



ASAANZ 2018
Annual Conference
6TH-7TH
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VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON



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ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL
SCIENCE AND WELLBEING

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Kia ora, Welcome from the ASAANZ Chair person

I am delighted to issue a very warm welcome to all conference participants. As this is our first ASAANZ conference at Massey Wellington most of us will be exploring a new campus. The colleagues from Massey and Victoria University have collaborated in organising the conference and have managed to offer us a multifaceted range of panels. Thank you all for doing the hard work for this year! None of us were expecting so many colleagues joining us from overseas, as we normally experience our annual conference as a somewhat family affair. Nonetheless, *'Improvising lives'* seems to have struck a chord. I am very much looking forward to meeting you and getting to know you during the days in Wellington. Welcome to you all.

Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich

ASAANZ Chair

Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Victoria University of Wellington

He Mihi Atu: Acknowledgements

Thanks to all who have been involved in the organisation of this conference, in particular (in alphabetical order): Robyn Andrews, Barbara Anderson, Nayantara Sheoran Appleton, Caroline Bennett, Hona Black, Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, Janepicha Cheva-Isarakul, Cameron Dickie, Eli Elinoff, Trisia Farrelly, Ruth Gibbons, Lorena Gibson, Graeme Macrae, Ani Morris, Carolyn Morris, Grant Otsuki, Catherine Rivera, Kathryn Rountree, Jennifer Shennan, Jeff Sissons, Jeff Sluka, Catherine Trundle, Tarapuhi Vaeau, Sita Venkateswar, and Tim Worth.

Special thanks go to Amy Haarhoff for her beautiful design for the cover of this conference book. Having finished her studies in Social Anthropology at Massey University's Palmerston North campus, Amy is currently exploring her love of art. She plans to begin an MA in Illustration in the New Year, and hopes to pursue a career as an illustrator-author.

Improvising Lives: Our Conference Theme

'Lives' are stories lived and written, modes of dwelling and becoming, modes of habitation and co-habitation, modes of accommodation and making do. Lives rarely unfold according to plan; lives are improvised. The 2018 ASAA/NZ Conference aims to consider how we are all Improvising Lives. The notion of 'improvisation' evokes images of the unplanned, the precarious, the provisional, the partial, the imperfect, the risky, the fearful, the playful, the imaginative, the joyful, the performative, struggles to make ends meet. Yet, improvisation is often not simply acting without a script, but deeply social, highly coordinated, and intimately reflective of existing worlds of meaning, their histories, inequalities, and discontents. We have chosen *Improvising Lives* as the theme for the 2018 ASAA/NZ conference in the hope that paper contributors and participants will be encouraged to reflect on ways that these ideas emerge within, resonate with, or inform their ethnographic research and writing.

The notion of improvised lives prompts questions such as: How is improvisation fundamental to the practice of world-making? What kinds of improvisational practices make life liveable? What kinds of improvisation emerge in moments of austerity, authoritarianism, or environmental collapse? What kinds of social coordination underlie the improvisation of life? How can a more robust engagement with improvisation fortify contemporary anthropological methods? How can 'theoretical story-telling' (McGranahan 2015) about improvised lives better inform critiques of systems of power and rationality?

Our conference this year welcomes anthropologists from around the world speaking to this theme in multiple ways and across topics and disciplines, and we're sure it will be a thought-provoking and stimulating couple of days for all.

Schedule of Events

		Room 1	Room 2	Room 3
Thursday 6th December				
9.00-11.00	Registration Pōwhiri Morning tea			
10.00-11.00	Keynote Performance: Rob Thorne (Lecture theatre 4B06)			
11.00-12.30	Panels	11 Precarity/ Multiculturalism	09 Resilience	15/44 Visual Workshop The life of the Anthropologist: Improvised and Living in the Between
12.30-1.30	Lunch	16/51 Film <i>Prepared to Care</i>		
1.30-3.00	Panels	05 Digital	10 Medical	
3.30-5.00	Keynote: Carole McGranahan (Lecture theatre 4B06)			
5.15-6.30	Postgraduate workshop (with Carole McGranahan)			
7.00-10.00	Conference Dinner (Saigon Van Grill Bar, pre-booked)			
Friday 7th December				
9.00-10.30	Panels	01 Religion	07 Migration/ Trafficking/ Refugees	14 Mahi Tahi 1
11.00-12.30	Panels	02 Religion	08 Migration/ Trafficking/ Refugees	14 Mahi Tahi 2
12.30-1.30	Lunch/AGM			
1.30-3.00	Panels	03 Sex/Gender	12 Ethnographic Improvisations	
3.30-5.00	Panels	04 Sex/Gender	06 Posthuman/ Multispecies/ Latour	
5.00-5.15	Presentation of Dr Cyril Timo Schafer Memorial Graduate Student Conference Presentation Awards			
5.15-	Farewell drinks			

Keynote Performance, Thursday December 6th, 10.00 – 11.00

Rob Thorne

Musician and Composer

<http://www.robthorne.co.nz/>

Improvisation as the Fundamental Phenomenon of Life

Improvisation is one key to unlocking both the necessities and the mysteries of the recently revived broken tradition that is modern taonga puoro practice. A large part of reclaiming, re-learning, rediscovering and reviving the traditions of taonga puoro has come out of a practice grounded in improvisation. Improvising instrument construction, improvising playing methods and styles, improvising how something should sound according to specific memories of people present and passed, improvising whole instruments from scant and rare, or singular, historical descriptions, and sometimes even improvising on knowledge when large parts of accounts have been mislaid/covered over (lost). Improvising composition.

Being a practitioner of improvised musical performance, I have come to realise that a fundamental element of the act is in the doing of intuition, and that this requires listening: to self, and context. I perceive the nature of improvisation as conversational: linear over time yet circular, multitudinous, meaningfully emergent, osmotic and unfolding, reflective, yet performative. A phenomenon. Where letting in and letting go blend. Engaged, resonant, fundamental. As my youngest child once randomly asked, “what is improvisation?” to which my eldest promptly replied: “what you are doing now.” Improvisation is life, and living is improvisation.

Rob Thorne (Ngāti Tumutumu), is a NZ Māori composer-performer with over 25 years experience. He is a diverse explorer in the newly revived evolution of Taonga Puoro (traditional Māori instruments). Since beginning in 2001 he has completed an MA in Social Anthropology specific to the instruments, and consciously incorporated his diverse experience compositionally and in performance since 2008.

In 2016 Thorne began collaborating improvisationally with electro artist Fis, touring Europe and NZ. Each pushes the boundaries of the other’s art and ability, consistently driving their work into new terrain. As the 2017-18 NZSM Composer-in-Residence, he was commissioned by the NZ String Quartet to write a new work incorporating taonga puoro that premiered in the NZ Festival. In October he showcased his work at WOMEX’18, one of only three NZ artists in its history, and participated in a panel with renowned improviser David Rothenberg exploring experimentation in the revival of broken tradition. In June he released the collaborative album ‘Rewa’ with Athenian pianist Tania Giannouli, to wide critical acclaim. The album was recorded over a weekend, a day after they met, and was fully improvised. In 2019 he has been commissioned to write a piece for Orchestra Wellington, and he is currently developing and teaching a performance paper in taonga puoro at NZSM, VUW.

Keynote Speech, Thursday 6th December, 15.30 – 17.00

Carole McGranahan

Professor of Anthropology, History, and Tibetan Studies

University of Colorado, USA

<http://www.carolemcgranahan.com/>

Anthropology as Theoretical Storytelling

Storytelling is crucial to anthropology. In the field, we collect people's stories. In the classroom, we illustrate anthropological concepts and theories by telling stories to our students. And in our texts, we re-tell others' stories, and we produce our own. However, if there has long been an anthropology *of* storytelling, we are now in a new period, that of anthropology *as* storytelling. If, as some scholars argue, people live storied lives, then how has anthropology responded to this reality? One way is by using storytelling as method and pedagogy and product, not only as subject or object of study. Since the narrative turn in the 1980s, social-cultural anthropologists have rethought how we write, think, and theorize. A key, but under recognized new development is our use of storytelling as analytical device. Stories may have always been a part of anthropological scholarship, but they have not always been theory. What does it mean to practice anthropology as a form of theoretical storytelling? This shift and its possibilities require our attention and consideration: why stories, and why now. What does theoretical storytelling have to offer us (and the world) in this current historic and political moment?

Carole McGranahan is professor of anthropology and history at the University of Colorado (USA). Since 1994, she has had the honor of working with Tibetan refugee communities in India and Nepal, and since 2007, in Canada and the USA on research projects ranging from war and memory, and gender and narration, to empire, citizenship, and asylum. She is author of *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War* (Duke University Press, 2010), co-editor with John F. Collins of *Ethnographies of U.S. Empire* (Duke University Press, 2018), and editor of the forthcoming volume *Writing Anthropology: Essays on Craft and Commitment*.

Keynote Streaming Information

The keynote performance and speech will be streamed live online:

Keynote performance:

<https://webcast.massey.ac.nz/Mediasite/Play/64658b4261b143c18cfcb892b11991231d>

Keynote speech:

<https://webcast.massey.ac.nz/Mediasite/Play/9677c18b1eb64cf190c572fc7ff353891d>

Panel Breakdown

Note: Panel numbers correspond to programme

Paper abstracts are listed at the end of the book, in alphabetical order by author

01 Religion

- 24. Impious Camouflage: Managing the Stigma of Atheism in Egypt
(Wael Al Soukkary, Egypt)
- 49. Improvised Incarnation of Mediums in Len dong - a Ritual Practice of Dao Mau
(Tran Thi Thuy Binh, University of Auckland)
- 45. Improvisation and the Ethics of Tapu: Letters to a Taranaki Shaman
(Jeffrey Sissons, Victoria University of Wellington)
- 19. Changing Lives, Changing Gods: Indian Christianity and the Problem of
'Conversion'
(Abhijit Dasgupta, Indian Institute of Technology) [By Video]

02 Religion (+ Some Improvisation)

- 20. The Capacity to Hope: Interfaith Efforts for Creating Peace and a "Good" World
(Sarah Haggart, University of Auckland)
- 10. 'Called to Serve': Evangelical Millennials, Divine Experiences, and Social Justice
(Catherine Rivera, Massey University)
- 23. Cultural Immersion Trips: "Making do" as a Valid Chance to Engage with the
Other
(Paul Robertson, University of Auckland)
- 41. New International Airport (NIA), Yogyakarta, Indonesia
(Khidir Marsanto Prawirosusanto, Universitas Gadjah Mada)

03 Sex / Gender

- 4. The Dancing Other: Roots, Rituals and Performance of Lahanga Naach
(Vicky Shandil)
- 52. Muslim Migrant Women's Everyday Accounts of Clothing
(Hina Cheema, Massey University)
- 22. The Influence of 'Intimate Moralities' in Young Cook Islands Women's
Relationship Construction Processes
(Anja Uhlmann, University of Auckland)
- 28. 'I thought it a Good Opportunity to Visit a New Country': The Collecting Life of
Sydney, Countess of Kintore
(Kirsty Kernohan, University of Aberdeen)

