context, separating them from the confusion of everyday speech and the specialized rituals of practical use. The resulting concepts, freed from their erstwhile moorings, are no longer defined by reference to the social world that created them. They become self-referential (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 22), self-grounded, absolute. This gives them critical power, as the world can be held up to the measure of ideas rather than ideas being subordinated to the world. But when philosophical

concepts are strung together into self-contained systems, in which each concept is explained only by other concepts in the system, philosophy can believe itself self-sufficient, exempt from external challenge. Philosophical systems begin to translate all things into their own concepts, negating the possibility of real confrontation between philosophy and world, which would require the translation of concepts into the language of other things. Eventually, it can become difficult to distinguish philosophy from the type of common sense and dogma it was meant to challenge.

Fortunately, philosophy doesn't end there. When philosophers sense that the discipline has become too comfortable with its own concepts, they reach outside their field in search of critical renewal. To take just a few examples from what became known as the Western tradition: Plato, in his dialogues, maintained the dramatic fiction that he reached his conclusions not purely through disputations with other philosophers, by also debating with men in the streets. Aristotle embarked on the empirical investigation of language, literature, and natural phenomena, developing philosophical categories that responded to these empirical findings. Later generations looked to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as impulses to rethink established philosophical doctrine in light of other approaches to value and truth (despite the resistance of many of their coreligionists, who saw philosophy as a challenge to the authority of dogma or revelation). In the early modern period, religious and scientific revolutions challenged philosophy again. But at that point, when theology, natural science, and social science separated themselves from philosophy, many philosophers responded by retreating into their own concepts again, even while other fields would repeatedly borrow from philosophy and translate it into other terms.

Anthropology has represented one of the most ambitious of such projects of translation, adjusting philosophy's concepts to its own needs. But it can also be seen as a source of renewal for philosophy itself.

The promise of anthropology

It was something like a personal renewal of philosophy that I was looking for when, after studying philosophy in college, I went to graduate school in anthropology. I loved the philosophy I had first encountered, when teachers encouraged us to learn the methods of philosophical reason and apply them to our world. But the farther I advanced in the field, the more disappointed I became, until I came to the conclusion that a philosophy department (especially a department focused on the creative, stylish, and dynamic Continental philosophy that interested me) was one of the last places on earth where people were free

to really practice philosophy. It was as if the more we learned about the great things that had been said before us, the more vigilantly we guarded against saying anything lowly in comparison. People who conduct research in a departments of anthropology are called anthropologists. But people who research in departments of philosophy are only researchers *of* philosophy, rarely daring to don the title of "philosopher".

Perhaps this state of affairs reflects a commendable element of humility. Are our ideas really ready to be forced on a world that already has so many great ideas? Should experienced philosophers be compelled to suffer yet another excited repetition of banal insights that have already been said better before? By now I've lived through enough careless barroom symposia to appreciate this hesitancy and circumspection, but the overall effect on the academic field has been deadening. In the field supposedly dedicated to the creation of concepts, students learn instead about concepts already created long ago. So, I turned to anthropology, where I saw people actively creating new concepts, with less fear of ridicule. Instead of studying the history of great ideas responding to other great ideas, there I could draw new ideas from the rich material of the social world.

At the time, I hadn't yet encountered Tim Ingold's clever phrase that anthropology is "philosophy with the people in". Later, when I heard the phrase and dug up the text where it first appeared (Ingold, 1992: 696), I was in equal parts excited and disappointed. The phrase invoked exactly the kind of philosophy I had always wanted to do, but it said little about what this anthropological approach might actually mean for philosophy. Here and elsewhere (e.g. Ingold, 2008; 2014; 2018), Ingold says a great deal about how anthropology should embrace its inherent capacity to philosophize, but he says very little about philosophy's unrealized potential to anthropologize. Philosophy, in his brief depiction, appears at its worst (philosophers rarely "enlist the help of ordinary people", Ingold, 1992: 696; philosophy, leaving out the people, becomes only a "flaccid, hollow shell", Ingold, 2014), while anthropology appears at its best, capable of exceeding philosophy in everything the old, decrepit discipline had tried to do.

I prefer not to write from the position of the one discipline against the other. I'm interested in understanding how each works through its internal contradictions, sometimes showing its worst tendencies (that is, its most limited and self-defeating), but sometimes (especially when it draws from the other discipline) showing its best. Anthropology, as I see it, doesn't replace philosophy by placing the people in it. Anthropology can *show* philosophy how to place the people in it, enabling philosophy to revitalize itself when it has become inadequate to its own idea. But when anthropology likewise fails to live up to its idea, the study of the people might benefit from a shot or two of philosophy.

Anthropology, like philosophy, is still grappling with the difficult conditions of its birth in a fraught relationship with money and empire. Modern mercantile states, with their vast colonial reach, not only spurred anthropologists to think in global terms, but also provided them with infrastructure, diplomatic permission, and funding to encounter a vast array of people from backgrounds unlike their own. Yet the first anthropologists, like the first philosophers, were uncomfortable with the social conditions that made their field possible. They recorded and sometimes protested against the destructive results of the imperial-mercantile encounter, but instead of countering imperial unreason with the autonomous use of reason, anthropologists countered imperial reason by turning to the reasoning of people who had had gone unrecognized and unprotected during the expansion of empires. While philosophy's authority as a counterweight to power has rested on the purity of its reason, on its internal consistency and independence from the temptations of power and money, anthropology's authority is greater the more it is impure, the more it can complicate the sublime claims of the powerful by forcing dominant reason to acknowledge the messy stuff of the world.

In putting "the people in" philosophy, anthropology was able to frame the great questions of philosophy in a new way, at a moment when philosophy's critical autonomy was threatened by its imperial use. When expanding empires drew on philosophy to declare that they acted in accordance with universally valid reason, anthropology could draw attention to the reason of dominated subjects. When empires justified mistreatment by claiming that their new subjects failed to measure up to humanist ideals, anthropology could show that those ideals failed to account for the full variability of human experience. Categories of thought could not be adequately understood through pure reason projected or imposed on all people, but they could be studied as reflections of differing societies and changing cultural systems.

But even if anthropology challenged philosophical universalism, its intentions have never been fundamentally anti-universalist. Anthropology's particularism came embedded in a claim to universalism: the idea that we can only understand the full reality of the human by taking into account its variability, including all the particulars that philosophy has been inclined to overlook. Anthropologists have a reputation for deflating universalistic generalizations by uncovering exceptions to them, but the field's underlying premise is that by accounting for these exceptions we can reach a better understanding of the whole. Only in a field that raises questions about the whole of humanity – a field that cares about the accuracy of generalizations – does it make sense to look at particular cases as *exceptions* to general rules.

When, as a PhD student based in Chicago, I was conducting fieldwork on folklore performance in Slovakia, my interlocutors often expressed surprise that my teachers and colleagues back home were interested enough in Slovak folklore to allow me to write a dissertation about it. But the truth was that they *weren't* interested in it. It was my task to make them interested. This is what distinguishes anthropology from fields like Latin American studies, English literature, medieval Czech history, Slovak folkloristics, or twentieth-century Continental philosophy: anthropologists' colleagues are *a priori* interested in nothing, because they are interested in everything. As anthropologists, we can never simply describe our material or simply fill gaps in existing research; we are compelled to explain why our material is interesting, how it contributes to a general understanding of a phenomenon relevant to other people. Anthropologists are required to be generalists, even when we analyze the most unusual and atypical of cases.

