Rethinking Euro-anthropology: part three. Early career scholars forum

In a state of repair

The very fact that this third take on a Forum dealing with Euro-anthropology has been organised shows that the original endeavour initiated by the editors of *SA/AS* responds to an actual need – reflecting on the current condition of the discipline, the impacts of funding and politics, and the directions in which anthropological practice is travelling. Pro-actively, we can also contextualise it as filling a void, or even as fixing up something that seems to be broken. Nothing new as such, anthropology has gone through many crises; yet in periods when the basis of our discipline is being shaken, or when the practice – as traditionally understood – is put at risk, anthropologists feel a need to retreat and engage in dialogue with peers in order to build up a stronger scaffolding and agree on a politics of maintenance (Ingold 1997).

Otherwise, the intensity of the debates reflects what Alessandro Testa calls 'a state of unrest' in his contribution, as much as it is a measure of the current vitality of European anthropology. The changes that our discipline has been undergoing over recent decades have accelerated, affecting the methodologies used, the themes being addressed and the labour conditions of practitioners (cf. Baiburin 2004). By re-opening the debate about anthropology's *reason d'être*, this Forum containing 15 contributions (including this introduction) also questions the very possibilities of critique inside the field of anthropology at, with and through Europe. Hence, following the previous Forum debates by senior scholars, it seems like a suitable time to recruit a few responses from younger colleagues, the generation of early career anthropologists as it were. Yet such an idea – included in the email used to invite the authors of this Forum – was itself called into question after Valerio Simoni challenged the very possibility of guaranteeing such a career these days. One might find a job – yet not necessarily in academia, replies Laura Hirvi. She reminds us that anthropologists employed outside the academy should not be cut off from influence on the discipline, and concludes that: 'As much as the world needs anthropologists working inside universities, it also needs those working outside and with universities'.

Drawing on the widespread sense that the generational issue needs more discussion, Martin Frederiksen connects this matter with the expectations formed about the future and changing temporal frames. In the same vein, Livia Jiménez observes that social acceleration is also happening in anthropological practice, exemplified in shorter fieldwork periods and the growing levels of stress and anxiety. She advocates, therefore, for practising a slower science and not giving away the intimate dimension represented by ethnography. Certainly, academia is a distinct world within society, yet a part of it, also subjected to wider social phenomena. Accordingly, participants have considered various questions concerning the power and economic dynamics implicit in our

research. For instance, Mariya Ivancheva criticises the model of an entrepreneurial university, which produces a growing number of impoverished, restless, hypermobile academics – living with minimum income but under maximum pressure for visibility.

Also Lili di Puppo picks up on this matter, noting that the involuntary migration of Western scholars to Russia, China or Singapore is shaping conventional views of centre and periphery in the production of scientific knowledge, creating new circuits of exchange and blurring of the boundaries between fieldwork and the phases of data analysis and writing. Our own practices of knowledge production are historically and geographically located; this not only involves philosophical traditions and modes of training, but also sources of funding and structural asymmetries. In his statement, Damián-Omar Martínez finds that anthropology is in a privileged position to observe and describe not just others, but also the inner workings of academia and its fields of study. Moreover, he calls for a contextualisation of the terms 'centre' and 'periphery', since the realities that they refer to have become more complex, with multiple trajectories and niches. In an interconnected world, relations of core and periphery reveal new dependencies that reach both ways.

Discussions on the production and circulation of ideas unequivocally lead to the awareness of how knowledge and power are connected. After all, hegemony is established through the definition of fields of inquiry – articulated through the institutional mechanisms that fund research, delineating what is relevant and which approach/method should be applied. Eventually, the marketisation of academic life generates new forms of authority; 20 years ago, when people spoke of 'the university', they were referring to the faculty; nowadays, they are referring to the administration. One of the reasons for the present-day errant status of European anthropology is that it shares many of the same problems, doubts and challenges of the European Union as a socio-political project. Europe contains many diverse cultures, which are not simply bounded by nation-states; and none the less, still we need the nation-states to ensure and facilitate certain rights and services. Current developments in the continent are putting pressure on the possibilities for accommodating social and cultural differences, deploying the past to reinforce antagonisms and resentments, including the return of nationalism and the construction of cultural 'others' (Fabian 1983). Drawing on the assumption that the third world has come home (boomerang-like) to postcolonial Europe, Ana Gutiérrez reckons that we might not always be asking the right questions and that doing anthropology of Europe implies posing 'Europe' itself as a problem.

Whatever might be considered European is first and foremost processual, in the making, and we are giving shape to it within this Forum (an exercise that unavoidably involves questioning the work done by our predecessors). Indeed, several contributors treat the work of anthropologists in a problematic way, criticising anthropology's production of distance (Starzmann) and suggesting that the discipline has been too complacent and has contributed to create the actual state of affairs. Specifically, Kacper Pobłocki reprimands the promotion of corporate managerial values drawn from the world of private-sector finance, and the need to become more active in fundraising and presenting our work as fundamentally different from the work of others. 'Commodification of knowledge is doing extraordinarily well these days', he concludes in a vein similar to recent discussions (Corsín Jiménez 2008; Wright and Rabo 2010).

Le pas au-delà

In the first Forum, Adam Kuper asks what anthropologists read, adding that more than other social scientists, anthropologists frequently appear in novels – characterised either as a hero or as a pathetic figure. We could easily twist his rhetorical question into an invitation for savouring the honey of cross-disciplinarity, leaving behind unilinear conducts of inquiry, opening ourselves to that which emerges from the borderlands of academia. After all, the history of anthropology is a shifting pattern of recreations and its development involves engaging with a certain edge, if not contamination and bricolage. Once, Lévi-Strauss even described anthropology as a practice that had grown out of various leftovers of other disciplines (see Tax *et al*. 1953: 349). And as Rapport and Overing foreground, anthropology 'has never been comfortably placed within certain categories of disciplinary knowledge, and, indeed, has seen its project as the exploration, and the calling-into-question, of conventional and disciplinary divisions as such' (2000: 305).

Our discipline also has its particular lifeways, and now seems to be the momentum for stretching the limits of academic discourse and practice – arguably being ill-suited to the task of analysing new social phenomena (Peacock). The development of new modes of associative work is indeed one of the key points of Daniel Miller's contribution to the first Forum. There, he asks for more comparative and collaborative practices: 'Something this discipline has always promised but rarely delivered on'. He also makes a request for a stronger commitment to popular dissemination, for instance by making use of social media (which certainly broadens the visibility of the research of many young scholars, yet also complicates our work and requires a more intense engagement outside the academy).