04 Sex / Gender

21. Sexuality Through Art by Female Pastoralists: “Body Mapping in Northern Kenya”
(Doreen Odera, North Dakota State University)
42. Renegotiating Norms: Men's Experiences of Studying Towards a BA in Aotearoa New Zealand
(Cameron Dickie, Massey University)
2. Improvising Safer Classrooms: How University Lecturers Break Taboos and Reduce Student Vulnerability to Sexual Violence in their Everyday Teaching
(Lise Palmer, Spark: Vibrant Organisations)
38. Gendered Politics: Family Planning and Reproductive Health in Rural Bangladesh
(Md. Faruk Shah, University of Auckland)

05 Digital

5. Dialogical Sense-making in the (Digital) Public Sphere: Citizenship, Care, and Disability
(Susan Wardell & Ruth Fitzgerald, University of Otago)
26. Digital Death
(Shannon Blanch, University of Otago)
36. Memeing LGBTQ Lives: Negotiating Difference and Relatability Through Shared Humour
(Claire Black, The University of Auckland)
50. Computer Code, Politics and Livelihoods: Exploring the Importance of Free Open Source Software Across Wellington’s Startup Ecosystem.
(Jessica Halley, Massey University)

06 Posthuman / Multispecies / Latour

6. Improvisation as Innovation: Aotearoa’s ‘No. 8 Wire’ Culture of Conservation Science
(Courtney Addison, Victoria University of Wellington)
34. The Crisis of the Anthropocene and a Call to Action
(E. Noel Eyre)
15. Racing to Retirement: Understanding Greyhounds’ Experiences of Becoming Pets
(Hannah Paap)
27. How to Make Truth Happen through Improvising?
(Marja-Liisa Honkasalo. University of Turku, and University of the Arts, Finland)

07 Migration / Trafficking / Refugees

7. Philippine Migration as Improvisation in Three Registers
(Pauline Gardiner Barber, Dalhousie University)
48. Suffering and Sacrifice: Narrating Experiences of Human Trafficking in the Philippines
(Amie Townsend, Massey University)
37. Between Coercion and Improvisation: The Case of Unauthorised Migrants in Transit through Mexico
(Gianmaria Lenti, National school of Anthropology and History, Mexico City & Bernardo López Marín, La Trobe University)
13. Making-up Lives – Tales From the “Refugee Crisis” in Europe
(Nicola Manghi, Università di Torino, University of Waikato)

08 Migration / Trafficking / Refugees

17. Building the Bridge and Forging the Way: Stateless Shan Youth’s Improvised Educational Journey in Northern Thailand
(Janepicha Cheva-Isarakul, Victoria University Wellington)
9. Colombian Former Refugees as Volunteers: Reframing Patron-Client Relations and Exchange Practices
(Andrea Merino Ortiz, University of Auckland)
33. Transnational Medical Seeking as Improvisation in Personal Health Care: a Case of Ethnic Korean Return Migrants
(Bon-giu Koo, Institute for World Studies, Ajou University)
30. Fragments of a Border Camp
(Tim Worth, Victoria University of Wellington)

09 Resilience (Improvising When Things Go Wrong)

55. Staying with Failure: An Experiment in Collaborative Learning
(Dorothy Kwek)
8. What Does Resilience Look Like? Self-harm and Sociality in Aotearoa
(Julie Spray)
35. Improvising Military Life: The Experience of Presence and Absence During Deployment
(Maike Guesgen, Massey University)

10 Medical

43. Asking After the Art and Craft of Open-ended Ethnographic Argument
(Mythily Meher, University of Melbourne)
40. Improvised Vitality: Patient's Storied Lives Before and After Hysterectomy
(Pauline Herbst, Waitemata DHB/University of Auckland)
25. The Cultural Invisibility of Alternate Sensory Worlds: Improvising a Life With Fibromyalgia
(Sally Robertson, University of Western Australia)
39. Co-producing the Ideal HIV Clinic in Bandung, Indonesia
(Elan Lazuardi¹, Stephen Bell^{1,2}, Christy E. Newman^{2,1}, Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney; ²Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney)

11 Precarity / Multiculturalism

53. Telling Lives: The Politics of Representation in Proposal Writing and Ethnography
(Lorena Gibson, Victoria University of Wellington)
18. Improvised Sovereignty
(Sara Hansen, Victoria University of Wellington)
31. Making Something Out of Nothing (or Not Much): or, How to Eat When You Can't Afford Food
(Carolyn Morris, Cassandra McTavish, Corrina Tucker, Massey University)
56. Improvising on the Periphery: Urbanization Beyond the Plan in a Provincial Thai City
(Eli Elinoff, Victoria University of Wellington)

12 Ethnographic Improvisations / Reflections

12. Getting to Know the Tuuhoe 1972-2018
(Steven Webster)
14. The Making of an Ethnographic Object: Improvisation in Discontinuity
(Subhashim Goswami, Shiv Nadar University)
16. Lumbung State: Improvising Methodologies for Studying the Large and Abstract
(Graeme MacRae, Massey Auckland; Thomas Reuter, University of Melbourne)
29. Theoretical Storytelling as Translation: Practical storytelling in the NZ Army
(Nina Harding, Massey University)

14 Stirring Up Silence: Mahi Tahi Interactive Presentation

This event is open to all who wish to engage with Māori student perspectives and experiences of anthropology. It will centre Māori student voices, but also hopes to generate a broad conversation across the discipline of anthropology in Aotearoa and beyond. We will consider how we might collectively make and remake our discipline to be one that is inclusive, meaningfully bicultural, cognisant of its colonial history and present, and informed by the Treaty. In other words, how might we answer Dr Lily George's call to 'stir up the silence'? (2017).

Organiser: Mahi Tahi. Chair: Tarapuhi Vaeau. Discussant: Dr Lily George

15 Visual Workshop: The Life of the Anthropologist: Improvised and Living in the Between

This participatory lab is open to all, and explores the concepts of improvised lives and the lives of anthropologists actively exploring what it means to be anthropologists who live in the between. Using imaginative, performative and creative practices we explore the improvised lives of the anthropologist and what it 'looks' like. Creative practices - through making, drawing, writing, photography etc... - open the possibility to examine experiences of life. Through the use of collaborative arts practice this lab turns the lens from our participants/ collaborators to our role and through active practices asks the question 'what is the improvised life of the anthropologist?'

Led by Ruth Gibbons, Massey University

16 Film: *Prepared To Care* (Jowsey, Tanisha, and Smith, Richard, 2018)

Focusing on the training initiative, Urgent and Immediate Patient Care Week, this ethnographic film documents how health care professional students – pharmacy, medicine, nursing and paramedicine – are learning to manage the tough aspects of patient care.

Postgraduate Event information

Thursday 6th December

5.15pm – 6.30pm

Fern and Flax Room

This year ASAANZ warmly invites Post Graduate students of all levels to come together for an evening of fellowship. Students will be joined by our keynote speaker, Carole McGranahan, and will have the opportunity to ask questions and chat with Carole about theoretical storytelling and beyond, to explore their own practice, ideas, and modes of anthropological praxis.

We hope this event is the start of some beautiful networks and sharing opportunities that extend beyond the conference into the future.

He Pārongo: Conference Information

VENUE

The conference is being held at the Wellington Campus of Massey University. The Wellington Campus is located on a small hill at the South end of Wellington's central Te Aro suburb. The main entrance to the campus is off Wallace Street (confusingly, Wallace Street is a continuation of Taranaki Street). It can also be accessed off Tasman Street or through the Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

GETTING TO CAMPUS

For those conference delegates staying in downtown Wellington, especially in one of the nominated conference hotels, the campus is best reached on foot. Massey University is a 15-minute walk from the CQ hotel.

If you are staying elsewhere in Wellington, there are a number of frequent buses that run past the campus. The particular bus will depend on what direction you are arriving from. If you are travelling from the Railway Station, the #10 and #11 buses travel past the campus.

ACCESSIBILITY

Wellington is a hilly city, although a comparatively compact one, and the Massey campus is likewise spread across a hilly area.

The hotel accommodation for the conference is a comfortable walking distance from the facilities on campus for non-disabled attendees, and we are on major bus-routes from the central city. (Bus numbers 10, 11 and 21 will move from the intersection of Manners St and Courtney Place up Taranaki St onto Wallace St and past the campus, and Wellington buses have provisions for people with impaired mobility).

The campus itself provides accessibility measures wherever possible, but cannot entirely circumvent the hilly nature of the campus that results in many sets of stairs. If you have any accessibility or mobility questions, please ask at the Registration Desk or contact Robyn Andrews at R.Andrews@massey.ac.nz so that we can work with you on finding convenient alternatives.

REGISTRATION DESK

The Registration Desk will be located in the Flax and Fern room. There will be someone on hand to answer queries at all times during the conference.

MORNING TEA, LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA

Your conference registration includes coffee on arrival, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, which will be served in the Flax and Fern room.

Dairy-free and gluten-free options will be available for those who have requested them. Please leave these options for those who have made special requests.

On-site caterer, Tussock, provides coffee, morning and afternoon Tea.

CONFERENCE UPDATES AND TWEETS

Conference updates will be signalled at the registration desk and distributed through email should they be required.

INTERNET ACCESS

Wifi can be accessed: select **MUGuests**. Full instructions will be available in the conference hub and on registration.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PRESENTERS

Most sessions are around 90 minutes in length and include 3-4 presentations. Please keep your presentation to 15 minutes. Please be aware that when you speak for longer than your allotted time you are depriving other panelists of the opportunity to present their work and for discussion and questions following the presentations. Panel chairs will time each session and provide 5 and 2-minute warnings. Each presentation will be followed by a 5-minute Q and A.

When you are presenting, please arrive 10 minutes early to ensure that everything is ready to go on time.

PHARMACY

The closest pharmacy is located in the Countdown supermarket, which is minutes' walk south of the campus (away from the city) down Wallace Street (general opening hours are 6am-12midnight).

SECURITY & MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Please ensure that you report any security or medical concerns to Registration and we will do our best to assist.

- Campus Security (24 Hours): 0274963681
- Police/Ambulance: 111
- Campus Facilities Helpdesk (07:30 – 17:00)
 - rfmwnhelpdesk@massey.ac.nz
 - Extension 63333 for on-campus phones, or
 - 04 979333

PLACES TO GRAB A COFFEE/FOOD

Tussock cafe is located off the Pyramid and offers a range of food and drinks.

For those venturing slightly further afield, upper Cuba Street is a 15-minute walk and contains a wide range of Wellington's best cafes and bars ranging from the Ekim burger caravan, to Wellington coffee institutions like Fidel's or Midnight Espresso, to fine-dining at Logan Brown.