When we generalize, we expect to find our generalizations confronted by exceptions. And when we particularize (so to speak), we do so in order to specify generalizations, to explain differences, to demand and justify the inclusion of excluded particularities in the whole of knowledge. In the process, we move from saying, "human beings do X" to saying, "under these conditions, these people do X, because they are organized in these ways, and when their conditions change, their actions will change accordingly." This specified generalization leads not to a classification of distinct types of behavior or society, but to explanations of how specific behaviors and social structures affect one another.

This approach to the problem of universalism should enable us to revisit anthropology's longstanding contention that "ordinary people" (Ingold, 1992: 696), "primitive men" (Radin, 1927), or "cannibals" (Viveiros de Castro, 2014) can be philosophers. The value of this contention is not only to in showing that people untrained in Western philosophy can have philosophical thoughts, but also that they can do something philosophy *can't* do: they can point to philosophy's limits, to the incompleteness of its universality, to its need to expand. The point is not just that non-philosophers (non-Philosophers) have philosophy, but also that *because they are philosophy's others* they can philosophize differently, bringing something to philosophy that pure reason never can. When philosophy becomes enmeshed in projects of civilization, the "ordinary", "primitive", "cannibal", or we might say *barbarian* element occupies a specific structural position in the world philosophical system. This position – below the heights or outside the centers of established power, the barbarian element that sounds to the civilized ear like nonsense – enables anthropology to see philosophy with a view from afar (Lévi-Strauss 1985) and tell it what it's missing.

But while anthropology views philosophy from a specific position, the raw material of its thought is larger than the material of philosophy. Rather than beginning with ideas already considered philosophical, anthropology begins by withholding judgment, which enables it to look for philosophical concepts anywhere. But this still requires conceptual work on the anthropologists' part. Philosophers, whether they are defending concepts or criticizing them, begin with the presumption that these concepts have universal reach. Anthropologists, by contrast, begin with systems of thought that are *made particular* by virtue of their exclusion from established systems. *Then* it can be the work of anthropology to make them universal, placing them at the disposition of philosophy, and freeing philosophy from the monopoly of philosophers.

An overlooked or taken-for-granted idea can be held up for anthropological appraisal. It can taken out of one context and held up against another idea for the sake of comparison or for the sake of tracing its historical development. Its component parts can be analyzed, its implications drawn out. It can be brought into conversation with other ideas, made to contradict them, made into a part of new arguments, new theories, new philosophies. A conception of the social organization of thought (through the notion of the totem, cf. Durkheim, 1947; Lévi-Strauss, 1964), a look at the world through the prism of gift-giving (through the concept of *hau*, Mauss, 1967), a concept that connects personal power to collective energy (*mana*, see Mazzarella, 2017), all these, derived from specific cultural contexts, can become self-contained totalities with a potentially universal range of applicability. Anthropology, in other words, can ask what happens to an idea when it is treated the way philosophers treat their own concepts. And then we can ask (with Viveiros de Castro, 2014; and Col and Graeber, 2011) how philosophers' own concepts hold up when confronted with the concepts uncovered and cultivated by anthropologists.

With the distinction between the emic and the etic (however old-fashioned it may seem to contemporary anthropologists), anthropology has a tool that could be of enormous use to philosophers, who easily forget just how emic their own concepts are, how their concepts are embedded in sociocultural context, however broadly they are applied. But the same could be said of anthropologists themselves when they employ the emic/etic distinction too readily and too rigidly, forgetting that every etic idea (every concept employed to analyze other ideas) is also an emic term, insofar as it participates in a particular cultural system, while every emic term (every term treated as a mere object of research) can become etic when it treated as a source of concepts placed on a plane with other concepts. Anthropology can only fulfil its promise of intellectual openness by recognizing the emic and the etic as a dynamic opposition, in which any given object can

pass easily between the two poles. And philosophy could follow suit, making its concepts always potentially universal as well as particular – always potentially a part of the specific cultural system in which they take shape *and* permitted to play a part in the intellectual debates of the whole world.

Anthropology could also help philosophy to break out from what I like to call the "cult of philosophical personalities" – the well-known, much maligned, and incredibly persistent tendency of philosophers to refer only to other famous philosophers, to speak less about concepts than about the individuals who once uttered them, a practice that sometimes devolves into a ritualized defense of great men who came before us. Anthropology, after all, has some experience analyzing the charisma of big men and the worship of ancestors, and even if such practices can sometimes fulfill legitimate social functions, they should be recognized for what they are, and they should not be mistaken for the kind of radical questioning that is supposed to be philosophy's defining mission. If philosophy takes seriously anthropology's suggestion that anyone can potentially philosophize – that anyone can question received ideas and propose new ones – then maybe the lowly people who study philosophy but refuse to bow before its big men could finally allow themselves to be philosophers too.

Why anthropology, nevertheless, still needs philosophy

Philosophy, betraying its own idea of itself, is repeatedly declared outmoded and unnecessary, perhaps better replaced by a field like anthropology. But philosophy keeps coming back, and because despite philosophy departments' best efforts to under-mine their discipline, there is still no other field better suited to the development new concepts as such. And at moments when anthropology becomes as lost in the forest of the concrete as philosophy becomes lost in ungrounded abstraction, philosophy might offer what anthropology needs.

If philosophy too quickly takes its concepts to be absolute, anthropology often errs by making its own concepts too relative, which ultimately yields a similar result. An absolute philosophical concept needs nothing outside itself, because it takes itself to be the basis of all else. A purely relative anthropological concept likewise needs nothing outside itself, because it takes itself to be the basis of itself and nothing more. Nothing else can explain it, compare to it, refer to it. The concept is left alone in its pure context. It renounces the philosophical claim to the universal, but, becoming relative to nothing, it becomes absolute in its particularity.

At such moments, anthropologists might do well to become philosophical, provisionally allowing their concepts, derived from concrete analysis, to become

abstract and tentatively absolute. They could allow themselves to see the world *as if* these concepts escaped their initial context, becoming applicable everywhere. They could allow their concepts to travel, expand, work through their inner contradictions, and transform the way philosophical concepts do – in the course of debate, where they should be judged according to their coherence, their ability to inspire and provoke new concepts, their applicability to new problems emerging far from their place of origin. And then the concepts could be contextualized again – anthropologized again – reduced and shaped and sharpened by a new configuration of concrete surroundings.

Anthropologists often hesitate before granting general-theoretical validity to the ideas we encounter or derive from specific empirical analysis. I suspect that this results from a misapplication of the principle of participant observation. Although most anthropologists would probably say that the core of participant observation lies in active engagement with our interlocutors, the method results at least as often in detached description, especially when it comes to the study of ideas. The trouble comes when anthropologists shun theory on the grounds that ordinary people (whether they are our readers or our research subjects) are only interested in empirical facts and action. But when we approach people's ideas without dirtying ourselves in theory, we lose the ability to actively engage our interlocutors in conversation, as equals trying to figure out what to do with our shared ideas. Without such participation, only observation remains.