Overall, the authors brought into the debate complementary approaches, with two aspects latent in most of them: the precarisation of (academic) work in Europe and how anthropology exists in a new era (matters that remain directly interwoven with political and generational debates). As you will read in this Forum, the contributors have put their emphasis on critical aspects of labour conditions, professional vulnerability, new technological options for ethnography (Wadle), as well as growing inequality and divisions (Gutiérrez). Yet this Forum aims at being more than a stop on the way or a punctual intervention; it hopes to take a 'step/ not beyond' (Blanchot 1992), using the prescribed platform to call for another limit, open new possibilities and make visible problems that have stronger effects on the younger generation.

Most of all, this Forum invites us to rethink how anthropology can contribute to the political present. As Maria Theresia Starzmann insists: 'Anthropological knowledge remains not merely descriptive but generative of specific practices and worldviews'. By putting the emphasis on the social conditions in which anthropology is being practised, this third Forum lays out a number of questions such as: can anthropology contribute to robust civil society? Shall we understand knowledge as part of a project to transform society or simply investigate human relations as an object of study? And shall we bind our findings and the actual needs of people together? These challenges are not only cognitive and theoretical, but also political. They were tangentially discussed in the previous Forums; for instance, Marie-Claire Foblets asks for a rapprochement between anthropologists and those entrusted with the responsibility of taking enforceable

decisions in various fields of policy-making, giving decision-makers the opportunity to draw on anthropological reflections and ethnographic methodologies.

Also, in the second Forum, and drawing on the assumption that European anthropology is diversified, Sharon Macdonald invites us to investigate what is meant by diversity, including how we imagine Europe and belonging. Nowadays, more and more anthropologies dwell on the margins of their homes and discipline, and within disparate systems of institutional support. Following that debate, Perry Sherouse points to the absence of any mutually agreed definition of Europe and its borders, and reminds us that Europe is not simply a place, but is also an idea and a vision, and as such is a referent for other parts of the world. This observation brings to my mind Máiréad Nic Craith's remark questioning whether we really should seek out singularity on a continental basis, and makes me think whether a loss of distinctiveness could be considered negative *per se*.

Moreover, if for the senior generation it was important to think of how the shifting relations between the elements traditionally considered European are changing epistemological traditions, for us, the most explicit concerns seem to be the attachments that people develop by moving from country to country, uncertainty, the pressures of individual production, the need to establish new networks of collaboration that compensate for the short time for fieldwork, the global scale of our inquiry, new forms of communication and the recalibration of anthropological practices as a result of technical changes. The heterogeneous selection of contributors demonstrates not only the diversity implied within European anthropology, but also how the values of these regional categories are becoming increasingly insufficient to explain our life trajectories and work. Note, for instance, that most of the authors included in this Forum are living in a different country from the one where they were born. Not surprisingly, Simoni engages with Evthymios Papataxiarchis's claim 'in favour of a European union of anthropological localities', by underlining 'the ambivalence of locality': 'beyond its brighter sides – we may need to confront the more exclusionary biases of its internal politics', eventually finding 'two competing logics – that of mobility and internationalisation on the one hand, and that of privileging the locality and those who belong to it on the other'. Polyglotism and the simultaneous attachment to multiple places is becoming a norm rather than an exception. Hence, when talking about European anthropology it is pertinent to ask: where, how and who in Europe (UK included)?

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Precarious anthropology

I am an early career academic on a fixed-term contract who researches the neoliberal university and an Eastern European anthropologist who studies Latin America and Western Europe. This position allows me to articulate certain inequalities that the *SA/AS* Forum debate about European anthropology should address.

The questions of long fieldwork and meaningful scholarly dialogue are terribly important. Yet, Adam Kuper's insistence that in the pursuit of 'interesting conversations' we should resist pragmatic concerns shows a worrying position-blindness that obscures structural analysis. Fieldwork is always precarious. Unlike previous generations, nowadays anthropologists are not granted a permanent well-paid job on return from the field. In competition with graduate programmes in the USA, the standard European three years' funding – secured by a few lucky students – is not enough to accumulate the publications, fundraising and teaching portfolio needed for a permanent job. Fieldwork is squeezed between endless grant and job applications, precarious teaching arrangements and growing publication pressures. Instead of engagement in meaningful conversation, one has to master skills of self-management, self-promotion and cut-throat competitiveness.

Landing a job, one does not enter a community of scholars. Conversations with busy employers and colleagues are confined to deliverables, evaluation and audit requirements, gruesome workloads and individualising promotion criteria. Academic outreach – another commercialisation benchmark – is increasingly confined to 'industry–academia collaboration': a smoke-screen that stands for hiring research students and staff to deliver high-quality research to private industries for minimal pay. Open Access articles in refereed journals should not be confused with 'outreach' either: affordable only to wealthy universities, this practice stratifies scholars and sponsors commercial publishers.

Celebrating the eligibility of anthropology for ERC and other EU grants conceals further inequalities. Instead of investing money in long-term research strategies, permanent positions and student stipends, university administrations harness scholars into a vicious cycle. EU agencies only fund a limited number of projects mostly from the wealthiest countries in the European Economic Area (Anonymous 2015). Human sciences get squeezed out of the 'target' areas (Lynch and Ivancheva 2015). Enormous material and human resources invested in application – unaffordable to peripheral universities – defy a cost-benefit analysis (Blommaert 2015). Funding goes to those with fundraising and publication portfolios, which scholars in peripheral institutions and countries cannot generate due to language and location barriers (Graham 2015).

Students pay fees to study at 'top schools' with 'excellent' scholars. Managing hefty research grants, the latter have no time for teaching or research. Students are thus taught by members of the precarious teaching staff: often women with care commitments, who increasingly leave academia (Lynch and Ivancheva 2015).

In this conjuncture, peripheral universities usually enter funding bids as token partners. In anthropology, they feature to provide fieldwork access and cheap research staff to academics from core countries. 'Local' scholars are often quoted as informants – rather than equal partners – in a scholarly dialogue. Generalisable knowledge is a privilege of intellectuals from core countries or institutions (Lomnitz 2001). Anthropologists who come from peripheral countries and do not do anthropology of home are recognisable only as 'ethnic subjects', informants to Western academics, and underpaid researchers for lucrative institutions. A cynical example: in 2014, Oxford's Centre for Migration, Policy, and Society, COMPAS, offered short-term low-paid flexible research 'opportunities' with no benefits, office space or authorship rights, to graduate-level trained anthropologists to interview 'irregular migrants' from peripheral countries (Ivancheva 2015). Persistent rigid spatial hierarchies mark the 'convergence between East and West' – or North and South – in Europe and outside.