Some other local highlights include:

Food

Aunty Mena's	167 Cuba St	A vegetarian institution—Malay veggie
Floriditas	161 Cuba St	Bit upmarket with a focus on seasonal food
Hop Garden	13 Pirie Street	Pub food and drink.
Little Penang	40 Dixon Street	Affordable, delicious, Malaysian. No alcohol, but plenty of bars nearby for after
Loretta	181 Cuba St	Casual cafe with a focus on local and organic
Ombra	199 Cuba St	Venetian food
Mr Gos	59 Taranaki St	Modern Asian. Delicious. Bring a friend and share
Napoli	40 Courtenay Pl	Best pizza in town. Also do a good spritz
Rasa	200 Cuba St	Malaysian and South Indian food. BYOB
Scopa	141 Cuba St	Pizza and pasta
The Old Quarter	39 Dixon St	Modern Vietnamese. So good! You'll need to book, but it's worth it

Drink

Crumpet	109 Manners St	Best cocktails in town
Goldings	14 Leeds St	Craft beer bar. There's a couple of other good bars nearby, so if Goldings isn't your thing, check out Hanging Ditch next door, or Fortune Favours just through the arch
Husk	62 Ghuznee St	Experimental brews from Choice Bros brewery
Rogue & Vagabond	18 Garrett St	Yet another craft beer bar. It's Wellington. This one is good for beers in the sun and curly fries
Tap Room	91 Aro St	House bar of the Garage Project brewery
Noble Rot	6 Swan Lane	A wine bar for a change
Poquito	11 Tory St	Great little whiskey bar. Also has good wine and beer

These are just the beginning though, please go out and explore our wonderful city!

Cuba Street tends to be a more casual, crafty, foodie part of town. If you're after a few more drinks and a dance, then you'll want to head to Courtney Place. There are some nice spots around the Harbour between Queen's Wharf and Oriental Bay, while to the South of the campus, the suburb of Newtown offers an eclectic range of options.

Kei Hea Tātou: Map/s and parking information

Transport to and from Massey and around Wellington

- Bus routes for Wellington City can be found on the Metlink website (<https://www.metlink.org.nz/>). Information regarding a tertiary student discount can be found on the Massey website.
- Train information is also available at Metlink.
- You can find walking info from Living Streets Aotearoa (<https://www.livingstreets.org.nz/>)
- Travel to and from the airport is easy – use Metlink to plan public transport, there are ample taxis, and uber operates in and out of the airport.

Cycling

If you're feeling energetic, there's plenty of parking for bikes. Bike racks are located on the south side of the Museum Building, the south side of Block 1, and the north side of Block 5. There are changing facilities and showers on campus - find more information about cycling in Wellington and Massey's facilities here:

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/maps-and-parking/wellington-campus/cycling.cfm>

Car Parking

Pay and display car parking is available on King Street and by the Museum Building (Block 10), Entrance D (Buckle Street). One-hour pay and display parking is available in Entrance A (Wallace Street). We also have spaces available (including accessible spaces) in Parking Lot E, outside the Tussock Café.

Remember to ensure your pay and display ticket is displayed on the front dashboard of your vehicle so that our car park security and audit person knows that you have parked and paid correctly. No penalties will be imposed if you do not exceed the expiry time on your ticket by more than 15 minutes. Exceeding this time could result in the issuance of a payment notice for \$30.00.

If you think you have been towed, contact CarePark Ltd, 388-9681.

Maps and more information

For maps and more information, visit <http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/about-our-campus/wellington-campus/maps-and-transport/maps-and-transport.cfm>

Call for papers, Special Issues, Special Sections



SITES: A Journal of Social and Cultural Studies is a peer reviewed, delayed open access journal. We publish 16-20 articles every year in both print and electronic format. Publishing frequency is twice yearly.

Our scope covers multidisciplinary perspectives on the study of societies and cultures of the wider Pacific region. We welcome work from authors in the fields of anthropology, cultural studies, indigenous studies, Māori studies, Pacific studies, sociology, history, gender, linguistics, and ethnomusicology.

We publish empirical studies and theoretical essays, methodological or pedagogical topics that fall within this broad purview. Our journal is trans- and multi- disciplinary and we invite submissions from scholars across a diverse array of disciplinary traditions.

<https://sites.otago.ac.nz/Sites/index>

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Abstracts

Addison, Courtney

Improvisation as innovation: Aotearoa's 'no. 8 wire' culture of conservation science

The native birds of Aotearoa New Zealand are subjects of intensive molecular investigation. The island nation's geographic isolation and history of multiple settlements has left many of its remaining native species in jeopardy of extinction – a precarious position that is further threatened by their exceptionally low genetic diversity. This paper explores the culture of native bird conservation science in Aotearoa, drawing on interviews with researchers working across a number of species, and theorising their practice in relation to science studies work on innovation and scientific cultures. An array of conservation scientists, volunteers, government workers, and non-profits work to protect and preserve native New Zealand birds, through techniques spanning traditional ranging and trapping to newer methods of genetic and genomic analysis. Here, high tech genomic tools sit alongside literally homemade 'DIY' technologies, to produce a type of conservation that is workable in the economic, geographic, and cultural landscape of Aotearoa. By piecing together these variously sophisticated methods and technologies, conservation scientists articulate both a pragmatics and ethos of scientific practice. Their perspectives centre threatened species and seek to compel particular forms of care and attention from wider national publics. This account thus highlights how conservation science comes into being in relation to broader national registers of value, and supports a social order that is explicitly multispecies.

Al-Soukkary, Wael

Impious Camouflage: Managing the Stigma of Atheism in Egypt

Examining the accounts of Egyptian atheists on the ways by which they simultaneously avoid detection and pursue a lifestyle without religious restrictions, in this paper I will argue that, despite the stigma associated with atheism as an identity, some Egyptian atheists are able to live undetected even when pursuing lifestyles or behaving in ways that deviate from traditional notions of Islamic piety. While the pressure to conform to mainstream understanding of Islam and general requirements of piety is immense, there are crevasses through which many Egyptians are able to deviate from these notions without necessarily giving up the faith or being viewed as non-believers. Some crafty Egyptian atheists who are not interested in "coming out" or advocating their ideas tactfully avoid confrontation and detection by pretending to be imperfect Muslims whose behavior and lifestyle, even if is seen as problematic or not up to standards of Islamic goodness, is not necessarily perceived as defiance to Islam but rather a result of a lack of

commitment to religion, exposure to distractions and personal weakness. These accounts offer insights not only into doubt and irreligiosity but also into the ambivalences and contradictions of modern life in Egypt which millions of Egyptians, including but not limited to atheists, struggle with.

Black, Claire

Memeing LGBTQ lives: Negotiating difference and relatability through shared humour

From “LOLcats”, images of cats with intentionally misspelled captions, to “planking” - a trend in which people lay flat on various surfaces and posted photos of this online, humorous and often bizarre internet memes are ubiquitous on contemporary social media platforms. These groups of digital items – including images, text, video and audio – are the epitome of improvisation, as they rapidly spread online and proliferate through parody, remix, transformation. Memes are therefore highly social, but meme research has tended to focus on popular memes and their spread rather than on the people who produce and disperse them, with even less attention to how marginalised groups of people use and diffuse memes. I draw on ethnographic research with LGTBQ 16- to 24-year-olds in New Zealand to explore how memes are used in the imagination and negotiation of LGBTQ collectivities and communities. I argue that “relatability” is central to these processes: these young people create and share memes which draw on “shared experiences” to facilitate affective experiences of recognition and connection. However, this raises questions of whose experiences are foregrounded in popular LGBTQ memes, and how people deploy these memes to negotiate between different levels and kinds of LGBTQ communities.

Blanch, Shannon

Digital Death

Digital technologies and internet access are increasingly shaping the way people live, changing the way they communicate and interact with each other. Individuals are uploading a substantial amount of their information online, creating an online presence or ‘digital self’ (Bassett, 2015). In recent years, new technological developments have made it possible for the online presence to take part in social networks without the offline presence, and to continue online identities and interactions after death. Previously, the deceased have been dependent upon their family and friends to keep their online persona ‘alive’ (Meese, Nansen, Kohn, Arnold, & Gibbs, 2015). However, death planning and management websites (DPAM) allow users to plan and self-manage their post-death digital presence. DPAM websites allow the deceased to be posthumously present and to control ‘authentic’ representations of their ‘digital self’, or more specifically their perception of their

self. While the continued presence may be comforting for some bereaved, for others the imagined posthumous self can be distressing. In this presentation, I discuss my research into why people choose to use DPAM websites, and how they understand the associated risks and benefits of performing their digital self posthumously. This qualitative research uses semi-structured interviews and a digital ethnographic approach. Digital ethnography provides a unique way of examining how the DPAM website users' posthumous presence blurs the boundaries between the online and offline, as well as the living and the dead. It provides insights into the way people improvise their lives even after death.

Cheema, Hina

Muslim Migrant Women's Everyday Accounts of Clothing

The paper draws on the immigrant Muslim women's everyday accounts of clothing as creative, modest, pious, rebellious, and/or sinful practice. It discusses the experiences of these women in bringing deliberate changes in their clothing practices as they moved to New Zealand. Muslim women are generally identified with their headcover, which is mostly associated with stereotypes like oppression, submission, and patriarchy, norms that contradict and negate Western values. This paper shows the experiences of Muslim women as they negotiate these stereotypes in different ways. Clothing is one of those everyday practices that lie amidst conscious and unconscious choices. It is a reflective embodied practice: *"you know it is the same wardrobe for years, with minor modification, but just with little effort I manage to give myself a different look everyday, it is a matter of mix, match, and contrast,"* Aima said. For my research participants, immigrant Muslim women, clothing is about their identity, faith, belonging, creativity, modesty, flexibility, adaptability and their negotiation to move into the negative stereotypes. For them, clothing is about being a pious and a modest kiwi Muslim who carries a positive image of Islam that does not interfere with kiwi values that are in contradiction with Islamic teachings. Within this context, theoretically, the paper investigates how the religious, social and cultural clothing habitus of immigrant Muslim women is (un)consciously being (re)made in the 'everyday' field(s) of modernity and Islam by focusing on their everyday acts of and around dressing up.

Cheva-Isarakul, Janepicha

Building the Bridge and Forging the Way: Stateless Shan Youth's Improvised Educational Journey in Northern Thailand

Migrant education is a dynamic arena where both state and non-state actors constantly seek to defend their space, negotiate their agenda and at times collaborate. For migrants and stateless youth, education is both a proven gateway for upward social mobility and a site of hegemonic reproduction of the state. For the

state, education represents a fundamental instrument to govern and assimilate the “Other”. For diasporic and activist groups seeking to return to homeland, education provides a means to forge belonging and build national consciousness. My 12-month ethnographic research in northern Thailand reveals complex dynamics and the politics of migrant education. It suggests a fluid and permeable boundary between the formal and informal education, and even a degree of collaboration between the state and non-state actors. This paper examines how stateless Shan youth in northern Thailand make use of this porous boundary and improvise their educational journey accordingly to address the resource limitations stemming from their legal status. By documenting how stateless Shan youth navigate between the various formal and informal educational systems to forge their future, the paper provides important empirical contribution to understanding not only stateless youth’s educational pathways, but also their hopes, agency, and identity (re)construction process as they seek those pathways.

Dasgupta, Abhijit

Changing Lives, Changing Gods: Indian Christianity and the problem of ‘conversion’

Indian religious minorities are always studied through pre-defined lenses, one such case is the lens of ‘conversion’ for the Indian Christians. In reviewing such a position, the paper through an ethnographic inquiry examines Hindu women participation in Christian prayer groups in a lower-class ‘para’ (neighborhood) in the city of Kolkata, India. The paper argues “what difference does Christianity makes” to the lives of the Hindu women who absorbs preacher’s interpretation of the Bible messages and teachings of Christ with examples from the everyday lives of the Hindu women? This specific form of encounter leads one to argue, how prayer as a form of sociality in a Christian ‘para’ is functional in bringing changes to the meaning of the everyday sufferings? Can the fluidity of such Bible messages be a way to challenge, improve or alter the sense of ‘self’ without changing one’s ascribed religion? The paper probes these questions with Emile Durkheim’s idea of ‘sacred’ as seen as “contagious” and fluid as it crosses religious boundaries delineating the changing meaning of ‘faith’ and ‘belief’. Revisiting such concepts, the paper reveals different ways Christianity lend meanings to the Hindu women’s sense of ‘self’ and sufferings by borrowing lens of “commitment”, “alterations” from the anthropological literature of Christianity.