If we politely accept what our interlocutors tell us, and then we report this to readers without inviting them into a critical conversation, we treat neither our sources nor our readers as equals in debate; we don't allow their ideas to step onto the intellectual stage along with the great concepts of philosophy that we readily adopt or criticize. Theory, with its method of abstracting an idea from one context to apply it somewhere else, is what can tell us that our small ideas might be important to others, or that other ideas, previously unfamiliar to us, can speak to our concerns. Theory can turn a few facts about people we don't know into a story that is also about us, because the concrete facts can represent abstract principles and evoke abstract meanings that are ours as well as theirs. And when speaking to people in the field, theory enables us to not only accept their understanding of what they do, nor to force our own understanding onto their actions, but to discuss with them how their story can be told.

Often anthropologists *declare* that they are involved in the world, because they do fieldwork. They proudly retell the discipline's founding myth about how it got up off the armchair and went to work with people in the world. But on what grounds is this specific kind of worldly involvement superior to the involvement of the armchair intellectual who, for example, might write opinion pieces for

the newspaper or might expound philosophy in a podcast or write literature or collaborate with artists? Ingold writes that "being-in-the-armchair" is "the precise opposite of being-in-the-world" (Ingold, 2008: 82). Much as I appreciate the dig at Heidegger (my favorite example of everything that can go wrong with philosophy), are the two terms really opposites? Why is this kind of assertion so natural for anthropologists that it goes without need for explanation? What if the armchair were part of the world?

"[G]round knowing in being", Ingold writes, "in the world rather than the armchair…any study of human beings must be a study *with* them" (Ingold, 2008: 83). But what if withdrawing from the world were a part of being in it? This moment of withdrawal, stigmatized by association with the comfortable, *grand bourgeois* armchair, has been symbolically banished from anthropological method. Withdrawal is presented at best as the naïve domain of ignorant theorists, at worst as a temptation to the colonialist comfort and privilege of thinking about the world without having to be in it. But anthropology thereby refuses to recognize this other way of being in the world: engaging in the world by occasionally sitting down, reflecting on it, and actively debating the value of the concepts that the world has thrown at us. Could we begin to understand philosophers too (and artists, essayists, poets, public intellectuals) as participant observers of their own sort? They too enter concrete social situations and join in conversations about what those situations mean. While anthropology tries to engage through active participation, philosophy engages through critical disengagement. Either mode can veer into complete disengagement if practitioners take only the most comfortable course.

There is a certain irony in the fact that anthropology has become so known for its analyses of empirical specificity, since as I argued above, anthropology has to generalize more than any other empirical field in order to explain why its empirical studies are significant. Theory is what makes a case matter. Which is another way of saying that it's what enables the ideas of our interlocutors to take their place on the armchairs of the world.[7]

This is not to say that all theory is philosophy. Rather, theory happens when the philosophical method is applied to empirical material, yielding a generalized conception of specific aspects of the world, from which new concepts are continually distilled. The philosophical method takes knowledge about specific phenomena and makes abstractions from them; it brings these abstractions into a provisionally

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[7]   This is how we might read a work like Viveiros de Castro's *Cannibal Metaphysics* (Viveiros de Castro, 2014): as a sort of thought experiment asking what might happen if we allowed indigenous Amazonians to sit for a while on the philosophers' armchairs.

autonomous sphere (we could call it the plane of being-in-the-armchair), where they are brought into contact with other abstractions and subjected to the play of reason, speculation, critique, debate. Philosophy, as a method, pushes us to ask big questions, before we get up off the armchair to look for answers in the rest of the world.

Looking for anthropos: toward a barbarian universalism

Among the biggest of those questions raised by philosophy is the question at the origins of anthropology: *What is the human being?* Modern Western philosophy made the human being one of its central problems, eventually establishing a field of enquiry known as "philosophical anthropology". But the philosophical concept of the human began is one-sidedly abstract and prematurely universal. Within the field of philosophy, this abstract universalism was challenged most famously by Herder, who called for a concept of humanity grounded in cultural context (or to use his preferred terms, the context of cultivation, *Bildung*, as realized among different peoples, *Völker*). On the margins of philosophy, the young Marx embarked on a parallel project, insisting that the human being could only be understood as a result of socially structured practice. Both Herder and Marx were part of a broad intellectual field in which critics of Enlightenment philosophy – who sympathized with Enlightenment ideals but not with its cultural myopia and its lack of interest in social practice – argued that universality can only be reached through the detour of potentially infinite particularity.

But probably no one did more than Franz Boas and those around him to establish a field of study of the human being in its concrete variability. In contrast to older, philosophical anthropology, which abstractly analyzed the characteristics of the human being as such, this new anthropology was to pass through concrete cultural and biological particularity and varieties of the social organization of human life on its way to reassembling the human being as general concept. If anthropology is "philosophy with the people in", philosophy might be rightly called anthropology with the human being as such in it. Taken by itself, this abstract humanism is never enough. But it gave anthropology the impulse to look for the human in a new way, through a great intellectual detour.

The central position of humanism in anthropology has recently been called into question, as ecological concerns and renewed interest in indigenous ontologies have raised the issue of anthropocentrism and opened the field of anthropology to non-human subjects, justifiably warning against the dangers of championing human subjectivity against nature and environment. This, however, needs not pose a fundamental challenge to the humanist project laid out by Boasian

anthropology. This anthropological humanism does not define *a priori* what the human is, but examines concrete manifestations of the human, with an eye for every possible expansion and redefinition of the human category. Every anthropology sees the world through human eyes, but it also asks what the human behind those eyes can be. Anthropology is a *question*, to which every humanism is a possible answer – including post-humanism and what Viveiros de Castro, drawing from Patrice Maniglier (Maniglier, 2000), calls "an interminable humanism that constantly challenges the constitution of humanity" (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 44–45). The *anthropos* we are looking for is continually changing, expanding, accumulating new dimensions, new particularity.

Kant, perhaps the most influential thinker of abstract humanism, tried to understand the human being by analyzing the fundamental categories of human thought. Anthropology, inspired most directly by Durkheim (1947), has responded by making categories into questions of sociocultural analysis. In such analyses we find anthropology best prepared to address philosophies, inserting them in social context and challenging them to revise their concepts, revealing the intellectual shape of societies and pointing to societies' principal axes of power and transgression. By analyzing the lines that separate categories from one another, anthropology shows how humans relate to established categories, aligning themselves within them and against them, enforcing them or challenging them, decrying unjustified separations, and calling for new distinctions. Philosophy enters the fray by challenging established categories and proposing new ones that expand the human understanding of the whole. Thanks to the Boasian tradition, we can respond to abstractly universal "philosophical anthropology" with a concretely differentiated *anthropological philosophy* that investigates culturally embedded categories and the possibilities of their transgression.

I began these reflections with G. M. Tamás's paean to philosophical universalism. I'll conclude with reference to another essay by Tamás (Tamás, 2010), where he identifies philosophy's struggle against the division and categorization of people with a struggle against the civilization responsible for such division. "Civilization", he writes, is "a whole comprehensive system of separations" – between the propertied and propertyless, men and women, leaders and led, and on and on. The legacy of the Enlightenment, with its modern interpretation of ancient philosophy, has trained us to see philosophy as a mark of civilization, a voice of high-minded universalism that speaks from a position of power, declaiming to the world its proper categories of thought. But Tamás places philosophy on the side of the barbarians that aim to break down the categories of the civilized world that keep people in their places. When civilizations divide the substance of thought into categories convenient to ruling powers, separating thinkers from

one another, channeling ideas into harmless forms – then a barbarous philosophy responds with a contrary universalism. Instead of imposing universal systems of distinction and categorization, it questions the categories that are the basis of civilization, and it calls for something still more universal.