And speaking of beyond Europe: while writing these lines, victims of war and economic warfare are washed up on the shores, hindered by barbed-wire borders or sleeping on the streets of an ever more exclusive and divided Europe. Anthropologists are in the unique position to expose the structural and symbolic inequalities that (neo-)colonial Europe has created, accommodated or exported and to help those looking for refuge articulate their necessities. Anthropologists can both do research and intervene in exclusive spaces of educated and power elites, and in the streets of rebellion. A commitment to equality and justice is needed not through shallow symbolic gestures that mask continued subordination of informants and colleagues. A material and symbolic reparation is urgent, inside and outside the discipline.

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Mobility, locality and precarious academic paths

When invited to contribute to this forum from the perspective of an early career anthropologist, an immediate question that came to mind had to do with the current possibilities for having such a career, and what it would look like. The reflections I present are based on my own academic trajectory in the UK, Portugal and Switzerland in the course of the past decade, and on discussions with colleagues sharing similarly precarious structural positions in what may be called, following Papataxiarchis, 'the international "arid zone" of post-docs and short contracts' (2015: 333). I am also guided by a broader interest in issues of mobility, crisis, value and in shifting notions of what makes for a good life. In the Forum, Gregory already called on turning 'the anthropological gaze' onto ourselves and our academic contexts, suggesting that such an anthropology of institutional politics 'would not be a pretty sight to behold'. At stake here are '[t]he political and economic conditions in which anthropology is being practised' (Green and Laviolette 2015: 331), a theme addressed by several contributors, and which leads us to consider the current context of economic crisis and increased precarisation of work in Europe. These conditions of uncertainty and the resulting 'breakdown of expectations' (Narotzky and Besnier 2014) they provoke strongly affect PhD graduates in Europe, as they chase the mirage of a permanent academic position.

In the European context, dominant institutional discourses celebrate a politics of academic mobility, a scenario that contrasts with the tightening of borders and prescribed immobility of less valued migrant 'others' (Glick Shiller and Salazar 2013). The prevailing trope is that of the self-entrepreneurial individual who carves a career moving from country to country, accumulating experience in different academic contexts and embodying the cosmopolitan scholar who is comfortable living anywhere for as long as required. What is often neglected are the attachments that people develop in a given locality, including the friends they make, the families they may want to build and the manifold allegiances and obligations that tie them to a place. When set against the background of the imperative of mobility and anthropology's embracement of its metaphors (Dawson), the desire of 'making home' somewhere sounds almost a bit old-fashioned, if not epistemologically suspicious. Seldom addressed in institutional settings, this has nevertheless become an issue of concern for many young anthropologists I know, particularly when there seems to be no end in sight to a life of short-term contracts here and there, and there, and there…

Several contributions in this Forum highlight the importance of locality, of the place in which anthropology is made in Europe. 'Location matters' (Green and Laviolette), and there are calls for recognising such diversity as an enriching source of innovation. 'Pluralistic conversations' are encouraged (de l'Estoile), as are 'non-hierarchical anthropologies' (Buchowski) in which different research traditions interact in a 'non-hegemonic flow of ideas, concepts, languages and theories'. In terms of young scholars' trajectories, this may go well with accumulating experiences in different countries and research traditions, and with the notion of blending in with local intellectual

specificities. But the localities one is supposed to integrate into are not just made of ideas, and come with their own institutional histories, which may also include local allegiances, internal favouritisms and power struggles that in turn affect the locality's ability and willingness to durably include newcomers, all the more so when resources are already stretched and in decline. This reveals the ambivalence of locality: beyond its brighter sides – e.g. a source of richness, diversity and a plurality of ideas – we may need to confront the more exclusionary biases of its internal politics, likely to become stronger in moments of crisis. At the juncture of what may start looking like two competing logics – that of mobility and internationalisation on the one hand, and that of privileging the locality and those who belong to it on the other – lies the path where precarious labour is welcome to circulate, a path that many young anthropologists seeking an academic career in present-day Europe are navigating, getting used to moving, competing and projecting plans for a better life yet a few more years down the line.

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Haunted scholars and academic emigration

'The only consolation', an older colleague said recently as we were discussing financial cutbacks at our department, 'is that humanities have always been in a state of crisis'. But how does crisis affect Euro-anthropology and young scholars at present?

In 2008/9 I conducted fieldwork among a group of underemployed young men in Georgia, most of whom were desperate to leave the country. A main conclusion from this fieldwork was that the widespread experiences of marginality among these young men were not merely based on questions of social reproduction: problematic pasts, structures or habits that continued to haunt their present possibilities; it was just as much a question of being haunted by the future. It was not that there was 'no future' but that there was a future that they did not feel part of. While their parents explained contemporary crisis as related to crises of the past (such as the dissolution of the Soviet Union), the youths saw their present as being affected by political visions, plans and reforms outlining a future in which they did not belong.

Needless to say, there are multiple ways in which the lives of unemployed youth in Georgia differ from those of young anthropologists across Europe. But there is a similarity in terms of temporal orientations worth highlighting here. Many of my own teachers 'came of age' as anthropologists during the crisis of representation, a time when a problematic past in terms of colonialism haunted disciplines such as anthropology and forced scholars to reconsider the practising of their disciplines. The contemporary crisis faced by young scholars is of a different nature. What we face is 'The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come' – one bringing very few gifts. In my own national context, regional studies at large have been under attack for some time due to politically motivated financial cutbacks. The result is study-programmes being shut down and people being fired. It has also resulted in a lack of prospects for younger scholars who struggle to secure funding and move between short-term contracts without possibility of tenure due to hiring freezes. Talking to colleagues abroad has shown this not to be something particular to Danish universities; there is indeed an emergence of what Papataxiarchis terms a 'lost generation of scholars'. I have many peers who have recently decided that life within academia is simply not worth the struggle. Many turn to consultancy jobs in public or private sectors, and they do great (and important) work there. I myself might very well end up taking that path and eventually leave academia.