Dickie, Cameron

Renegotiating Norms: Men’s Experiences of Studying Towards a BA in Aotearoa New Zealand

This research investigates an aspect of contemporary gender identity on campus at university in Aotearoa New Zealand and has been undertaken for my master’s thesis in Social Anthropology at Massey University. For the past several decades the

proportion of men attending tertiary education in New Zealand has steadily declined, with more recent government reports revealing that only about a third of the university-going population is male, which is significantly lower than other western nations. Within universities themselves, the proportion of men participating in some subjects and qualifications, like the arts and humanities or nursing, is noticeably lower than others, for example, engineering. At this stage, there has been limited academic exploration of contemporary men's university experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand. Based on fieldwork with men studying toward a Bachelor of Arts in 2018, I discuss how men who are taking 'atypical' paths through university education perceive, negotiate, or reform their understood norms of masculinity and maintain their identities as men in majority-female education environments. Throughout this discussion, I reflect upon the wider social and economic pressures which contribute to shaping my participants' understanding of what they 'can or cannot' or 'should or should not' be doing with regards to attaining higher education. I conclude by illustrating how gaining a deeper insight into these men's experiences may help support men who are in the minority in their courses and how more men may be attracted to study a more diverse range of subjects in the future.

Dureau, Christine

An Un/Holy Place: Denominational Conflict and Converted Landscape on Simbo, Western Solomon Islands

When Seventh Day Adventism arrived on Simbo in the 1920s, it met a violent Methodist response. Consequently, the small SDA community fled to a place occupied by the evil spirits of women who had died in childbirth, establishing the village of Tuku ("Closed) there.

For those of Methodist lineage, Tuku remains a place of evil pre-Christian forces that afflict SDA women of reproductive age, the denomination almost literally living in the time-space of Darkness. By contrast, for SDAs, Tuku triumphantly validates their Christian authenticity against Methodist "superstition" and, and is, somewhat paradoxically, a hostile noumenal landscape transformed into a "truly Christian" locale. The history of Tuku reveals improvisation. The conflict might have played out in any of innumerable forms but the happenstance of a small island and the possibility of claiming lineage rights to the land on which Tuku is located shaped the SDAs' successful response to the situation. But successful improvisation delimits the later truths with which people must deal and the strategies they are able to deploy. Accordingly, I further consider improvisation as consequentially conservative by describing how the particularities of contemporary denominational politics are caught in the webs of earlier social pragmatics.

Elinoff, Eli*Improvising on the Periphery: Urbanization beyond the Plan in a Provincial Thai City*

Since 2007, I have been conducting ethnographic fieldwork with the urban poor living in railway squatter settlements in the northeastern Thai capital, Khon Kaen. Across a decade of research, I have traced the ways in which urban growth, new forms of planning, and struggles over citizenship have intersected, reconstituting space and political life along the tracks. Since the 2014 military coup, these railway settlements have been under increasing pressure from the threat of eviction and relocation as the military government has made good on long promised improvements in the national train system. This paper explores residents' responses to that infrastructure project and the slow churning of dispossession associated with it. I describe how residents have taken the forms of planning and political organization that were prevalent previously and used them as grounds to build new lives in the city's dusty periphery, often in ways counter to the expectations of the planners and activists that helped organize these coalitions. I argue that these new settlements were neither spontaneous nor planned, but improvised in the sense that they emerge from complex negotiations, extensions, and transformations of the given terrain. I show that improvisation is never just making things up on the spot, but a practice of reconfiguration that emerges from particular moments in time extending old logics in new ways to remake the city and one's own life in response to an unfolding, uncertain present.

Eyre, E. Noel*The Crisis of the Anthropocene and a Call to Action*

The 'wax' that binds our cultures melts amidst the Anthropocene Icarus effect which draws us too close to Ra. In confronting these issues Cartesian distinctions of objective and subjective activist research need to be laid to rest. Collective cooperation between islands of imagined communities has become imperative to meet these challenges. This process requires the great refusal and negation of the separative one dimensional hegemonic culture of narcissus. Moral or ethical appeal is insufficient for change rather mindfulness in awakening of compassion together with positive disillusionment are essential components for this cooperation. It can be empirically demonstrated that capitalist industrial farming technology influenced changing dietary patterns in New Zealand and the industrialized West and this has significantly contributed global warming. Demythologization of the necessity of these patterns is explored through examining the role of 'attention merchants' in entrenching consumption patterns. Analysis of peak organisation politico-economic lobbying for the status quo demonstrates the forces that must be confronted. Global warming has already resulted in increased migration of economic refugees with reactive nationalistic restrictions on relocation destinations. Humankind's history has

been the story of wandering all over the face of the earth leading to countless diasporas. Reactive nationalism threatens to bring and end to this. We must heed the signs lest our species precipitate the sixth extinction!

Gardiner Barber, Pauline

Philippine Migration as Improvisation in Three Registers

Reflecting on migration histories of generations of Filipinos seeking work in regional labour markets and farther afield, this paper considers how migrants respond to the contingencies and disruptions, as well as the opportunities that nudge what we might productively interrogate as improvisation. Migrants' histories are tied to livelihoods and kin and community relations where questions of class and locality arise; who learns about and can access resources necessary to stage a migration? As plans unfold, national policies prompt the opening and closing of global labour markets. Thus improvisation for migrants is to some degree, a matter of locality, social relations AND political economy. Part II of the paper channels the conditionalities and temporalities embedded in migration policy - as a kind of outsourcing of risk pressuring migrants' improvisation. Part III introduces the improvisation and entanglements of capital relative to the movement, modalities and global ambition of migrants as labour. Improvisation here then has three registers; labour, capital, and mediating nation states who regulate border crossings. To anchor the discussion the paper references the Philippines' extensive history of "labour export" to Canada, now a preferred destination for Filipino migrants across the class spectrum. Likewise, the Philippines has become Canada's top migrant source country across all immigration streams. Standing in for mobile global capital, the paper considers the machinations of Canada's iconic Tim Hortons fast food provider now reliant on Filipinos to staff its numerous franchises. Improvisations are manifold across all three registers. Visual images will guide the presentation.

Gibbons, Ruth

The Life of the Anthropologist: Improvised and Living in the Between (Visual Workshop)

Stoller (2009) suggests as anthropologists our practice of world making is one of living in the between. He suggests that we are never completely in one place as we are always straddling our experiences of being in and out of the field. We improvise and learn to live different lives with our participants which influence our and their lives as our relationships alter between being in the field, at home and being in the field at a distance. As anthropologists, we often have foci and fields which we engage with but we come together sharing our journeys commonalities and differences. Anthropologists live lives where improvisation and organisation feed and bleed into each other as we seek to understand peoples lived experiences. In

these moments we give of ourselves, come up against ourselves, improvise ourselves and emerge with learning and experiences. This participatory lab explores the concepts of improvised lives and the lives of anthropologists actively exploring what it means to be anthropologists who live in the between. Using imaginative, performative and creative practices we explore the improvised lives of the anthropologist and what it 'looks' like. Creative practices - through making, drawing, writing, photography etc... - open the possibility to examine experiences of life. Through the use of collaborative arts practice this lab turns the lens from our participants/ collaborators to our role and through active practices asks the question 'what is the improvised life of the anthropologist?'

Gibson, Lorena

Telling Lives: The Politics of Representation in Proposal Writing and Ethnography

What are the impacts of ongoing efforts to secure funding on orchestral music education programmes operating in low-decile schools in Cannons Creek and Taita? This paper looks at the tensions that arise when music educationalists create narratives about the lives of the young people they are working with in order to be successful in a competitive funding environment. I work with charitable organisations that run orchestral music education programmes for young people in urban areas of high socioeconomic deprivation – many of whom are Māori and Pasifika – with the aim of transforming their lives, their families' lives, and their wider communities. The music educationalists running these programmes rely on donations and competitive grants from government agencies, philanthropic trusts and foundations, and other community organisations, and invest a considerable amount of time and energy in proposal writing. In this paper, I discuss the tensions they experience when application forms ask them to describe the contexts in which they operate and justify why they deserve funding, which can involve telling stories about young people's lives that reproduce the deficit narratives and performances of poverty they are working to challenge. I also discuss how these politics of representation play out in my own visual ethnographic project as I consider how much context is necessary for academic analysis, and how to portray the young people and their families in a way that illustrates social change and lets them retain their dignity.

Goswami, Subhashim

The Making of an Ethnographic Object: Improvisation in Discontinuity

I do agree that in conceptualizing life as an unfolding without a certitude does not imply that life is an arbitrary disposition "without a script." The paper I propose in response to this thought provoking proposition of your conference is a work on method within anthropology which argues how an ethnography or what I choose to

call an “ethnographic object” is an object which is forever in constitution. Much like the way life is an assembly of unchartered splintered shards of various tangential intersections, an ethnographic object too is constituted within the bounds of its own constituent units, forever in a system of arrangement. I argue that an object in its making is disjointed and of the moment and how such a broken, non-linear, non-structured process of making leads to the production of an object in a manner which is not about moving from the “abstract to the concrete” but is actually about “discontinuous improvements.” This conceptual framing has been influenced by Gilbert Simondon who presents this peculiar combination of words discontinuous with improvement to talk about the genesis of a technical object. The ethnographic grounding I use to elaborate on this argument is a play in its making that I followed over a year. If ethnography is the making of a story then my paper is essentially an ethnography of how a story is made and this making I argue is an act of improvisation with its own intrinsic logic but fragmented and discontinuous.

Guesgen, Maïke

Improvising Military Life: The Experience of Presence and Absence During Deployment

Deploying overseas for New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel is seen as a career-defining opportunity, one which puts into action the training and skills acquired by that individual. However, it is also important to understand who is left at home during a deployment, and what their experiences are of life without their family member. This paper focuses on the experience of the presence and absence of military partners. In particular, it investigates the experience of women who have had a partner deploy to Iraq as part of the Building Partner Capacity mission with the New Zealand Army. What I found was that my participants talked about coping and managing the deployment. The way in which they achieved this was through resilience building. They needed to become resilient to this presence-absence change during the three phases of deployment: pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. Focusing on the pre-deployment phase in this paper, I explore how resilience was built through the concept of social capital, the social connections and networks among people. Social capital allowed my participants to maintain positive mental health, support themselves and their families during the pre-deployment phase, and carry on with family and work life although their partners were preparing to leave overseas. Social capital, coupled with the NZDF welfare support services helped with resilience building. Social capital generates resilience. Becoming resilient, and developing resilience in different forms, through the NZDF and through their own strategies, allowed my participants to not only prepare for their partner’s deployment, but to thrive.