In order to accomplish this, I would add, philosophy needs to stand outside the heights of civilization. It needs to see civilization from the outside, from the position of the negatively categorized and the de-categorized. This is where anthropology stands. And I can think of no more honorable label for the discipline than to call it a *barbarous philosophy*. A philosophy that anthropologizes universalist concepts, questions them, confronts them with the concepts of the excluded, and provokes us to imagine alternative civilizations that could respond to the challenge set out by anthropology's barbarous universalism.

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Children and Sex in Anthropology

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Recently, after four and a half years of incarceration in a Slovak prison, I was granted parole and released into the world of the free with merely an electronic anklet monitoring my movement. Convicted of sexual abuse of Romani minors living in some of the rural ghettos that dot Slovakia's eastern periphery, local authorities staunchly refused to recognize the legitimacy of my research of juvenile prostitution, my home university's ethics clearance of the employed methods (such as interviewing minors without the presence of their legal guardians), and even the very existence of the investigated phenomenon. I had invented it, the prosecution argued, in order to prey on vulnerable children.

In the course of my research, I had interviewed some 150 girls and young women who acknowledged sex work as a source of irregular income and – controversially for contemporary social scientists – pleasure. I had rarely detected more than a nominal measure of contrition while even young teens rejected the majority society's control of their bodies as meddlesome intrusiveness. In short, these youngsters displayed and demanded a great deal of 'agency'. Unfortunately, a full analysis and publication of the intriguing intellectual fodder encountered in the nether world of Slovakia's Romani ghettos was cut short by my arrest and incarceration.

Slovak media swallowed the prosecution's portrayal of the 'Canadian professor' as a sexual predator hook, line, and sinker. They quoted at length from the luridly written indictment at the center of which was a pre-teen whom I had allegedly 'purchased' for the purpose of sexual molestation. Yet they failed to cover the trial sessions where this story was revealed to be a fabrication and where most of my alleged victims contradicted the indictment and invoked pressure and threats of juvenile detention homes as justification for their cooperation with the police. Alas, their sworn recantations in court had come too late to have any effect on the verdict.

In view of these contradictions, I was curious about the reaction of 'my people' to my conditional release and my enforced residence in a community nearby my principal fieldwork site. Within a week my telephone number had been circulated among dozens of former informants, and I was inundated with requests for meetings during which my alleged victims and their close and distant kin offered companionship and sexual services for the duration of my involuntary exile. They all expressed outrage at the way they had been misused by the police and judiciary and declared me to be the only outsider who understands and accepts their version of the 'Gypsy way of life'. An anthropologist's dream unfolding at a time when one wrong step will send me back to prison….

That juvenile prostitution continues to thrive in the Romani ghettos of eastern Slovakia is beyond dispute. But my experience shows that it is a phenomenon explored at one's own peril and for this reason, perhaps, glossed over by the exploding number of scholars, many of them anthropologists, who claim a niche in the burgeoning sub-field of Romani studies. One reason for this curious omission undoubtedly derives from the unease we feel about children's sexuality, especially when combined with erotic desires that are normally considered a prerogative of adulthood. The suggestion that teens and even pre-teens pursue prostitution not out of despair and sheer economic necessity but also as a means to satisfy sexual desire, as many of my Romani informants claim to do, is dismissed as an outrage, or, as my Slovak prosecutor thought, a ruse used by a make-believe academic to conceal his misdeeds.

Contemporary anthropology has little to say about children and sex and even less about children's erotic desires and the ways they are gratified. That wasn't always the case. Responding to Freudianism's provocative theories about this subject (let's recall, for example, the enormous impact of Melanie Klein's work on children's sexual perversions), the pioneers of modern socio-cultural anthropology sought to demonstrate the new discipline's relevance in part through documenting – and theorizing about – distant people's attitudes to and practices in the realm of children's sexuality. Margaret Mead had complained to Ruth Benedict that all her youthful informants wished to discuss was 'sex, sex, sex', and went on to record intimate data that made Havelock Ellis typify Samoa as a place where "nearly every little girl masturbates from the age of six or seven" (Ellis, 1939: 88). Members of the same age group frolicking in trial copulations on Kiribina's beaches were described in Malinowski's famous *Sexual Life of Savages* which may have inspired an entire generation of anthropologists to consider children as (also) sexual beings. C. G. Seligman discussed "genital stimulation in young children" (Seligman, 1932: 215) and quoted Isaac Schapera's correspondence about boys and girls of six rubbing together their genitals in attempted intercourse

(Seligman, 1932: 214). George Devereux employed under-age informants to convey such explicit information about the sexual conduct of Mohave adolescents and pre-adolescents that he (or his publisher?) felt compelled to render much of it in Latin (Devereux, 1961). Geoffrey Gorer's work on the Lepcha of Sikkim (Gorer, 1938) whose consensual pedophilia inspired Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita,* or Verrier Elwin's richly textured account of the Muria *ghotul* (Elwin, 1947) – a club house where children experimented with sex – are well known. We are less aware of Raymond Firth's attention to children's sexuality in Tikopia (Firth, 1936) or Gregory Bateson's contemplation of the significance of parental masturbation of Balinese and Sicilian infant boys (Bateson, 1947) – a practice still prevalent among the Slovak Roma where I conducted my fieldwork. Numerous other examples of pre-WW2 anthropological accounts of children's sexual desires and practices found their way into Ford's and Beach's influential *Patterns of sexual behavior* (1951) which suggested rather subversively that "a society which permits extensive sex play in childhood and adolescence may thereby increase the chances that sexual relations in marriage will be pleasant and mutually satisfying" (1951: 197).

Reading these accounts nowadays – as I did in the solitude of my prison cell – one wonders how our predecessors got hold of the data they conveyed. Margaret Mead interrogated sexually curious girl-respondents in the privacy of her residence – as did, much later, Gilbert Herdt during his work with Melanesian youths. Verrier Elwin got so close to his young informants that he eventually married a thirteen-year-old tribal girl. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf's musings about Naga girls' physical assets accentuated by skimpy skirts of barely a "hand's width" led him to bemoan "the necessary reserve of the anthropologist" (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1939: 220). Gorer admitted to having been an object of sexual attention in a society where "almost every woman from eight to eighty" welcomed attempts at seduction (Gorer, 1937: 327). Malinowski confided guilty thoughts and occasional gropings to his diary. Melanie Klein conducted therapy sessions with boys and girls who masturbated in her presence – and occasionally demanded her participation. Such was the case, for example, with six-year-old 'Erna' who underwent almost 600 hours of treatment and requested that the therapist touched and smelled her genitals (Klein, 1960: 85). In my case, the mere fact that I had interviewed unattended adolescents – a methodological necessity approved by my university's research ethics committee – was one of the contributing factors leading to a guilty verdict. My judges agreed with the prosecution that I should have limited my encounters with juveniles to public institutions such as schools and community centers supervised by teachers and social workers. That would have been a waste of time, of course.