Between 2012 and 2015 the Georgian population dropped from 4.5 to 3.7 million, mainly due to emigration. Many fear a brain-drain as particularly young people seek work and possibility elsewhere. But those who have left are still Georgian, and they still have an impact on their old country, whether in terms of remittances or by bringing back new forms of knowledge or skill. The emigration of young scholars from academia is slightly different. Marie-Claire Forbes is right in asserting that an expansion of anthropology into consultancy work opens up prospects for the future of the discipline in terms of giving decision-makers the opportunity to draw on anthropological knowledge. The problem is that this is often a one-way route. Young scholars who leave academia rarely come back, even though their new positions might well entail valuable contributions and insights, for instance in terms of discussing the directions of Euro-anthropology. Yet the lack of structural support towards alternative venues of knowledge means that many young academics do not feel encouraged to participate in such discussions, or in grassroots movements. Rather, they uproot themselves completely. Further, people who engage (or are invited to engage) in academic discussions, whether in publications, conferences or forum debates, are still by and large people from one venue: universities.

That the humanities, and perhaps especially anthropology, have always been in a state of crisis may well be true. But that only makes an awareness of the particularities and consequences of the crisis all the more pertinent, not least in terms of how it affects the development of the discipline. It may be utopian to think that the ghost of the future currently haunting young anthropologists can be exorcised (although that should not stop us from trying). But it is vital that we at least come to terms with how to handle its presence.

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Trapped in the rat race: slow science as a way of resistance for European anthropology

In the last years, many conversations with other early career anthropologists in Spain have revealed the feeling that our scientific work is accelerating. This is part of the general trend towards the acceleration of the rhythms of social life (cf. Martínez 2015), in what Comaroff and Comaroff called 'our perplexing times' of 'millennial capitalism' (2001: 3). Neoliberal politics have invaded universities, scientific journals, research institutions and the general way of making science. Evaluation agencies have introduced new quality standards based on the number of publications in indexed journals, funding policies force shorter periods of fieldwork and experiences of applied anthropology have to deal with impossible deadlines. The restrictions on funding and the falling numbers of new positions offered at universities due to the financial crisis make the situation especially hard. Sharing anxiety and growing levels of stress have become commonplace in coffee-break conversations. Many agree that research projects aimed at producing a real social and/or theoretical transformation have to be kept in the drawer as all the time available must be invested in a crazy race for curriculum growth. Nutritive science cooked over a low heat is becoming a luxury remnant of past times.

Three years ago I arrived in Portugal to work on a postdoctoral project and I could witness the same generalised feeling of discomfort and frustration among my colleagues. In our seminar on neoliberalism and expressive culture, the debates finally focused on the consequences of the neoliberal agenda for our scientific work. In an EASA workshop held in Lisbon, I could confirm that this is far from a specific South European problem. Some colleagues talked about the slow science movement, the manifesto of which, written in Germany, is available online: http://slow-science.org/

In the case of social and cultural anthropology, acceleration goes right in the opposite direction of the basic philosophy of the discipline. First, grants and funding for research that allow short fieldwork periods are not compatible with ethnographic requirements. Unfortunately, this is a current trend, as Judith Okely claimed in the first Forum. Building trust relations in the field takes a long time and it is the only way to gain a deep comprehension of social phenomena. There is no shortcut for establishing engaged human relations: taking our time is the only way. Second, recent quality measures of scientific production go against the philosophy of anthropology. For example, ANECA, the Spanish Agency for the Evaluation of Research (following the general international trend) values short articles in indexed scientific journals much more than the writing of a dense monograph. Ethnography may lose its meaning and its beauty when we need to cut into pieces long, thick descriptions of the field, resulting in short fragments out of context. Anthropology, the science of providing context, may be on its way towards progressive de-contextualisation. We are pushed to write as many articles as possible instead of a really good one resulting from years of focused work. The reading of classical ethnographies feels like a nostalgic exercise of admiring how beautifully anthropology was handcrafted in the past. Nowadays there is not enough time to write, there is not enough time to read. Ironically, in order to get positive evaluation of research quality, we may risk the quality of our scientific work. Another consequence of the profitable publishing business is that production is not available to all universities and researchers, and the gap is growing wider, not to mention the general audience and the participants in research. Daniel Miller called this

situation a scandal in the first Forum. What do we produce knowledge for? Who is actually benefiting from our efforts?

Summing up, accelerated anthropology is putting our discipline at risk: shorter fieldwork periods, the more articles published in the lesser time the better, not enough time to think, to read, to elaborate materials and theories. While running as fast as possible in the rat race, big publishing companies are making great profit. Are we suffering a McDonaldisation of Anthropology? How can we resist this trend? May European anthropology become the reference of a sensitive change towards high quality-slow anthropology?

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From field to field

A favourite question that fresher students of anthropology and ethnology are often asked by relatives and friends is where they will work once they have graduated. 'Perhaps at a museum or as a researcher' was my favourite answer to this question at that time. The professor in my introduction course to anthropology, in turn, was of the opinion that many of us would eventually end up as taxi drivers. From today's perspective, I am glad to note that the scope of possible job opportunities for anthropologists and ethnologists goes well beyond these three options.

In order to strengthen this insight in people's minds (including students and their professors as well as relatives and friends alike), there is a need to spread a wider narrative of what kinds of career paths anthropologists usually take. Hence, when I was invited to write this statement, I decided to prepare a piece in pursuit of helping to achieve this aim. Further, I intend to highlight how my schooling in a European University as an ethnologist has prepared me for my current job.

Indeed, the skills that I acquired during my MA and PhD studies have been of great use in my current job as the director of the Finnish Institute in Germany. At the Finnish Institute we seek to foster a German–Finnish dialogue, especially in the field of culture and science. When designing the content of our programme, I am inspired by the insight that cultures are not defined by or bound to national borders, but rather they are formed through rich and complex practices that are carried out by human beings.