Gundersen, Agnete*Lifestyle Migration: Searching for the Good Life*

This paper explores the increasingly growing phenomenon of lifestyle migration among western females in their 30s to 50s, who have moved to Ubud on the island of Bali in Indonesia. While tourism has been a field of study for decades, the concept of lifestyle migration is a relatively new term. Although lifestyle migrants have much in common with tourists, this paper will focus on why the lifestyle migrants left their home country and chose Ubud as their new home environment. In this paper, the extensive variety of alternative activities and practises that the western women perform will be elaborated. Furthermore, this paper will show how the women's search for the good life is essentially due to the three core elements of escapism, new challenges, and freedom.

Haggar, Sarah*The Capacity to Hope: Interfaith Efforts for Creating Peace and a "Good" World*

In this world of global conflict and risk (Beck 2009) questions emerge regarding how people attempt to make the world a "good" place. Coming from the perspective of the anthropology of the good, which seeks to understand people's efforts for, and understandings of, good, I analyse the workings of hope amongst the interfaith movement, which is a manifestation of the everyday efforts of diverse religious people trying to build a peaceful society. I explore how interfaith actors engage with their hopes to work against a spectre of world disaster and seek to pre-emptively protect New Zealand, which they perceive as "good" and "not-yet" enmeshed in conflict, from global events of disharmony.

While Halafoff (2013: 170) argues that the politics of fear that thrives globally can only be countered by a "politics of understanding", I contend that hope is an integral way that people engage with and (re)conceptualise their worlds, helping them create initiatives to develop this understanding. Most often, this reflects the idea of the future as directable and amenable to change. The diversity of beliefs in interfaith begets a diversity of imagined futures and ideas of peace, creating an environment of tense navigation of differences, an improvisatory space characterized by dialogical carefulness and in which contentious topics are silenced, lest they disrupt the visions of peace. From the unpredictable potential for risk, hope emerges as a means through which interfaith actors pre-emptively care for their society, allowing them to believe they have the capability to radically alter their world(s).

Halley, Jessica

Computer code, politics and livelihoods: Exploring the importance of free open source software across Wellington's startup ecosystem

There is a prima facie argument for thinking of computer programming as a strictly solo activity yet working within the unseen realm of computer code demands significant human collaboration. As such, computer code is shaped by the politics of those who write it. Software produced within Wellington's startup ecosystem is entrenched within the collaborative cultural practice of Free Open Source Software. Free open source software (FOSS), is a movement amongst developers to secure open access to source code (the primary specifications of computer programs). Through open access, developers can tweak this code, and redistribute it through other software projects. At its core, this is an improvisational practice, whereby developers must work within an ever-shifting, global code base. Here, a software project cannot be planned out from start to finish, but instead must evolve daily within the code base through which it is embedded. In this technological landscape notions of intellectual property rights are complicated. FOSS provides an example of how liberal values, such as free speech, are embedded both technically and socially in the working subjectivities that surround Wellington's startup culture. Using theoretical storytelling this paper will unpack the cultural practice of FOSS in relation to Wellington-based start-ups. The stories shared by my participants reveal how access to FOSS enables Wellington developers to build their career portfolio effectively, whilst simultaneously participating in redefining modes of liberal freedom.

Hansen, Sara

Improvised Sovereignty

Sovereignty is typically understood as the limits of state power and authority. It is a concept we tend to associate with nation-state boundaries and the constitution of governance of land and populations. In this presentation, I aim to focus on the idea of sovereignty as a process and imperative taking place from below, within the domain of everyday living. Based on research that explores the lived reality of multiculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand I elaborate how sovereignty is experienced, understood and enacted at the grassroots level. The presentation reflects on lived accounts of sovereignty in a multicultural settler nation context and discusses how attention to the improvised and community-based enactments of such concept can provide relevant knowledge to contemporary conversations about multiculturalism, post-colonisation and indigenous self-determination.

Harding, Nina*Theoretical Storytelling as Translation: Practical storytelling in the New Zealand Army*

McGranahan's (2015) concept of "theoretical storytelling" illuminates how anthropologists "tell stories to make theoretical arguments" which involves "analytical and narrative labor". This paper will focus on how this process is, as McGranahan argues, a translation. Theoretical storytelling may require translations not only between the languages of anthropologists and participants but also between different ways of relating to the world. Theoretical storytelling is a form of what Bourdieu (with Passeron, 1990) has called "symbolic mastery": "the making explicit and the formalizing of the principles at work in a practice" (p.46). When I was embedded with a cohort of New Zealand Army soldiers for the first eighteen months of their careers, however, I was struck by how distinct our two ways of engaging with stories were. The soldiers' mastery wasn't symbolic but rather "practical", where principles "manifest themselves only in their practical state" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p.47)- that is, only as they are actually practiced. Conversations largely revolved around present events rather than reflecting on the past, they remained concrete rather than being abstracted, and when stories were expressed they were often acted out (in, for example, skits) rather than verbalised. This paper will explore how, in some cases, theoretical storytelling as anthropology's primary method of making sense of the practices of participants involves a fundamental transformation from their own modes of expression, what Bourdieu (1977) has called "nothing less than a change in ontological status" (p.120).

Herbst, Pauline*Improvised Vitality: Patient's Storied Lives Before and After Hysterectomy*

Hysterectomy is a term that describes the surgical removal of the uterus and the cervix, and sometimes extends to the ovaries (oophorectomy) and fallopian tubes (salpingectomy). In this paper I examine the experiences of nine women scheduled for two different procedures at a New Zealand hospital: laparoscopic and open hysterectomy. I find that the word 'hysterectomy' is more than a catch-all solution to a diagnosis, it is a repository for multiple improvised lives and related storylines that mirror each other. Each houses a 'different' hysterectomy, linked to a past and future self, one with the potential to create life and one without. It is also linked to vitality's opposite, death, in that some hysterectomies are undergone to stem cancer. Vitality is a key theme in women's stories: they desire the vitality denied by fatigue and constant bleeding, and simultaneously fear an enduring "weakness in the joints" post-surgery which is highlighted in the way they frame the differing procedures. Speaking to women before and after surgery has revealed the uterus as the centre of a spiral of social concerns that radiates outwards, improvised stories that give meaning to a disruption of the social self. I present this paper in

conjunction with images drawn by these women illustrating their lives before and after surgery and ask if this disrupts the text or more provocatively, if as ethnographic storytellers and receivers, we intuit and enfold meaning regardless of intent.

Honkasalo, Marja-Lisa

How to Make Truth Happen Through Improvising?

In this paper, my aim is to portray the process of improvising lives by asking how uncanny experiences are appropriated into one's life as meaningful, how they contribute to the making of social relations. The question originates from my experiences in the research project *Mind and Other*, funded by the Academy of Finland. Making use of the Latour-influenced framework of actor-network theory enables me to treat uncanny objects, such as beings, voices, feelings, sensations as actants that influence the world and contribute to the (re)arranging of it. As an anthropologist I do not attempt to make claims in relation to what has 'really' happened to people in terms of the uncanny; instead, I am interested in the effects through which people become to know and express the 'reality' of such experiences. I ask, how does one make sense of social world objects – be they technical devices, human beings, ideas or words – as participants in the course of action. Existence is not an a priori property of any 'thing', but rather things can be claimed to exist only in the sense that they affect the world around them. What I intend to show in this paper is that in the sense of people's everyday life, uncanny actants can be just as effective and, therefore, *real* in shaping one's life. For the purposes of this analysis of improvising I make use of the Latourian idea of an 'event' that relates to a rupture or a happening through which the world comes to 'hang together' in a certain distinct fashion. My research results point to different ways in which uncanny experiences put in motion events in terms of e.g. the self, the social bonds and the world. The concept of an event can replace the notion of a 'discovery', which implies that one can merely discover a fact, which has always been there and exists irrespective of the observer, just waiting to be found. 'Events', in contrast, refer to occurrences or sequences – possibly temporally unspecific and covering a long period of time – in which actants 'set up' the world. 'Events [...] do not discover truth, but they make truth happen' (Sansi, 2013: 453).

Jowsey, Tanisha, and Smith, Richard

Prepared to Care [Film]

How are health care professional students – pharmacy, medicine, nursing and paramedicine – learning to manage the tough aspects of patient care? This ethnographic film documents one powerful training initiative, Urgent and Immediate Patient Care Week. Using clinical teamwork simulation scenarios (with actors and

computerised 3G mannequins), including a car accident scene and diagnosis of a suddenly unwell patient in hospital, we see students from different disciplines perform in difficult scenarios and hear their views on what makes simulation training important to them. The ethnographic method offers observational footage that privileges student voices and student experiences. Students discuss their fears and difficulties in coping with 'patient' situations and managing power dynamics in teamwork. They also discuss the value of training interprofessionally in a simulation environment. Prepared to Care offers a rich journey into the enculturated worlds of New Zealand's health care professionals of tomorrow.

Kernohan, Kirsty

'I thought it a good opportunity to visit a new country': The Collecting Life of Sydney, Countess of Kintore

Collectors of ethnographic objects in the nineteenth century acted within well-established and diverse paradigms of academic interests, market values, and exchange relationships. Sydney, Countess of Kintore (1851-1932), donated her collection from Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas to the University of Aberdeen museums. But Sydney did not set out to be a collector. The objects she collected, and her travel journals offer the story of a woman who finds herself, as a result of her marriage, unexpectedly embarking on a lifetime of travel and colonial residence. It is both a story of conventional aristocratic opportunities to collect, and a story of haphazard object acquisition. Sydney was overwhelmed in the busy markets of Yokohama, Japan; failed to acquire hei tiki in Rotorua, New Zealand; and was impulsive in her purchase of model dishware in Oaxaca, Mexico. Through experience, Sydney came to understand herself as an intentional and astute collector, but the uncertainties of travel meant that her collecting was always improvised. However improvised, Sydney's collecting, interactions with colonised people, and display of her objects in Scotland, were entrenched in colonial inequalities. This paper is a story about how individual actions, which are not necessarily strategic or successful, can perpetuate colonial ideologies on a global scale.

Koo, Bon-giu

Transnational Medical Seeking as Improvisation in Personal Health Care: a Case of Ethnic Korean Return Migrants

This paper will examine the way in which medicine is sought across national borders by some return migrant groups as a way to improvise aspects of their health care. Immigrants' lives are full of improvisation, especially in the early stages, and this is more so the case for the health care sector than any other areas as many studies on immigration have pointed out. As transnational migration has become a dominant

form of international population movement since the 1990s, transnational medical seeking has also become a widespread practice. While these border crossing health-seeking practices are implemented in very systematic ways in some aspects, these in large part are done in an improvised fashion. The paper particularly focuses on such improvisational aspects of transnational health care practices including medications and medical treatment seeking. This paper is based on a research project entitled "Medical Experiences and Strategies in A Transnational Social Field: A Case Study of Korean Ethnic Return Migrants" where transnational medical seeking practices among ethnic return migrants from Germany, Russia and the US are compared. This current paper firstly introduces the whole project briefly to provide some contextual information, secondly describes how some of the ethnic Korean returnees utilise both countries' medical systems as improvisation in personal health care, and finally interrogates the structural factors and logics behind this type of transnational medicine usage.