Times are changing. Perhaps I should have reported the Romani teens and

pre-teens who, often with the knowledge and support of their parents, had sought to involve me in a sexual liaison and had dismissed my protestations with the mirthful assurance that the control of their bodies was their own business. Isn't that also part of the 'agency' enlightened anthropologists have been so anxious to assign to their research subjects? Who sets the limits of that magical 'agency'? The people we so respectfully work with or the western hegemony we claim to abhor? The young sex workers of my acquaintance share some of the attributes of Eric Hobsbawm's pre-political 'primitive rebels'. They are aware of their racial oppression and dismissive of the semi-colonial recipes Slovak society proposes as a solution to the perennial 'Gypsy problem'. They don't want to go to school in order to acquire discipline and inferior skills that promise the career of an under-paid kitchen aide or cleaning lady. They prefer to remain free and enjoy what Nietzsche called a 'Dionysian' lifestyle, which, in the context of the impoverished ghettos they inhabit, is proudly invoked as the 'Gypsy way of life'. Controlling one's one body and sexuality is its core ingredient.

It is early September, and hundreds of children from what is locally dubbed 'Slovak Africa' have tearfully returned to boarding schools where problematic Romani juveniles get reformed and re-socialized. During the summer recess the girls begged outside shopping malls, huffed toluene, and turned tricks. Now, under the supervision of white psychologists and social workers, they will be de-loused, de-toxified, and re-habituated to a pharmaceutical régime that seeks to suppress their 'excessive' sexuality. Vaneska, my thirteen-year-old informant whom I was careful to interview only in the public space outside a shopping mall where she begged and looked for clients, described the six large pills she was compelled to swallow each day and the drowsiness and fatigue induced by them. She, too, has returned to her 'home away from home'. She didn't want to, but she did in order not to jeopardize the release of her father who is serving a six-month-sentence for tolerating Vaneska's truancy. After he returns, it will be Vaneska's mother's turn to go to prison. I sympathize, for the same paragraph of the Slovak criminal code figured also in my prosecution. It is meant to avert children's 'moral decay' or 'feralization'. I was found guilty of violating it by rewarding my juvenile informants with nominal honoraria and thereby contributing to their 'asocial' way of life.

My Slovak and Czech colleagues with research experience in the ghettoized settlements of eastern Slovakia are likely to dismiss this ethnographic sketch as unrepresentative of the majority of local Roma. And indeed, my focus has always been on the so-called 'unadaptables' who are utterly dismissive of the norms and values of white Slovaks (Scheffel and Mušinka, 2019). These are undisciplined people in the Foucauldian sense of successfully subverting the modern state's

'biopower'. They give a fig about table manners, dental care, prudery, sobriety, and sexual restraint. They are fond of Dionysian excess, and that's perhaps why present-day students of Roma tend to dismiss them as an untypical minority doomed to extinction in a world pretending 'integration' and 'inclusion' being distinct from assimilation.

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First International Conference of the Histories of Anthropologies

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This major conference of nine panels, each with ten papers, two keynote addresses, and one roundtable, results from years of sustained effort of the History of Anthropology Network (HOAN) within the European Association of Social Anthropologists. The spiritual movers in this network have been David Shankland, Aleksandar Bošković, Andrés Barrera-González and Han F. Vermeulen, Halle (Saale) based Dutch anthropologist, the author of seminal volume *Before Boas* (2015). The actual organisers were, however, two lady anthropologists, Fabiana Dimpflmeier (Pescara) and Hande Birkalan-Gedik (Frankfurt), who were logistically supported by the University of Pisa and the NomadIT. There were 14 members Scientific Committee and 4 members Honorary Committee (Regna Darnell, Ulf Hannerz, Sandra Puccini and Han Vermeulen). It should be said from the outset that the conference confirmed the strategic status of historical research on anthropology, conceived mostly as the study of individual anthropologists by anthropologists acting as historians of their own discipline. As such, it was a resounding success. It was only taking place online, which enabled the participation of Europeans and specialists from all over the world (sessions started at noon CET, thus ideally enabling the participation of Americans and Australasians). Each session had its own link, which ensured the high technical quality of meetings.

Two panels always ran concurrently. That obviously allowed one to be present at the same time at only one session. My report will, therefore, comment on those sessions I could follow or in which I participated. Quotes are from the abstracts.

Keynote 1

The conference was opened with the first of two keynote addresses. The speaker was **Solimar Otero** of Indiana University. She characterised her talk as follows:

"Rooted in epistemologies from Afro-Caribbean religious and cultural work, as well as engagements in archives of ritual activities, this keynote lecture interrogates how anthropological collaborations with communities and objects of study are deeply engaged with inhabited pasts."

Panels

Dmitry Arzyutov, Sergei Kan, and **Laura Siragusa**, all based in US universities, spoke about "relationships between the pioneer of American anthropology Franz Boas and his Russian colleagues and friends of the period between 1897 and 1942", thus reimagining the history of Arctic anthropology.

Eszter Ruttkay-Miklián of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences described her experiences with preparing publication of materials left by Antal Reguly, a 19th century traveller to Siberia. Reguly was one of the first searchers for Hungarian roots in Siberia.

Ciarán Walsh revived the old tension between humanist and scientist approaches in anthropology in his paper. As he put it, "I compare a class war fought between post-evolutionist 'culturals' (led by Haddon) and academic 'physicals' (led by Galton) with the current stand-off between 'emancipatory' traditionals and 'practical' academics."

Richard Kuba of the Frobenius Institute in Germany looked at Leo Frobenius's last field expedition. In 1938–39, he sent five members of his institute to Kimberly in Northwest Australia but the processing of rich materials from the expedition takes place only today. "85 years later, the extensive expedition materials are rediscovered, reassessed and returned to the source communities. This paper explores how far the different ontologies – the one from the archive and the local living one – can be reconciled in a collaborative process and used productively to reach a more nuanced understanding of the research process as well as of the history of the country and culture."

Sergei Alymov of the Russian Academy of Sciences discussed the failed Soviet attempt, led by the historian Liudmila Danilova, at dedogmatizing Marxist historical materialism. "This paper focuses on the fate of Marxist anthropology in the USSR in the late Soviet period (the 1960–1970s). It recovers the story of the 'sector of the methodology of history', which became the center of interdisciplinary debates among historians, ethnographers, and philosophers, who were intent on modifying the Marxist narrative and suggesting new approaches for thinking about the early states and creation of class societies, modes of exploitation under slavery and feudalism, and changing the Stalinist narrative of 'social-economic formations'.

Henri Wagner (Université Bordeaux Montaigne) pointed out that "Sahlins's uses of the concept of mutuality is in line with Lévy-Bruhl's concept of participation inasmuch as it runs counter the traditional logic of individuality." As well, "the concepts of participation and mutuality are used to define a third way to the traditional alternative between culturalism and naturalism." Wagner concludes that "Sahlins's use of the concept of participation should be read in light of his earlier book *How 'Natives' Think.*"

Ildikó Kristof of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences revived letters, published in a Hungarian newspaper in the 1890s, depicting the daily life of the Sioux. Their author was a mother of a woman who married one man of the Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show when it was touring Eastern Europe. The mother-in-law visited Pine Ridge Reservation, and her descriptions are very realistic and differ very much from the then-prevailing evolutionist discourse. "They should become an essential part of the history of anthropology of the region, from which they are still missing."

There were also two papers about anthropologists whose communist persuasions led to changes in careers and subsequently obscurity. One of them was Frederick Rose (1915–1991), who carried out highly innovative research among the Australian Aborigines but could only develop his anthropological career when he emigrated to the German Democratic Republic in 1956. **Petr Skalník**, in his paper "With British Passport to the GDR via Australia: Rehabilitating Frederick Rose's contribution to anthropology", tried to show that Rose was one of the most underrated anthropologists of the 20th century. The other was German ethnohistorian Paul Kirchhoff, who emigrated to Mexico in the late 1930s. His double life in anthropology and politics was aptly characterised by **Mechthild Rutsch** (National Institute of Anthropology and History, Mexico).