Planning the Institute's annual programme is like designing a research project or putting together a written ethnography: What are the main questions to focus on? What is the most important story I want to tell the audience? When planning the

Finnish Institute's emphasis for the programme in 2016 we took inspiration from my background as a researcher. We decided to focus on the topic of migration, because I had studied it, and because it is a timely topic that needs to be addressed from different angles. Thus we initiated two art exhibitions dealing with the question of how the mobility of artists influences their art work – a topic that I studied before beginning to work at the Finnish Institute in Berlin (see Hirvi 2015). *Pilgrimage – Ways to Wiepersdorf* was shown at the Finnish Institute in Berlin in spring 2016 and dealt with the topic of artist residencies. The other exhibition, entitled *Passengers*, was shown at Salon Dahlmann in Berlin in summer 2016 and will perhaps travel onwards to be shown in Finland in 2018. The aim of the *Passengers* exhibition was to generate new perspectives on mobility, migration and transnationality. On our invitation, it was curated by ethnologist Christine Nippe, who is also the author of the ethnography *Kunst baut Stadt. Künstler und ihre Metropolenbilder in Berlin und New York* (2011).

There are numerous other ways in which I could demonstrate how my educational background in ethnology influences my work at the Finnish Institute, and how I benefit from it. Academic conferences, for example, have prepared me well for the art of networking, which now plays an essential role in my daily work. In my current position, I often have to prepare and offer introductions at openings, and my previous experience as a teacher and lecturer have proven to be hugely beneficial. As a trained ethnographer, I am also constantly analysing and reflecting on what we do at the Institute and trying to put it into context. Specifically, I consider what went well, and what we can improve on the next time.

Today, people sometimes ask me whether I have left academia for good. Perhaps I have, possibly because I was tired of the super-short funded research periods that just give you enough time to apply for the next research grant. But perhaps this is not true; perhaps I would have left the university regardless, since I felt an urge to move on and make different use of the insights that I had gained throughout my academic career. Besides, I would like to claim that in a sense I have not really left academia. After all, like a researcher going to the field, taking along their 'autobiographical luggage', I have now entered a kind of 'field' and have brought with me a bag full of fresh academic thoughts and contacts. I strive to intertwine those strings into the work that we do at the Finnish Institute as much as possible, in an attempt to help popularise research and to foster interdisciplinary projects. In particular, I am keen to support projects in which art and research can come together to create a fruitful dialogue that goes well beyond the usual box of thinking.

The issues that I have brought to the fore in this short statement are not groundbreaking news. Yet they are important to mention once in a while in written form in order to inspire people like a former intern of ours. When I walked into the Finnish Institute for the first time after having been elected for this job, she approached me and said: 'When I was informed that an ethnologist was chosen for this position, I was so excited to hear that we can get jobs like this one. It encouraged me to continue with my studies in anthropology'. As much as the world needs anthropologists working inside universities, it also needs those working outside and with universities.

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The art of abolishing oneself

For a while, we could pride ourselves that what brings us together are humanistic values. After 2015, very little is left of 'Social Europe'. It was a watershed moment for Europe, perhaps as pivotal as 2008 for the USA. The drama of negotiations between Eurozone finance ministers and the government of Greece unveiled the painful truth – that the European project was by and large tailored to the needs of the banks, and not the peoples of Europe. It also turned out that free movement of people across borders was great as long as it was needed to facilitate economic growth. It no longer does, and so it is being scrapped as we speak. The generally callous response to the human tragedy on the Mediterranean showed that old ghosts are still alive and kicking in many European homes. We are curling up in the nasty igloos of our national states, to paraphrase Eric Hobsbawm.

European anthropology is still tethered to the very centre of the global market in the production of knowledge – located across the Atlantic. Most leading publishing houses and journals are there. 'New' has eclipsed 'good' as the main yardstick of valuable research. We are pushed to produce more work that merely juggles with complicated words. Browse journals from a few years back – not only will you see that most articles are not worth much but also that they are even difficult to comprehend because they are so infested with outdated jargon. The grant system – one of the instruments of separating successful from unsuccessful careers – promotes excellent mediocrity. Big conferences are formalised sessions of elevator pitching, masquerading as debate. Commodification of knowledge is doing extraordinarily well these days.

It is instructive to look to different fields. My partner is an art curator, and so I get to see art events and visit places with her. Many people in the arts actually do research. To be sure – as in academia – a lot of it is bogus, and came to exist only because some institution had to organise yet another event in order to fulfil the yearly quota or had some extra money to spend (the people who are forced to produce such works are perfectly aware of their scanty value, but have to play along). The arts too are ravaged by the star system that produces a tiny group of somebodies and a vast army of nobodies scrambling for resources and attention. Yet somehow hierarchies of knowledges are less pronounced there. It is fairly normal to see a book published in Warsaw in arts bookshops in Beirut or Tokyo. These locally produced books really do travel – and so do ideas. My peers in the arts are frequently invited to participate in shows in Korea or Brazil, can work on whatever they want and are not expected to represent the culture they were born into. On the other hand, my academic colleagues invest their energy into producing books that end up as easy prey for the scam publishers. Since you are a nobody, they will print only a handful of exorbitantly priced copies, and your book will end up only in a few specialised US libraries. Nobody will read it, and thus

you will remain – from the point of view of global academia – one of the many nobodies. But the publishers will churn a profit.

As a person who came of age during the Clintonite *belle époque*, believing in the stability of Pax Americana, I am now deeply worried – and terrified – for the very first time in my life. It seems we have learned little from the 1920s and 1930s. Meanwhile, a truly nasty system that shamelessly exploits academic labour and exacerbates existing disparities between places, institutions and traditions has emerged. And most of us didn't even realise it. But today, reading yet another paper on how to be truly radical, printed in a journal that you can access only if your university pays horrific sums of money for the subscription, this is no longer amusing. Of course all this pertains to academia in general, but anthropology has been complacent too. Most of us see this and occasionally complain, but that will no longer cut it. What distinguishes us, I guess, is our methodological cosmopolitanism. If we took it seriously, then the academic world as we know it would cease to exist. But this is actually really hard. George Orwell once wrote this about class: 'to abolish class-distinctions means abolishing a part of yourself'. In order to successfully combat the turbo-capitalist academic world we helped create, we would have to start doing things really differently.