Kwek, Dorothy

Staying with Failure: An Experiment in Collaborative Learning

This is not so much a presentation as it is a request, and response to the invitation of Mahi Tahiⁱ—an improvisational, collaborative exploration of how a stranger, non-Māori, may begin approach Māori ways of sense-making (I deliberately refrain from the term *Kaupapa Māori*ⁱⁱ). The experiment focuses on the question of how Māori ways of sense-making construe failure (e.g., taken-for-granted categories such as 'property' may be failures in a Māori perspective).ⁱⁱⁱ Tracing construals of failure tracks how Māori modes of sense-making have both persisted and changed through histories of colonialism and resistance. Tracing the meanings of failure allow the discernment of commonalities across competing demands made of Māori ways of sense-making, e.g., demands that they yield legible outcomes for the everyday well-being of Māori communities and individuals, *as well as* demands that they serve as a theoretical resource for critiquing outcome(/governmental)-driven assessments. I begin by situating myself as 'postcolonial,'^{iv} to highlight the specificities of responses to colonialisms. Structure: a preamble, then an appeal to the audience/accomplices to share their knowledge of failure in Māori ways of sense-making, and hopefully, clarification through follow-up questions. With audience consent, I will record and transcribe the experiment for a media source (conventional or nonconventional). Most importantly, *those who have taken part (through comments/critiques/advice/etc.) will, if they wish, share co-authorship, and have a say in editing their statements.* Mounting interest in Māori ways of sense-making, driven by the recent legislative success of *Te Awa Tupua*, is a double-edged sword. This experiment seeks to create an imperfect, improvisational connective space to

explore how adjacent disciplines can learn *from* (instead of simply learning *about*¹) Māori ways of sense-making, while attempting to forestall appropriation.

Lazuardi, Elan, and Bell, Stephen, and Newman, Christy

Co-producing the Ideal HIV Clinic in Bandung, Indonesia

Indonesian HIV intervention programs draws largely on a global health strategy set by international agencies. One of these programs is called 'test and treat' which centralizes on the early and universal diagnosis and treatment for HIV infection, particularly for 'key populations' in the clinic settings. With priority often set by a top-down approach, local clinics are often left with little to improvise and little room to adapt their own values and expectations. Street and Coleman (2006) appropriated Foucauldian perspectives on hospital as 'heterotopia', in which it is perceived as both real and imagined. Hospitals are imagined as a space in which order, governance, and improvement are at work, but they are also permeable in the sense that flexibility in biomedical practices is commonly observed. Based on a study of everyday clinic practices in Indonesian HIV services, this paper will discuss the processes which govern the localization global health strategies. Approaching clinic practices as spaces of order, governance, improvement, and even failure, helps to situate how global health strategy is 'placed' in local contexts, and then enacted by clients. This presentation will also discuss how clients and clinic actors improvise in their engagement within HIV care in the face of austerity and increasing 'moral panic' in relation to HIV and homosexuality in Indonesia.

Lenti, Gianmaria, and Lopez Marin, Bernardo

Between Coercion and Improvisation: The Case of Unauthorized Migrants in Transit Through Mexico

Central American citizens who emigrate from their home countries perform unauthorized journeys throughout Mexico characterized by violence, danger and uncertainty, while having to engage in a constant improvisation of life. Multiple and interconnected forces frequently coerce these people to leave their homes and families behind, often leaving them without possibility to migrate legally or, seek refuge abroad. When the migratory path begins, these individuals abandon their ordinary lifestyles and are compelled to improvise themselves as migrants, struggling to survive the journey and pursue their objectives. When they become 'illegal', migrants in transit enter a terrain of precariousness and risk that make them vulnerable to adverse realities and uncountable kinds of abuse. Within the scenarios of violence incarnated by the marginalized territories of the trans-Mexican routes, Central American migrants improvise life within contexts of death, by engaging in

activities to alleviate the vicissitudes of transit, endure the escalation of governmental oppression and withstand the social consequences encompassing this humanitarian crises. These migrants should not be perceived solely as victims, but as independent individuals who use their creativity and agency to resist institutional oppression. Our study conceptualizes migration as an improvisational strategy employed by many people to make life liveable, when the continuation or dignity of life is threatened in anybody's country of origin. This reality enshrines the individual and collective social struggles that entangle a tacit reclaiming of lost rights, consisting in the improvisational exercising of civil rights that are legislatively defined as a privilege exclusively reserved to citizens.

MacRae, Graeme and Reuter, Thomas

Lumbung State: Improvising Methodologies for Studying the Large and Abstract

We are working on a project on "Food Security/Systems in Indonesia: a moral economy approach". Indonesia is a big country and its food system is large and complex. Food security is likewise a large and somewhat abstract and amorphous concept. How can two people possibly study all this, and how can they do it anthropologically? Have we bitten off more than we can chew (so to speak)? Clearly some methodological improvisation is called for. Our basic approach is two-pronged and at two scales: on one hand a meta-mapping of "the food system", in all its complexity, contradiction and obscurity and, on the other, a series of ethnographic interventions into strategically and/or serendipitously selected parts of the system, in specific locations. So far so good, but how do we link and integrate these disparate levels/scales of understanding? And what about food-security? And where/how does moral economy come into it? We can't improvise our way through this but fortunately, a set of ideas, and metaphors deeply embedded in Indonesian history, culture and political economy are emerging, almost spontaneously, at various points, expected and otherwise, across the system, and that link the most micro- of ethnographic levels with the larger and more abstract levels of analysis. We improvise until it takes on a life of its own.

Manghi, Nicola

Making-up Lives: Tales from the "Refugee Crisis" in Europe

The last 4 years in Europe have been characterized by a significant increase in people migrating from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East. This has resulted in greater pressure on national asylum systems to the point of potential collapse, particularly in the first arrival countries, such as Greece, Spain and Italy. This is what is usually referred to as the "European refugee crisis". People trying to reach Europe through the Mediterranean Sea have to face many troubles on their path: the journey costs a lot of money and carries with it many risks, among which

are human trafficking, exploitation and drowning. When, or rather *if*, they manage to reach the southern European coastline, migrants are forced to ask for asylum, which is the only way for them to legally reside in Europe. As they become framed as asylum seekers by host countries, migrants are confronted with a number of problems, among which is a narrative one: how to tell one's story? Which parts of it are to be hidden, and which are better to be highlighted? What should and shouldn't be said? The narrative aspect of the asylum seekers' challenge to build a life in Europe must not be dismissed as a secondary one, as the possibility for them to legally stay in Europe depends largely upon the "narrative quality" of their application.

Marsanto Prawirosusanto, Khidir

New International Airport (NIA) Yogyakarta, Indonesia

This paper is an early exploration of the development of the new international airport (NIA) in Kulon Progo District, Yogyakarta, Indonesia as one of the presidential prioritized infrastructural projects. One of the promises offered by this project, aside from boosting national economy, is to improve local welfare. NIA, on the one hand, is projected to be a new national symbol of global connectivity and progress. But on the other hand, NIA no longer appears to reflect its promise. Instead, the future airport represents an example of how local people are disconnected from their collective memory on social relations and environment as well as their living resources. To this day, the project has been embroiled by controversies, related to state-initiated land-grabbing, and eviction of local residents and it creates the uncertainty, which led to different forms of resistance. Against this background, it only becomes natural to ask why and how Indonesia, under Joko Widodo presidency, focuses its national agendas on massive infrastructural development since 2016, although it means that the Indonesian citizens might lose not only their 'affective spaces' (Navaro-Yashin 2009) but also their right and sovereignty (Ong 2005). By examining contemporary "internal colonialism" (Scott 2009:13) by the state to its citizens and transformations of the social and material infrastructures (Larkin 2013; Simone 2004), this paper attempts to understand how the district of Kulon Progo is being (re-)imagined as a new peri-urbanscape or the "Yogyakarta's edge" (Harms 2011), and the resulting vanishing ruralscape.

Meher, Mythily

Asking After the Art and Craft of Open-ended Ethnographic Argument

The craft of fieldwork is one of attentive improvisation. The subsequent craft of writing ethnography, certainly for me, has involved conveying my improvising self as part of the field's liveliness, but alongside labours of analysis and argument, which usually introduce forms of closure and evoke a more abiding self: I, the

anthropologist. In this paper, I am interested in lines of argument and forms of ethnographic knowledge that pursue something more open, investing in the uncertainty and contingency of their form. I think, here, of Anna Tsing reminding readers that *Mushroom at the End of the World's* flurry of short chapters mimic “the patchiness of the world [she] is trying to describe” (2015: viii) and “gesture to the so-much-more out there” (ibid). I think too of Lucas Bessire’s claim in *Behold the Black Caiman* that “there are no clear answers: the delirium of ethnographic experience is the central aesthetic and interpretive guide” (2014: xii). Take cue from Tsing and Bessire, my recent work, a study of medical pluralism, was, in part, a portrait of the tensions held in suspense when crafting an ethnography of pluralistic knowledge. It argued for ambivalence towards conclusive forms of knowledge. Taking the form of a critical reflection on recent work, this paper asks after the broader implications of writing ethnography in pursuit of communicating non-linearly, akin to an art form, so as to interrupt and give inflection to conventions of anthropological knowledge.

Merino Ortiz, Andrea

Colombian Former Refugees as Volunteers: Reframing Patron-Client Relations and Exchange Practices

I explore issues of social exchange amongst Colombian former refugees who do volunteering work for each other in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The complex dynamics enacted by those Colombians who also consider themselves to be volunteers show how refugees improvise their cultural practices of exchange during settlement. I argue that they do so by negotiating the meaning and idioms of giving; in utilising the cultural narratives of resettlement – in this case, the language of *voluntariado* [volunteering]– former refugees reframe traditional structures of exchange, whilst simultaneously modifying their meaning and significance to fit their social milieu. Their improvisation of giving is fundamental to how they build sociality and establish networks during resettlement, providing them with material, emotional and relational support. I use two frameworks related to exchange practices: the Maussian notion of the gift and patron-client structures. The latter belongs to a large body of anthropological work that originated in the study of Mediterranean and Latin American societies, and which theorized how power, generosity, gratitude and loyalty can be enmeshed in inter-personal and social relationships (see Wolf 1966; Gouldner 1960; Li Causi 1975; Silverman 1965; Graziano 1975). My interlocutors were embedded in intricate systems of generosity and reciprocity that followed particular types of power imbalances and significantly resembled patron-client relations; dyadic exchanges that carried notions of morality, loyalty and friendship (Gilsenan 1977; Polanyi 1970[2005]; Hicken 2011). Colombians’ moralities and rationales of giving are innovatively reinterpreted, borrowing the language of resettlement to reinstate and improvise traditional forms of patronage amongst resettled Colombians.

Morris, Carolyn, and McTavish, Cassandra, and Tucker, Corrina

Making Something Out of Nothing (or Not Much): or, How Do You Eat, When You Can't Afford Food?

Making ends meet when you have nothing (or very little) is hard work. Based on interviews with users of Palmerston North free-food store *Just Zilch* we examine how people without the means to buy food feed themselves, exploring the material and narrative labour required to achieve a life of dignity in such circumstances. Unable to simply buy food when needed, the breakfasts, lunches and dinners of *Just Zilch* customers are necessarily the outcome of strategic improvisations, assembled from a variety of sources of varying degrees of reliability. Improvisation necessarily implies things or resources to improvise with, and the people whose lives we explore here have few such resources. As such, we ask whether the concept of improvisation is “good to think.