Nikola Balaš of the Czech Academy of Sciences came with a paper on "The Myths of Origins: The Shifting Representations of Disciplinary Histories in socialist Czechoslovakia and post-socialist Czechia." He depicts the competition between "ethnologists" (who were, in fact, a kind of turncoat home positivist peoplegraphers) and a few pioneers of sociocultural anthropology as a balanced duel. However, the former were much more numerous, and their power play resulted in the temporary defeat of anthropology on the Czech turf. The author admits that "the institutional conflicts in the past thirty years led to a serious misrepresentation of anthropology's and ethnology's disciplinary histories." Does he not contribute to a new phase of mythology building?

In the panel on regional anthropologies, a paper by **Nava Kishor Das** (Anthropological Survey of India) entitled "Indigenizing Indian Anthropology" argued that during the British rule, it was anthropologists who attacked the Orientalist vision of India and "emphasised India's cultural, socio-economic,

religious and political heterogeneity, thus questioning the British presentation of India as a monolith." Daniele Cantini (Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Germany) spoke about "Anthropology in the Arab World". He admitted "the development, or lack thereof, of anthropology in all Arab countries." He tried to explain the problems by analysing "the institutional development of anthropology, its insertion into transregional contexts, and the material difficulties of conducting research in some countries."

Han Vermeulen gave a talk in the *Doing History of Anthropology* panel. It was called "Early Ethnographers Before 1870", and it seemed to be a development from the recently published collective volume *Ethnographers Before Malinowski* (Rosa and Vermeulen 2022). Vermeulen appealed to the listeners to send him information about pre-1870 authors whose work could be considered ethnographies. As we go further into the past, only some travelogues can be called ethnographies. Let us wish Han and his collaborators success in distilling worthwhile but unknown ethnographies of the 18th and earlier centuries.

An interesting paper was presented by **Maria Beatrice Di Brizio** (French member of HOAN), who studied the research methods of Edward Tylor. She proposed "to demonstrate that not only Tylor's in situ observation of Mexican society and antiquities but also his armchair research practices – culling of data from written sources, strategies for checking and classifying borrowed data – attest to a sustained effort to establish anthropology as an empirical and inductive science."

Peter Rohrbacher (Austrian Academy of Sciences) tackled one of the mysteries of the history of anthropology: was Richard Thurnwald a National Socialist or not? After WWII, the founder of ethnosociology and still existing journal *Sociologus* managed to persuade victorious powers and influential anthropologists that he had been "a staunch Nazi opponent". Rohrbacher showed in his paper that there were documents testifying otherwise and it seemed that it was high time that Thurnwald's politics be reviewed.

István Sántha (Institute of Ethnography, Research Center for the Humanities, Budapest) and **Tatyjana Szafonova** (Comenius University, Bratislava) related about Vilmos Diószegi's fieldwork sojourns in Southern Siberia and Northern Mongolia that took place between 1957 and 1964. The first fieldwork was made possible just a few months after the Soviet crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. The paper-givers did not explain this apparent puzzle, which may be connected with Diószegi´s political stance. Also interesting was the assertion that Diószegi's motivation for his shamanism studies (*Tracing Shamans in Siberia*, 1968) was a search for Hungarian Asian origins.

Another revealing paper was by Staffan Müller-Wille (University of Cambridge) and **Elena Isayev** (University of Exeter), who discussed the youthful field trip of

the great botanist Carl Linné to the country inhabited by the Saami (then known as Lapps) on the divide between northern Sweden and Finland. The authors of the paper mentioned their "new English online edition and translation of Carl Linnaeus's diary of a journey through Lapland undertaken in 1732" and reported about "a re-enactment of that journey." Indeed, they more or less moved on the traces of Linné. As they wrote, "by combining re-translation and re-enactment of the journey we envisage an entirely novel methodology of scholarly edition."

One should not omit another revealing paper: "Before Lady Frazer: Glimpses of Mrs Lilly Grove, FRGS" by **Luis Felipe Sobral** (University of Sao Paulo, Brazil). Mrs Lilly Grove (1855-1941) is nobody else than the later Lady Frazer, who immensely helped her (second) husband in his laborious volume writing. As Mrs Grove, she was an independent researcher on the history of dance, and as an expert of South American geography, she was "one of the first women elected fellow of the Royal Geographical Society."

Independent British researchers **Hugh Firth a**nd **Loulou Brown** gave a fascinating paper on "Rosemary Firth: An Anthropologist in the Shadow of Raymond Firth and Edmund Leach". It appears from their paper and their recently published book *Love, Loyalty and Deceit. Rosemary Firth, a Life in the Shadow of Two Eminent Men* (Berghahn 2023) that both later Sirs have been serially in love with Rosemary but it was Raymond, her husband since 1936, who made her anthropology possible albeit as a representative of the second sex. Rosemary Firth left a legacy of her solid anthropology writings and students whom she taught.

Amalia Dragani (University of Florida, US // KU Leuven, Belgium), in her paper "The Other of Biography and the Anthropologist as a Poet: the explosive encounter between Bronislaw Malinowski and Stanislaw Witkiewicz", reminded the listeners about the poetic contents of the relationship between Malinowski and Witkiewicz (alias Witkacy). Dragani then speculates: "How has he contributed with his presence, his reflections, his intellectual and artistic background to Malinowski's fieldwork and, more in general, to the birth of anthropology?" It should be noted that Witkacy broke with Malinowski and did not accompany him to New Guinea.

Roundtable

The conference was made even more lively by the introduction of a Roundtable *Writing Transnational Histories of Anthropologies* animated by anthropological stars **Gustavo Lins Ribeiro**, **Susana Narotzky**, **Yasmeen Arif**, **Michał Buchowski** and **Benoît de l'Estoile**. They asked "how anthropologists have generated and exchanged transnational and intercultural knowledge in different professional

settings. Central to this endeavour is the understanding of cognitive extractivism's role in the relationships between non-hegemonic and hegemonic anthropologies. How does it relate to the undervaluation of non-anglophone anthropological writings? What do non-hegemonic anthropological traditions and their respective histories bring to a global polyphonic interpretation of disciplinary history and to its decolonisation? How do national traditions, differently located within the world system of anthropological production, become lenses through which world anthropologies are seen?" These questions have become evergreens in the world anthropological discourse in recent years.

Keynote 2

Finally, there was a closing keynote address by none other than **Thomas Hylland Eriksen** of the University of Oslo. His entertaining talk was called "The many languages in the history of European anthropology". Eriksen stressed that "English is totally dominant in the field, which places most European anthropologists at a disadvantage when it comes to publishing, funding applications, professional communication and informal networking." He regretted that "[A] great deal of significant anthropological work has been and is being published in languages other than English. Most of it never makes its way into official historiographies of the discipline." In my comment, I mentioned that English as the language of anthropology would be okay, but that non-English speakers need funds for copy-editing so that their writings are fully competitive.