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Reflecting on knowledge production in contemporary academia

I would like to approach the topic 'Rethinking Euro-anthropology' from the perspective of some observations and thoughts that have arisen in my work as assistant professor at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow in the last years as well as in my current field research on the topic of Islamic education in Russia. My position at HSE Moscow since 2012 reflects in itself some important changes in worldwide academia that may also impact on the work of socio-anthropologists. The lack of job prospects for early career academics with PhDs earned in Western Europe or the USA has driven them to seek opportunities in countries such as China, Russia or Singapore. This trend towards an internationalisation of higher education can have different outcomes for contemporary academia. It can lead to more uniformity through the adoption of neo-liberal standards of efficiency, for example through increased pressure on local academic staff to publish in Western peer-reviewed journals. At the same time, internationalisation can also be seen as an opportunity to question conventional views of 'centre' and 'periphery' in the production of scientific knowledge with a view to 'de-centralise' it as well as foster more exchanges between various academic traditions. By 'de-centralisation' I mean a shift away from Euro-centric conceptions of knowledge as well as a questioning of the implicit status of Western higher education institutions as 'producers of theoretical concepts' against the image of other countries in the world as 'purveyors of data'. Another particularity of the internationalisation trend that is more relevant for socio-anthropologists, whose

settings are not situated in their countries of origin, is a blurring of the boundaries between fieldwork and the phases of data analysis and writing. In my case, Russia is my field and also the place where I live and work. Different stages of research – data collection, analysis and the writing phase – all take place in the same geographical space. My direct affiliation at HSE offers me the advantage of a more immediate access to my field. The fact that this situation is still relatively unusual can be seen in the reactions of some of the participants in my field research, who expect me to be affiliated to a foreign university instead of a Russian one.

My current field research on Islamic education has triggered further questions in relation to the nature of scholarly knowledge and the importance of devoting more attention to the processes through which knowledge is obtained and produced in contemporary academia. As a central concept in Islamic education, *adab* refers to rules of conduct, knowledge of etiquette and good manners. Naquib al-Attas defines *adab* as 'knowledge of the purpose of seeking knowledge' (1980: 12) and notes that the purpose of education in Islam is to produce a good man or man of *adab*. He further observes on the meaning of *adab* as 'invitation to a banquet': 'In the same sense that the enjoyment of fine food in a banquet is greatly enhanced by noble and gracious company, and that the food be partaken of in accordance with the rules of refined conduct, behaviour and etiquette, so is knowledge to be extolled and enjoyed, and approached by means of conduct as befits its lofty nature' (1980: 14). In these reflections on the purpose of Islamic education, knowledge appears as a divine gift that should be handled with reverence and humility. Discovering this view of knowledge as 'fine food', I found that it offered a sharp contrast to contemporary pressures that researchers face to engage in a relentless 'production' of knowledge, a process that tends to disregard the subtleties of the research process. Indeed, the invitation to view knowledge as a gift that requires from the seeker moral discipline also implies an acceptance of the notion of secrecy and of the potentiality of 'failure' in the sense of an uneasy access to information. Secrecy guards knowledge against an improper use. A talk by Paul Stoller at the 2014 EASA conference in Tallinn hinted at the uneasy relationship of Western social sciences with the notion of secrecy, as Stoller evoked the criticism of a Malian musician against Western anthropologists for revealing secrets in their publications that should never have been exposed. The idea of knowledge as a gift that should not be misused can be seen as a call to think more carefully about the ethical dimension of the process of obtaining and generating knowledge in contemporary academia.

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EASA and Euro-anthropology: an ethnographic approach

Despite being a very powerful tool for the analysis of socio-cultural phenomena, ethnography has not generally been applied to the study of anthropologists and their social and institutional conditions of knowledge production.[1] This Forum calls for Rethinking Euro-anthropology; what better way to do that than with ethnography? It is true, however, that the question on whether there is such a thing as European anthropology is a subject of controversy among different actors in the different European national fields. Therefore, an ethnographic analysis of Euro-anthropology cannot take for granted that there is such a thing. It is precisely that very controversy that deserves a detailed ethnographic, sociological and historical investigation.

A good starting point for that analysis could be to focus attention on the emergence and development of EASA itself. There are several reasons for this. Let us focus on one of them. In the late 1980s, some anthropologists working in different European countries were arguing for the need to develop a new cosmopolitan, transnational approach for social anthropology that would encompass the different national schools, going beyond them (Gibb and Mills 2001; Girke 2014), and creating 'a community of European Social Anthropologists' (Eriksen 1991). Most of these anthropologists were involved in the creation of EASA, with Adam Kuper as a 'convener'. The new association was their tool to create such a community (Kuper 1989; Silverman 2002: 103–10).

Hence, after almost 30 years, it is pertinent to ask if EASA has been successful in creating such a transnational community of European social anthropologists. Certainly, the Association has created platforms of socialisation (biannual conferences and thematic networks) and publications (the journal *SA/AS* and book series) that have largely contributed to the emergence and consolidation of transnational spaces for European anthropologists from different geographical settings, intellectual traditions and national origins to meet, socialise and publish. These transnational platforms and spaces are undoubtedly one of the conditions of possibility for the existence of a community of European social anthropologists.

Some people go a step further and argue that EASA has also, slowly but progressively, fostered the knowledge of – and interactions among – European anthropological national schools other than the traditionally dominant British and French ones, and included representatives from these peripheral traditions into the Association's processes of decision-making. By doing all this, they argue, EASA has also contributed to blurring the boundaries between 'centres' and 'peripheries' in the production of anthropological knowledge in Europe. Let's briefly pause on this question. Ulf Hannerz mentions that out of the first eight chairpersons of EASA (1989–2005), he was the only one without a doctorate from a British university (Hannerz 2008: 220). Moreover, in an interview I had with another member of a former Executive Committee, (s)he said that most of the early Executive Committees' members were either trained in France or the UK (even those working in countries such as Spain, Portugal or Denmark). This pattern only started to change, the interviewee told me, after around 1997/8, when people from other European countries

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1   For some valuable exceptions see Bourdieu (2003), Fernandez de Rota (2012), Ntarangwi (2010) and Silverman (2002).

and not trained in the UK or France started to be members of the Executive Committee. That change was clear by 2006–8.

It is true that, if we analyse the countries represented in EASA's Executive Committees from 1989 to 2016, the trend goes in the direction indicated by the interviewee. Progressively, the Executive Committees have been including members whose academic institution was in so-called 'peripheral' countries such as Greece, Poland, Iceland or Hungary. It is worth mentioning, however, that in absolute numbers the two countries with more representation in the different Executive Committees from 1989 to 2016 are still the UK (with around 20%) and France (with around 14%). This percentage is calculated taking into account the countries where the Executive Committee members had an institutional affiliation. If we included also those with an institutional affiliation in countries other than France or UK, but with academic training in these two countries, the percentage would be even higher.