Ortiz, Andrea Merino

Colombian Former Refugees as Volunteers: Reframing Patron-Client Relations and Exchange Practices

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resettlement to reinstate and improvise traditional forms of patronage amongst resettled Colombians.

Paap, Hannah

Racing to Retirement: Understanding Greyhounds' Experiences of Becoming Pets

Animals have always been present within anthropological investigations as tools to better understand humans. However, they have only recently been researched in their own right, as actors making their own lives through interactions. This area of study, known as multispecies ethnography, aims to decentre the human and give non-human animals an equal voice. However, it is much simpler to theorise multispecies ethnography than it is to apply it in the field. There are limits as to how far human anthropologists can perceive, think like, and understand what their animal participants are communicating. As a result, humans still play a central role in multispecies ethnography. While this dilemma is often discussed, there has been little work done on what methodologies might allow us to gain the perspective of our animal participants without relying upon the human point of view.

For my Master's research, I was inspired to try and fill this gap. I sought to understand greyhounds' experiences of their transition from working dogs to domestic pets to the best of my human ability. I developed my own methodology by taking a multidisciplinary approach. I combined ethnography with ethology, the science of animal behaviour, to help interpret greyhounds' body language, body carriage, and vocalisations. Additionally, I used semiosis, "the production and interpretation of signs," to help comprehend how greyhounds come to understand the world around them (Macini, van der Linden, Bryan & Stuart, 2012, p.145). This paper will explore the possibilities and limitations of such multi-disciplinary methods for multispecies ethnography.

Odera, Doreen

Sexuality Through Art by Female Pastoralists: Body Mapping in Northern Kenya

Female teenagers in the Turkana pastoral community in Northern Kenya are born into a culture that has over the decades been rigged to change despite the efforts of the government and NGOs to intervene. Parents have predominantly decided whether their female infants would have an opportunity to go to school or live a traditional life and be prepared for marriage, a few months after their birth. With two distinct female population perspectives on sexuality vary diversely. Menstruation was used as an approach to initiate talks into sexual health perspectives of the female adolescents. Incorporating body mapping as part of data collection broke through the communication barrier and taboo topic, making it inclusive for all the females. In groups of fives each from a distinct group the females

13-18 years of age traced a figure of one of them on a paper, decorated, wrote on and painted it to depict their way of life. This was followed by a discussion centered around the symbols drawn by the females and their meanings. Visually engaging the female adolescents allowed the researcher to better contextualize the sometimes-challenging interviews about sexual issues within the community. Body mapping provided room to improvise and create a comfortable environment for the teenagers to discuss sexuality a topic that is deemed a private affair in that part of the country. This method proves to be both a powerful complement to conducting traditional ethnographic research and an important method for social action.

Palmer, Lise

Improvising Safer Classrooms: How University Lecturers Break Taboos and Reduce Student Vulnerability to Sexual Violence in their Everyday Teaching

Universities are under scrutiny as they are increasingly recognized as sites with high rates of sexual violence. In response, many universities are creating new policies on sexual violence, but this focus on adjudication and punishment fails to influence how the university environment – that is, classrooms and departments – can either make students vulnerable to sexual violence or offer protective factors. Our 2017-2018 action-research project at a Canadian university asked over 50 participants how students, staff, faculty and administrators understand sexual violence prevention, and in particular, its locus of responsibility. We discovered that while faculty were perceived as the most common recipient on campus of a student’s first disclosure about an experience of sexual violence, they were the most unaware of how they might contribute, and the least knowledgeable group on campus about sexual violence in general. Following these findings, we homed in on the classroom as a critical space on campus, exploring what some faculty were doing in their everyday teaching that contributes to sexual violence prevention. These “micro-practices” are improvised in the sense that they tend to be unscripted, unplanned engagements in sexual violence prevention that may not be recognized as such. At the *Improvising Lives* conference, I propose to share our initial research findings using a combination of traditional presentation, story-telling, and -- for those lecturers who wish to try something different and actively imagine how they might integrate some sexual violence prevention micro-practices in their own classrooms – participative improv theatre.

Rivera, Catherine

‘Called to Serve’: Evangelical Millennials, Divine experiences, and Social Justice

This paper explores how a group of Christian young people constructed their understandings of social justice issues such as human trafficking through experiences they had with a divine being, God. Based on ethnographic research conducted for

my MA thesis I outline how lives lived through ‘experiencing of God’ and his ‘broken heart’ led to unpredictable events including the giving up of employment, world travel, and leaving university. These practices of world-making were intimately intertwined with not only embodied experience, but also digital elements, highlighting the role of the Internet in how ideas emerge and influence modes of becoming. Using Bruno Latour’s work on religious experience as a form of knowledge, and other theorists such as Paul Stoller and Michael Jackson, I argue that improvisation of lives is often based on non-rational and seemingly ‘un-modern’ worlds of meaning. In this currently fraught and chaotic historical moment of increasing nationalism and xenophobia, it is imperative that anthropologists learn to engage with alternative knowledge bases, such as embodied experience, in order to ethnographically ‘paint’ the worlds of their participants for others.

Robertson, Paul

Cultural Immersion Trips – “Making do” as a Valid Chance to Engage with the Other

In recent decades, cultural immersion trips to seemingly exotic third-world destinations have become a popular activity for high school and tertiary students groups as they seek authentic experiences of other cultures, and aspire to develop their own spirituality and often through “voluntourism”, contribute “something” to the host societies. India has become one common destination for such sought exposures to world religions. Drawing on literatures on pilgrimage, tourism, short-term mission and development, my doctoral research attempts an anthropological understanding of the many competing and often contradictory dynamics at play in immersion encounters. The fieldwork for this study focused on a school group of 42 participants from a number of New Zealand Catholic schools, who spent six weeks in India, working as volunteers in Kolkata, engaging with NGOs and visiting tourist and sacred sites across the country. The study considered the immersion participants’ experiences and those of hosts. This paper explores the ambiguities of, and contradictions in understandings of what cultural immersion actually is, producing uncertainty in the participants’ and organisers’ desires for more “authentic”, rather than just touristic, encounters. It is in the times of improvisation and having to “make do”, especially while being in liminal space, that the greatest opportunities for cultural exploration and these kinds of understanding present themselves. But how do such “make do” experiences impact on how the participants and the host communities understand and view their worlds and each other?

Robertson, Sally

The Cultural Invisibility of Alternate Sensory Worlds: Improvising a Life With Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a neurosensory condition in which what is felt in the body is amplified by a hypervigilant nervous system. Despite increasing aetiological evidence of the underlying mechanisms, its validity is still contested by some medical professionals, and it remains a controversial condition within the practice of Western biomedicine. In my ethnographic work I have sought to elucidate the sensory experiences of those living with fibromyalgia; what it means to live a life with a condition that is poorly understood and how people navigate the world with pain, fatigue and sensory sensitivity. The condition often means having to re-evaluate one's life and make new adaptations, leave or change employment, reduce social activities and attempt to explain one's limitations in the context of a condition that is largely culturally invisible. In this presentation I use narratives provided by my research participants, and some photographs they have shared depicting their sensory world, in order to convey what it has meant for them to improvise a life. I situate these experiences in the wider social and historical context of how fibromyalgia has come to be understood, and how this context has created an atmosphere of ambiguity for both doctors and patients. Cultural notions that separate mind and body have been central to these developments. Using a neuroanthropological framework, and considering alternate cultural understandings of bodily experience, I also briefly suggest some possible ways forward that may reduce the level of precarity and uncertainty that many with fibromyalgia currently live with.

Scarth, Bonnie

'If nothing else, I have power over my own mortality': Improvising Life from Suffering and Suicidality

The quote in the title to this abstract illustrates a significant theme across many of the 49 unstructured and semi-structured interviews that were carried out in the USA and NZ between November 2015 and June 2017, as part of the ethnographic fieldwork for my (current, in-progress) PhD thesis. Suicidal participants, who had usually lived with significant suffering and survived suicide attempts, often perceived their suicidality as a form of agency and resistance to micro and macro powers. Medicalization and the pathologizing of trauma tends to render suicidality as an inherently individualized problem, which casts those experiencing suicidality as mentally ill victims. While many participants certainly practiced agency *within* this (medicalized) model, it rarely allowed for participants' improvisations of healing and recovery on their own terms. The meanings that participants gave to their suicidality and suffering were frequently at odds with the medicalized discourses of suicide and

suffering, and yet, these meanings were often what gave them the impetus towards hope and recovery: in essence, improvising life in its closeness to death. By using empirical data from my fieldwork, and the emerging theory of critical and (post) suicidology (including the anthropology of suicide) I will demonstrate why it is crucial to incorporate suicidal and suffering persons' own meanings and understandings of suicidality and suffering into the field of suicidology.

Shah, Faruk

Gendered Politics: Family Planning and Reproductive Health in Rural Bangladesh

Drawing on ethnographic data, this paper examines how gender inequality is embedded in family planning, both at state and domestic levels in rural Bangladesh. Family planning is an essential way of controlling high population growth in over-populated Bangladesh, as perceived by both the local people and the state. To this end, the state has adopted several policies and programs to bring the population under control, as well as to ensure reproductive health and rights, fulfill women's desires and their need for freedom of choice, and to eliminate the use of discrimination and violence towards women. These provisions are very much in line with the attributes of modernity that assure development, equity and justice. However, as this ethnographic study shows, the current population control approaches and reproductive healthcare provisions for women do not meet all the government obligations. Rather, the local practices have deepened gender inequality in society. I observed that the family planning program undermines women's voices, fails to understand their needs, and reinforces the patriarchal structures. The practices largely work against the freedom and rights of women to reproductive health as a result of the top-down approach and focusing the responsibility on women. This ethnographic account strengthens our understandings of how patriarchal social norms, cultural values and state policies intensify structural violence in the modernist pursuit of population management. The contradictory and discriminatory practices regarding population control put women's reproductive health at risk and produces further social tensions and social suffering among rural women.

Shandil, Vicky

The Dancing Other: Roots, Rituals and Performance of Lahanga Naach

Lahanga Naach (Skirt Dance) is an IndoFijian cultural performance with direct links to the generation of Indian indentured labourers recruited to work in Fiji by British colonisers from 1874 to 1920. This IndoFijian practice incorporates music and an individual or group of dancers. What distinguishes Lahanga Naach from other IndoFijian folk performances is the inclusion of cross-dressed or transgender males in the form of dancers. This paper presents the roots of Lahanga Naach based on

narrations of past and present performers. This paper argues that while Lahanga Naach began in Fiji through the practice of crossed-dressed males dancing in social gatherings, today all its most prominent performers identify as transgender. Lahanga Naach has in a sense become the vehicle for these individuals to negotiate their gender identity publicly while also using Lahanga Naach as a form of employment. This paper tells the story of a few of these performers, focusing mainly on the challenges of embodying a fluid identity in a predominantly masculine and patriarchal social setup. In the process of these narrations, the paper will also describe the nature and context of these performances as well as its social and cultural significance. The paper concludes that in addition to its historical value, Lahanga Naach is now also a site of gender rebellion and performativity.