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Extractions and Related Changes in Svalbard

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Zdenka Sokolíčková, *The Paradox of Svalbard. Climate Change and Globalisation in Arctic*. London: Pluto Press 2023, 202 pp., ISBN 978-0-7453-4740-0

The issue of global climate change resonates across the natural and social sciences and creates space for a range of new conceptualizations of social development. It has also inspired Thomas Hylland Eriksen and his collaborators to characterize the current era as "overheating", which views social and climate change as a single phenomenon with various manifestations (Eriksen 2016). Since the concept was first articulated, several projects have emerged studying overheating in local conditions. The reviewed publication is one of them. Zdenka Sokolíčková, a lecturer in social anthropology at the University of Hradec Králové in Czechia, received a European grant through the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic and co-funding from the parent university to implement the project in Svalbard, where human life may change significantly as a result of climate warming. Her main research site was in the town of Longyearbyen, and the publication is based on ethnographic data collected there.

In her book, Zdenka Sokolíčková sets goals that exceed the local community. She sees Longyearbyen as a laboratory, a microcosm, and a scaled-down image of how Norway manifests itself in a globalized world and how the globalized world affects Norway. This egocentric hyperbole helps the author to place the locality in a global context. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, the mentor of her research, points this out in the preface to the book, saying that Svalbard and Norway, as a whole, do not form an utterly identical picture. Zdenka Sokolíčková is aware of this and shows that an environment that has a specific international status, is excluded from Schengen, and has a specific visa or visa-free regime creates a communication environment that is difficult to compare with classical parts of

European states. Despite this, with her perspective, she manages to frame many phenomena by more general events.

The book opens with a classical introduction compiled from first impressions after coming to the field that would undoubtedly have intrigued Clifford Geertz – taking into account his famous piece *Works and Lives* (1988). A brief history of Svalbard follows it, contextualizing the author's field data. The next subsection presents academic sources of inspiration. First mentioned here is the research mentor, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, and his concept of overheating, elaborated in his book of the same name (2016). Other authors include Bruno Latour, Jeason W. Moore, Donna Haraway, Lesley Head, and others who consider the topic of ecological change in the context of globalization, working with the concept of the Anthropocene or Capitalocene and other concepts linking human society and ecological change. Follow the positioning of the author and her family who accompanied her.

The results of the field research are summarized in three parts. The first part, entitled *Fluid Environments*, focuses on the issue of experiencing climate change. In this part, the author begins to introduce her ethnographic work and seeks to answer the question of how people respond to change. She starts with natural scientists, geologists, and climatologists. Although it is clear from the opening sentences of her work that she takes the subject of climate change very seriously and uses the vocabulary of engaged anthropology, the chapter titles *Fairy Tales of Change* and *Once Upon a Time* convince the reader that her aim is not to reinterpret the data of natural scientists. Instead, she works with information as narratives and provides the opportunity to follow the flow of information as a dialogue. The chapters show that geologists and climatologists who work with long-time data are cautious in their judgments and even refer to a period when forests covered Svalbard and the present archipelago was accessible by land. They could also imagine it without people. Sokolíčková contrasts gradual change with the theme of immediate change, in the book represented by the avalanche, and shows that people not only react to change differently according to their position in society, knowledge, and values, but their reaction is determined by the time span in which it takes place, how urgent it appears to society and how immediately it affects individuals. Chapter 3 of Part One, entitled *The Viscosity of Climate Change*, expands on this theme through the discourse about the temporary closure of the Seed Vault due to water intrusion[1] and some other topics related to the local government's responses to natural disasters.

The second part of the book, entitled *Extractive Economies*, works with the concept of extractivism to provide a deeper understanding of the processes of

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[1] The Global Seed Vault located on the island is intended to be a global bank of biodiversity.

exploitation and subjectification. This concept provides an interpretive scheme for entrepreneurial activities on the island. In addition to the mining activities, it includes tourism, which has been particularly dominant in recent years and which Sokolíčková could especially experience during her stay here. However, she also uses the concept of extractivism for scientific activities, which also contribute to ecological change and are accompanied by the mobility of students and the movement of other people who provide an infrastructure for them. In comparing science and tourism, she draws not only on her own field data but also on data collected in Canada by Nicolas Graham (2020). The chapter shows that extractivism can refer to any activity and is related to the theme of sustainability. The latter is most likely to emerge, based on personal activities, especially where people project themselves with a long-term perspective.

The theme of temporality and the long-term perspective of people living in Longyearbyen is developed in the third part of the book entitled *Disempowered Communities*. I see the issue of social cohesion and the creation of a socially cooperative environment as the central topic of this part. It will attract attention because, among other reasons, paradoxically, the fears and doubts of people speaking spontaneously about issues of the space in which they live do not significantly link them to climate change, or at least this is not apparent from the text. Building a livable environment turns almost exclusively on the issue of relationships between people, not on the relationship between people associated with nature. The author names the initial social unit "extractivist settler community" (p. 116), which is specific in that it "combines the features of a rural small-scale society, where social networks are tightly knit, with the mesh of an urban society" (p. 117). In this section of the book, the various actors reveal what they see as the most significant obstacles complicating the prospects for a brighter future. Sokolíčková correctly identifies that community building is currently a largely managed process significantly influenced by state and local policies. She introduces them to the reader and shows how they emerge in the reflection of residents. She connects them to the process of "communitification", whose theoretical anchoring she takes from Anne Mette Jørgensen (2019). Perhaps even more insight into the creation of the social environment and its embedment in material space would have allowed for providing more information about the actors themselves, their social background, and aspirations for the future. Of course, even if its current residents do not associate their futures with Longyearbyen, the issues of maintaining local cohesion are primarily in the hands of politicians. But perhaps this aspect of community building was difficult to unpack, especially for a foreign anthropologist who came alone to "extract" data on local life and intended to leave after two years when her project ended. If she writes

that local people are somewhere between the small-scale rural community and urban society, I do not see that interface here. The rural community is tied not only by social interconnections but also by the object of its activity – rural production. The object of the activity is tailored to the social ties of the community: marriage policy, multi-generational staying in one place coupled with planning to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the environment in which the group lives or within which it migrates. Kinship ties reinforce community ties. The corporate culture of single occupations that might substitute for this aspect of life in Longyearbyen is not discussed here, except for a few hints about old miners' meetings in the cafeteria. But even what is apparent in the text, in this new settlement society, social cohesion is created and manifested, especially in the occasional overcoming of common obstacles, such as the consequences of the avalanche described by the author.

In conclusion, the author returns to the social and climate change link. We can conclude that she has touched on many issues that go beyond the town of Longyearbyen and that perhaps emerge even more here than elsewhere in the world. She shows here that social mobility and globally interconnected economies, technologies, and social relations make it possible to enter and inhabit a wide variety of geographical spaces. At the same time, this high social mobility brings with it many uncertainties associated with the unmooredness of people in surrounding space and society. At least, this book suggests that the mechanisms for creating a sense of social cohesion in a globally mobile world are still in the making, and since it is a mobile world, this cohesion cannot be anchored in local belonging alone. In a heavily immigrant environment, people may respond to global changes (which people have probably always feared). However, given the weakly developed social memory, few will associate them with local changes.

Zdenka Sokolíčková's publication is an exemplary ethnography and an interesting contribution to understanding local and global challenges through the reflections of approximately two hundred informants with often very contradictory views. This multiplicity and contradictions are also alluded to by Hilde Henningsen in *Afterwords*, where she finds one of the added values of this text in this generality that Zdenka "has given voice to unheard voices in the community creating arenas of common ground – community dialogues."