These very preliminary findings don't deny the many successes of EASA, nor the way it has contributed to the promotion of Euro-anthropology. But they problematise its inclusiveness and representativeness, as well as the argument of the blurriness of centres and peripheries in the European production of anthropological knowledge. However, the question is too complex to establish hasty conclusions here. It is precisely because of its complexity that I think this recent phenomenon of the history of anthropology should become the object of ethnographic enquiry.

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Projections of Europe

After stamping my passport, the border guard at customs in Tbilisi handed me a half bottle of red wine made from Saperavi, an indigenous grape variety. 'Welcome to Georgia', she said. Dangling from the neck of the bottle was a small folding card with the words 'Did you know?' printed in bold. Below that were encouragements for economic investment, such as: 'Georgia is part of the European Market', 'Georgia enjoys Free Trade with half of the world, including the EU' and 'Exporting from Georgia is tax free'. On the bottle itself, also in English, was printed a bulleted list that alerted tourists of the centrality of wine to Georgia's traditions, and promoted wine as the central symbol in this checkpoint nation-branding (Manning 2010, 2012). It said, for example: 'Georgia is known as the "Cradle of Wine"', 'Georgia has an unbroken history of 8000 consecutive vintages of wine' and 'Georgia's traditional "Qvevri" winemaking method (fermenting wine in a clay vessel buried underground) dates back to the 6th century BC.' A symbol of national pride was literally thrust into my hand on arrival – unrefusable Georgian hospitality had made it all the way to customs. An arsenal of wine boxes was stacked behind the security booths.

That evening in June 2015 a flood caused the River Vere to burst its banks, destroying the surrounding area. Tbilisi Zoo, ill-positioned on the banks of the river, was flooded. Many animals were killed, and the rising waters carried others away. A white tiger terrified locals and a hippo made global headlines. Youth volunteers banded together to clear the debris. Politicians, reporters and regular citizens celebrated the younger generation's generosity and selfless labour in rebuilding Tbilisi. In the aftermath of the flood, many found solace in the collective action of youth. Against this backdrop, I researched how eco-urban activists invoked the category of 'Europe' when staging unorthodox protests against an increasingly congested traffic and parking culture. In previous visits, I had noticed that 'Europe' was often manifest in discourse as an imagined elsewhere to which social actors attributed forms of orderliness and cosmopolitanism.

The unopened bottle remained on my small kitchen table over the next month as I worked on fieldwork projects unified by a common question: What frames of reference do Tbilisi residents invoke to make sense of the material and social conditions of life? In Georgian discourse, 'Europe' remains a powerful yet ambiguous signifier, often appearing as an aspirational economic, political or social landscape of cosmopolitan modernity (Sherouse 2015). Yet 'Europe' is but one of many contrasts through which 'Georgian-ness' is made. The opposite of Europe is not simply 'Asia' – the singular thirdness of Georgian experience is also set in opposition to the thirdness of Russia, a non-Europe-non-Asia looming northward with a combination of menacing political power and enduring social and economic influence. Making sense of the multiple frames of international reference against which social actors differentiate 'Georgia-ness' means taking stock of the non-European others (Iran, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, to name a few) that historically and contemporarily run along the geographic and cultural peripheries of Europe. The predicament that the Greeks face is analogous in this regard: they hold themselves to the evaluative standards of the 'West' and in doing so acknowledge themselves as ancestors of 'Europe' but not its benefactors, and also must disavow the influences of adjacent powers that are 'non-Western' (Herzfeld 2003: 293–4). Projections of 'Europe', therefore, involve a matrix of 'non-Europes' against which social actors adduce cultural, political and economic alignments and contrasts.

In the first two instalments of the Rethinking Euro-anthropology Forum, scholars tacitly and explicitly grappled with the boundaries and contrasts that the designations 'Europe' and 'anthropology' rely on and generate. For instance, 'America' appears as a contrastive disciplinary other to British and European anthropological approaches (Eriksen; Foblets; de Pina-Cabral; Ingold; Wulff). I was reminded of similar debates about terms such as 'Eurasia', 'post-Soviet' or 'post-socialist', all of which can be both limiting and geographically expansive. What contrasts does 'Europe' invoke, and to whom? No matter what form of anthropology one practices, it is beneficial to find points of connection rather than new forms of insularity. What holds the 'diversity' of Euro-anthropology together is a commitment to weigh multiple and various accounts against one another, to restlessly probe the frames of reference that we and our interlocutors bring to bear on the interpretations of social life.

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Young scholars of an ageing discipline in the old continent

The task(s)

I think that the editors of *SA/AS* have set themselves an audacious and challenging yet necessary task: to stimulate a collegial reflection on what it means to practise anthropology of and/or in Europe today. This reflection has taken the form of a collection of dense and thought-provoking contributions that can truly constitute the base for a pivotal shift in the way we think and practise the discipline. And I am glad that the editors also gave the representatives of the newer generation an opportunity to make their voices heard.

Different focuses and approaches emerged in the earlier Forum parts, some of which seem to me particularly significant and inspiring for younger readers of *SA/AS*: the reaffirmation of the necessity to focus on specific, well-defined spheres of social life (religion: Meyer; economy: Siniscalchi; language and power: Nic Craith), the need to explore further new or old themes (like ethnicity: Eriksen) and the important call – not surprisingly coming from 'post-socialist' voices – for further attention in the articulations of academic and (therefore) political cultural geographies (Cervinkova,

Buchowski). The important point of highlighting what is typically anthropological in anthropology and to exalt its scientific strengths has also been intensely and rightly advocated (Toren).

What I found particularly inspiring and worth pondering here was the emergence of a more or less explicit polarisation between those inclined towards a cosmopolitan, transnational (or global) Euro-anthropology (Kuper) and those insisting that a thus-conceived anthropology should not overshadow disciplinary local specificities (Papataxiarchis) or affinities with other kin-subjects (for instance folklore and ethnology – Gregory, Macdonald). A shared philosophy is nevertheless, in my opinion, possible and even suitable: younger and older ethnologists, anthropologists and folklorists of Europe could be today united under the ideal flag of a reflexive and critical Eurocentrism (or Cosmopolitan Eurocentrism, if I am permitted the theoretical oxymoron); in other words, a methodological Eurocentrism that could go hand in hand with moral Cosmopolitanism.