Sissons, Jeffrey

Improvisation and the Ethics of Tapu: Letters to a Taranaki Shaman

Had Michel Foucault been a Maori scholar, steeped in his particular tribal history, the most obvious focus for his genealogical project would have been the concept and practices of tapu. Instead, as a French scholar, steeped in European history, he chose to focus his last genealogical studies on sexuality and the desiring Christian subject. One of the most significant conceptual outcomes of these investigations, however, was a very useful distinction between ‘morality’, as a code or system of laws and ‘ethics’ understood as the practices through which Subjects work on themselves and relate themselves to moral codes. In this paper I draw upon this distinction and the general analytic framework that Foucault proposed to illuminate a particularly intense ethical moment in the history of Maori tapu. This plateau of intensity occurred in Taranaki, between the years 1857 and 1860 when, after several years attempting to ritually decontaminate the landscape and render its sacred sites free from tapu, Post-Christian Maori focussed their attention on improvising correct conduct (ritenga) in relation to these sites. They did so through written correspondence with a local *tohunga*, or shaman, Tamati Te Ito, the leader of a movement whose members referred to themselves ‘Kai Ngarara’ (‘Lizard Eaters’, or more correctly, ‘Demon-eaters’).

Spray, Julie

What Does Resilience Look Like? Self-harm and Sociality in Aotearoa

In psychology, resilience frameworks seek to avoid a deficit model of the relationship between adverse circumstances and poor outcomes by focusing on the protective factors that help young people to mitigate risk and achieve success. Yet exactly what resilience is, and how it can be identified, measured, and fostered, are still subjects of wide debate. An ongoing problem is one of structure and agency; resilience discourses can place responsibility on the individual for their own wellbeing and be

co-opted as an ideology that is used to justify inaction, while models that focus on 'protective factors' tend to erase agency or risk environmental determinism. Recent socio-ecological models attempt to resolve this tension by viewing resilience as practices of 'navigating and negotiating resources' in culturally specific ways (Ungar 2011). However, most resilience research to date has involved large-scale quantitative studies and there are few descriptions of how this socio-ecological version of resilience plays out in the context of daily life. In this paper I ask, how can ethnographic research complicate assumptions about what resilience looks like? Based on fieldwork at a South Auckland primary school, I consider the increasingly common practice of self-harm, which is usually framed as a symptom of dysfunction in contemporary psychology. I analyse how self-harm functioned for these children as a socially recognised embodied expression, and argue that considering children's practices as 'accommodations' may more accurately conceptualise the many improvised social processes that play out in the space between vulnerability and resilience.

Thi Thuy Binh, Tran

Improvised Incarnation of Mediums in Len dong - a Ritual Practice of Dao Mau

After facing legal sanctions and socially stigma for six centuries, Dao Mau - an indigenous Vietnamese religion - was officially recognized as the world's intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO on December 1, 2016. How can it be switched from an evil religion to a national treasure in the mainstream discourse? What encourages its practitioners to be martyrs? The paper explores its internal power empowering its believers to overcome public ostracism through an improvised ritual practice - *len dong*. With the aid of various sensory elements such as the strong colors of the costumes and offerings, the music and hat van (invocation hymns), dances, and others stimuli, *len dong* induces moments of ecstasy in connecting mediums with the souls of male and female deities under the support of congregation. After the bodies of mediums incarnate spirits of all genders, mediums feel powerful and enjoy the power of deities that they do not gain in their daily lives. I argue that the moment that the soul of spirits and their empty body become one helps mediums acknowledge another beautiful world and then embraces their involvement with Dao Mau as their destiny. Besides that, the spiritual connection between the medium and participants helps themselves release their stress or concerns, creating temporary joy or consensus. Thanks to that, its practitioners balance their mental health and guide their behavior in the mundane world. In conclusion, mediums flourish their ritual practices in order to gain their aspirations in a vivid religious world.

Townsend, Amie*Suffering and Sacrifice: Narrating Experiences of Human Trafficking in the Philippines*

The Philippines is known as a 'source' location for human trafficking, and in Mindanao I found that multiple forms of trafficking were common. During five months of fieldwork, I conducted life-narrative interviews with people in Mindanao who had experienced various forms of human trafficking. Within the life narrative accounts, many participants referred to the idea of sacrifice – "*sakripisyo*" – as a way of explaining and making sense of their experiences. In this paper, I consider the meaning of *sakripisyo* [sacrifice] in my participants' stories as a historically-derived trope, and as a site and tool for improvisation. In response to unexpected forms of hardship, long-held ideals are embodied and enacted in new ways that both reinforce and extend their relevance as explanatory narratives. The work of improvisation thus also suggests Levi-Strauss' idea of *bricolage*, at the point where shared stories are integrated and enacted in daily life. People use the stories, language, and symbols available to them to make sense of and improvise their current realities; however, in doing so, these images are transformed and altered to encompass and describe contemporary life at the moment of improvisation. In tracing the concept of *sakripisyo*, I argue that its role in my participants' lives includes both symbolic violence and embodied meaning and identity that transforms and transcends violence.

Trnka, Susanna*When is Self-Care (Not) Enough? Health Apps and Young People's Views on Physical and Mental Wellbeing*

This presentation examines how young people use digital technologies to understand and promote physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Based on interviews with 70+ New Zealanders, aged 14-24, I examine how health app use shapes young people's experiences of themselves as agentive subjects, responsible for shaping their own, and others', mental and physical health. Considering how app use opens up new avenues for constituting and tracking health, I outline how digital care technologies recast the temporality and spatiality of healthcare, expanding the range of possible interactive exchanges between self and other and reconfiguring young people's sense of agency and control over their own health, the wellbeing of others, and the technologies they employ. I argue that by collapsing the temporal and spatial relations of health improvement activities, apps both expand opportunities for engendering advanced liberal ideals of self-responsibility, while also promoting the feeling that there is no escape from them. The result is that for many young people, having a sense of responsibility and control over their physical and mental wellbeing comes to be calibrated against not only the inherent inter-sociality of care but also the "demands" they feel that technological itself is making upon them. In such a climate, there is a need, I suggest, to reconceptualize not only

what young people consider constitutes mental, emotional and physical “health,” but also the very meaning of “self-responsibility” itself.

Uhlmann, Anja

The influence of ‘Intimate Moralities’ in Young Cook Islands Women’s Relationship Construction Processes

“Do not ask! The whole last night was a mistake. It was not even planned that I would go out. I wanted to go home after work and sleep but a colleague just persuaded me to go to the club. I even had to borrow clothes from her and then I met that guy. It was not planned! It just happened”, a 22-year old Cook Island woman told me when I asked her where she got her love bite. She spoke in a low voice and I could see how embarrassed and ashamed she was about what she did. At this time, I decided not to ask further questions. It sounded spontaneous, coincidental, an individual case highly loaded with moral perceptions. But, indeed, after hearing this kind of story quite often I started wondering whether casual sexual contacts are really improvised or if they have to appear “planned improvised”.

Drawing on fieldwork in Rarotonga/Cook Islands, I explore how historical patterns and social institutions such as church, state, society and media establish, shape and convey rules, norms, attitudes and therefore moralities. These ‘intimate moralities’ regulate human behavior and promote a social environment in which particular kinds of intimacy are stigmatized, sanctioned or dissolved while others are encouraged. These discourses provide the framework for considerations about how ‘intimate moralities’ inform Cook Islands women’s relationships, how they are negotiated, transformed and challenged by Cook Islands women and how they influence women’s practices of living and negotiation in the planned – “planned improvisation” continuum.

Wardell, Susan and Fitzgerald, Ruth

Dialogical Sense-making in the (Digital) Public Sphere: Citizenship, Care, and Disability

Social media represents a new ‘public sphere’ in which meanings are shared, negotiated and contested. The researchers present a case study of the (2015) story of 'Baby Leo' - born with Down Syndrome in Armenia, to an Armenian Mother and Kiwi father - which received extensive media attention and debate online. Through discursive & dialogical analysis of Facebook comments on the media coverage, we examine the circulation of ideas around 'natural' (gendered) qualities of parents, in relation to parental rights and care responsibilities. Ideas about cultural difference and relativism, especially in relation to disability, intersect with this. We discuss the vernacular articulation of national and cosmopolitan ideas of 'home' and ‘welcome’.

We highlight counter-debate around belonging, state responsibility and care, invoked variously in relation to geography, biology, family, and national values of altruistic responsibility, especially in the cases of vulnerable people/s. We discuss the relationship of this to other salient socio-political debates around refugees and immigration, and prenatal screening debates, including the advocacy of groups such as Saving Down's (publicly and in their case to the ICC) for the rights of people with Down Syndrome, also based in discourses of citizenship. Our paper explores multifaceted and often improvised processes of sense-making around these topics in digital spaces. In doing so we also engage in a methodological discussion about the potential for applying Bakhtinian theory to analysing social media, including the idea of chronotypes, words of authority, words with loopholes, and dialogical voices.

Webster, Stephen

Getting to Know the Tuuhoe 1972-2018

In 1986 I took leading theorists of experimental ethnography to task for reification of the genre. Following George Lukacs, Walter Benjamin, and Raymond Williams, I argued that the new awareness of an ethnographic genre was fetishising a new form of doggedly ahistorical cultural naturalism, doomed either to resignation or aesthetic idealism. Instead, I urged pursuit of a critical form of realism that exposed the contradictions of the material historical context of the ethnographer and his or her hosts and motivated them to change the encompassing society for the better (Webster 1986). Later I extended my argument following Brecht's, Benjamin's, and Adorno's historical materialist critiques of surrealism (Webster 1990), and I have recently suggested this as an antidote to some current 'ontological' fetishisms of Maori indigeneity. Now in my nostalgic dotage, I wonder if my unpublished attempts in the early 1980s to write such emancipatory ethnographies of my family's experiences with the Tuuhoe lived up to the demands of my own critique. I suspect that they did not, but intend to revise them so that they do. However, I am still given pause by Phyllis Herda's terse appraisal in 1983, in the Anthropology tea-room after I had read my account of Tama Iti's trial and the Springbok tour for the weekly staff and graduate seminar: "Well *that* was a bit like a B-grade movie..." Nowadays we also have to worry about populist confusion of reality with such movies.

Worth, Tim

Fragments of a Border Camp

This mixed-media installation is the culmination of a research project carried out in Calais, France, soon after the dismantlement of *The Jungle* refugee camp in November 2016. The photo below demonstrates a prototype of the installation. One aim of this piece was to experiment with alternative modes of presenting anthropological insights, bringing critical art and anthropology into a shared sphere

in order to “foment dissensus” (Mouffe 2007). This aim is intimately linked to the thematics of the piece; seemingly disparate components have been pulled together to express the incommensurability of migration policy and media portrayals on the one hand, and the lived experience of migrants on the other. This piece therefore communicates notions of “improvising lives” in numerous ways. First, it seeks to convey the lives of migrants who experience often volatile and dangerous living circumstances precariously erected on the margins of the French State - the quintessential borderland. This simultaneously mundane and exceptional condition of life is captured in the assortment of objects taken from the *Jungle* site - teargas canisters, a bible, toothbrushes, and beer cans, to identify just a few. But these tangible elements of the story are intentionally complicated by distorted images and sounds. The objects and images are subverted in the same way life stories are through state policy and media outlets. Finally, the piece is a reflection on issues of representation that the researchers faced, especially when experiencing the camp after dismantlement. Thus, “Fragments” relates as much to the fragmented lives of migrants in Calais as to the methods employed to communicate those lives.