The book has many dimensions. There are the reactions of local people to various events, the impact of laws and other regulations on different groups of people, reflections on life in Svalbard by non-European migrant groups, and other aspects that will open up the reader's understanding of life in a specific and unusual place. The book inspires students and is an example of well-crafted ethnographic research.

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Gellner Revisited and Revitalised for an Age Languishing in Indifference and Relativism

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Skalník, Petr, ed. *Ernest Gellner's Legacy and Social Theory Today*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan 2022, xlii+581 p.

This monumental study on Ernest Gellner (1925-1995) illustrates (as if such were necessary) the breadth and scope of Gellner's thinking, of his erudition and his singular ability to dissolve the often-contrived borders between Sociology, Anthropology, History, and Philosophy.

Nearly thirty years have passed since he died, and in that relatively short space of time (one says 'short' because in the terms that he himself established, thirty years is not a long time), the world has changed so dramatically. Of course, it's a moot point whether it has changed for the better. Would today's world even have been recognisable for Gellner, or indeed one should ask, is it not because of Gellner, that the subsequent permutations of our global culture are at least decipherable?

Naturally, the question that comes to mind is whether one can still view Gellner as relevant to our age, and if so, how? This study edited by Petr Skalník provides a resounding reply in the affirmative, though let it be said, not easily so. The disciplines being deployed in this volume are so wide-ranging, incisive and profound – very much in keeping with the dexterity, *elan* and insight that characterise Gellner's approach to the pressing questions with which our varied cultures have had to grapple.

Gellner clearly was not one to have his mind put at rest by facile solutions, such as relativism or monolithic ideological sleights of hand that have brought misery to millions.

With Gellner straddling the various disciplines, this volume of over 600 pages, contains the contribution of a host of eminent scholars, each giving their own

response to a particular aspect of Gellner's variegated thinking, each emphasising that aspect of Gellner's thoughts which awakens each contributor's expertise. Gellner's study of Islam for example take us into the realm of Ibn Khaldun and his concept of *asabiyyah* or "group feeling" which in turn produces the ability to defend oneself, to protect oneself and to press one's claims, i.e., whoever loses his group feeling [*asabiyyah*] is too weak to do any one of these things'.

Further elucidation of this point is provided in Siniša Malešević's chapter, being just one example of the range of thought and probing that Gellner and his followers engage in. Malešević's chapter is complemented by further studies on how the application of a Gellnerian "formula" as it were can be applied to for example Turkey, a society that is at variance with many presuppositions that seek to make the Islamic world more accessible to Western oriented scholars.

In Chapter 16, for example, David Shankland has entitled his contribution Gellner: "Right and Wrong". In this rather more personalised account of his dealings with Gellner. In his chapter Shankland deals extensively with the nexus of Gellner's ideas where *Agraria* and *Industria* are at loggerheads with one another, in a way which seems starker in the context of the Maghreb.

The contributors variously give their own reading of the significance of Wittgenstein or more precisely "Wittgensteinerism" and the "narodniks" of North Oxford, who worshipped at the altar of Wittgenstein whose philosophy of language was excoriated by Gellner, leading in his view to the lamentable supremacy of relativism and post-Modernism. In the Preface to his *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, his views are most succinctly put across:

"Alliances crystallise, but their internal strains and inescapable disappointment inevitably provoke re-alignments, and no participant can really settle down in a stable liaison. It is all somewhat like the children's game of scissors, paper and rock: the scissors cut paper, the paper wraps the rock, the rock blunts the scissors. There is no stable dominance, only inherent instability. What are the three contestants?
1 Religious fundamentalism.
2 Relativism, exemplified for instance by the recent fashion of 'postmodernism'.
3 Enlightenment rationalism, or rationalist fundamentalism." (Page 13).

Here we have what all the contributors in one guise or another, are examining and thrashing out the permutations of Gellner's thought. One sees in the above Gellner's consistent faith in rationalism, the appropriation of 18th century Enlightenment values that in a sense restore his faith in the supremacy of that human faculty which functions as a bulwark against delusions of fundamentalism

(be they religious, Marxist or Fascist) and relativism, the latter which gives rise to the "anything goes" paradigm, and which is ultimately a lazy way out of engagement with whatever ails Mankind at any particular junction. And, this is what makes Gellner's thinking so compelling and where his forays into philosophy, history, sociology and anthropology put him in a sense in an unassailable position. His specialisations put him in a position to evaluate from various angles the fraught issues of our times. In short, for Gellner there are no short cuts. We have to study and understand, say, the cosy contradictions of the Habsburg empire, we have to examine the dichotomy between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*. In other words, Gellner is if nothing else thorough and unrelenting in his pursuit of truths, whether they be arrived at via history, sociology, philosophy or anthropology.

Seen thus, our scholars in this volume have primarily convinced us of their shared authenticity in their approach to the truths which Gellner extolled. Gellner is not one for facile solutions, and consequently any engagement with his ideas baulk at a superficial *Auseinandersetzung* of the parameters of his thought.

Chris Hann makes a cogent point when he says: "Nothing in the intellectual apparatus of Ernest Gellner equipped him to grasp the causes of post-socialist trends in political economy." This notion has been referred to several times in the overall study of Gellner's legacy. Of course, it would have been useful if Gellner had lived longer to see developments in Viktor Orbán's Hungary or in Poland. However, the scope of his analysis is such that he better equips us to try to understand developments when Marxist fundamentalism gave way to market forces and when ethnic nationalism once again reared its head in post-socialist Europe. Ample examples of this can also be seen in the xenophobic atrocities that occurred in Rostock and Hoyerswerda in the former East Germany.

Alan Macfarlane's view of Japan and the implicit need for a re-examination of the applicability of Gellner's ideas to a culture suffused with idiosyncrasies. The example of Japan, moreover, serves the useful purpose of deflecting from self-congratulatory Western, or Mediterranean paradigms and balances the exemplification of former Habsburg territories. John Hall's chapter, among other invaluable insights, also lends a certain intimacy to the discussion on Gellner.

As Chris Hahn points out: "Nowadays the inconsistencies in illiberal democracies are much more obvious. Just as the Popper of 1945 was no longer defensible in 1994, so the Gellner of 1994 cannot be defended in 2022 and modifications are called for". His is a pithy observation and helps us to contextualise the limits that our moment in history impose on us, and especially on a strident thinker such as Gellner who by force of circumstance seems to have felt compelled to go into the various intellectual directions that he did. The thought of his staying any longer in Czechoslovakia after 1939, and not going to England, does not bear

contemplation, given his Jewish lineage. That said, Gellner's life reminds us of the happenstance of the lives of those who have contributed to and illuminated so much of our often fractious and discordant interpretations of the world.

Another aspect which sets this work apart are the commentaries which follow each of the chapters, where contributors are given the opportunity to comment on their colleagues' work. This is quite daring and not a widespread practice in multi-authored works. The presence of these commentaries would seem to suggest a thorough unity of purpose among all the contributors, namely to do justice to one of the 20th centuries greatest thinkers. *Ernest Gellner 's Legacy and Social Theory Today* will for many years to come be a definitive and indeed, an indispensable text on Gellner, combining as it does the work, inspired commitment and dedication of a host of sincere scholars, putting their erudition at the disposal of the academic fraternity and, in time, the wider public.

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