Joining forces

Common tasks and a sense of belonging to the same intellectual imagined community are also important because of the epistemological composition and complexity of younger 'Euro-anthropology': many scholars in their early careers (including me, as well as many other colleagues) have in fact been physically, but also intellectually, mobile in unprecedented ways: continuously moving across Europe during their fieldworks, doctorates, postdocs and first appointments, but also coming from different disciplines (mostly history, folklore, religious and cultural studies), and eventually landing on the field of anthropology in some department. For many the journey has been turbulent, for the European academic landscapes that young scholars are today exploring are characterised by the synergy between mighty structural (but also destructive) factors such as the economic crisis, social acceleration, growing competition and theoretical dismay (to which I will return in a moment) – all factors that, *soit dit en passant*, characterise many other interconnected and multifaceted configurations of our liquid and 'posthumous' reality (post-colonialist, post-socialist, post-modern, etc.).

Has this journey been only a symptom of juvenile restlessness or is it another form, perhaps less experienced but none the less intellectually significant, of that disciplinary 'impatience' that the journal editors have evoked in their introduction to the first *SA/AS* Forum (Green and Laviolette 2015a: 331)? Maybe. What seems clear to me is that this condition also reflects a state of unrest through which the entire discipline has been going in the last few decades. And here I come to the 'theoretical dismay' I previously mentioned: when I started studying anthropology, some 10 years ago, I had the clear sensation that the discipline was not only ageing and going through an existential crisis, but was also on the verge of committing epistemological suicide. Many anthropologists had in fact only a few years earlier been announcing the death, or even worse the non-existence, of their own objects of study – culture, religion, kinship. And yet even during those troubled times excellent anthropological knowledge was being produced all around the world, in Europe no less than elsewhere.

Coming from what is usually qualified as an interdisciplinary background (history, anthropology and folklore), I therefore cannot but applaud – and take up

– the idea of possible inter- or transdisciplinary 'new kinds of alliances', as proposed by the editors (among others), in their introduction to the second Forum (Green and Laviolette 2015b: 492). Moreover, I invite the younger readers of *SA/SA* to join forces in a precise circumstance: in order to address these and other issues, the board of the *SIEF* Young Scholars Working Group has organised its first international conference: *Coming of Age: Young Scholars in the Fields of Folkloristics, Ethnology, and Anthropology* (to be held in Göttingen, 25–26 March 2017). The main aim of the conference will be to reflect on the academic, intellectual and existential conditions of being young scholars in these fields, notably for those working in and/or on the Old Continent.

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The third world has come home

Doing anthropology in Europe is hardly new in the discipline. It is no longer the case that anthropologists have to leave their countries, their region, to go to the Global South in order to encounter the exotic 'other'. The third world with its particular 'otherness' has come home. The so-called 'other' who was relentlessly imagined and created within Europe has arrived. These 'others' cross borders every day, every hour; they are desperate to get into the first world, into the land of opportunities. The more people move across those borders, the more the periphery and the centre flux, get entangled, acquire new meanings and produce new forms of social relations.

Those of us who made the choice to study the amalgamed diversity that populates Europe found that our field sites are postcolonial zones shaped and reshaped by painful legacies that are in continuous expansion. These zones produce and reproduce further inequalities due to on-going global economic forces and states' increasingly rigid immigration policies, which in turn play on and reproduce 'native' racisms. The gap between the rich and the poor is no longer characterised by national geographic locations, it is here, and it widens within our field sites. In order to understand the so-called migrant phenomenon – now turned into the 'migration crisis' – we, as anthropologists, focus on the effects of capitalism, the impact of neoliberalism and the global systems of domination that consistently 'push and pull' migrants. Then through the detailed ethnographic observation of their everyday lives, we analyse its poignant manifestations and consequences.

By doing this, by studying those 'others' within Europe, we revive the old divide between the West and the Rest. We observe this divide during fieldwork by witnessing the inevitable outbreak of various cultural worlds. This amalgamation of cultures within Europe has radically transformed 'Western' society. Despite the so-called transformation and blurring of the boundaries between Western and non-Western societies, our findings tell us otherwise. My own experience while doing fieldwork in London with women migrants confirms that the divide exists on an everyday basis. It is alive. It shapes migrants' livelihoods and subjectivities. It influences migrants' legal realities and social locations and dislocations. The divide is an intrinsic part of the lives of those 'others' who we study as part of our anthropological projects. As a result we are challenged by the alterity within and by the categories in which such alterity has been placed.

How do we make sense of this long-standing divide? Do we ask the right questions to understand the alterity within? Who is the new subject that we observe, dissect and shape by the production of anthropological knowledge? What is our ethical commitment towards the study of the alterity within? I fear that global discourses of difference subsumed under depoliticised categories like 'multicultural', 'superdiverse' and/or 'transnational' have influenced the way in which we approach this alterity. We are falling into the trap of 'writing culture' along lengthy discussions about racial difference that appeared to be taken for granted and seemed to be silenced in our anthropological reflection. We must make explicit the alterity as racialised in order to recognise its connections to the development of citizen/migrant subjectivities and their material realities.

After all, we are, as De Genova states, doing anthropology in Europe, but not anthropology of Europe. He explains that if we really want to engage with a critical anthropology of Europe, then we must posit 'Europe' itself as a problem and not only the 'other', the alterity on the spotlight. Based on my own experience, as an anthropologist in Europe, I see the need to go back and reassess those questions that post-colonialism, as well as feminism, once asked up front. Let's go beyond the politics of cultural difference and bring race – and its various theoretical and scientific bearings – back into place in order to interrogate the workings of this new global socio-economic order. We need to bring race to the centre of the analysis – in the way it is in everyday life – as a political imperative, particularly given Europe's role in the creation of racial science and racist colonial practices and logics.

If we want to engage critically with an anthropology of Europe, we must acknowledge and face the uncomfortable but unequivocal role that race – with its concomitant dominant white identifications with white supremacy – has played in shaping the post-colonial condition of contemporary Europe and its cultural identity. It is precisely from this powerful post-colonial whiteness that a nondescript, 'superdiversity' is fashioned, essentialising masses of migrants who come from a race-neutral alterity known as the 'third world'.

Let's take alterity seriously and reject the naturalisation of cultural identity that obscures the complex racial relations of power that keep the 'other' trapped in neutral zones of exclusion. It is not about reifying 'otherness' or simplifying race as a category of difference, but about working against the invisibilisation of race. Only then, by scrutinising the racial colonial underpinnings of the category of the other – along with it is intersections with gender, sexuality, citizenship as well as religious identities – will we be able to develop a critical and holistic depiction of migrants' social locations and dislocations as racialised 'others' existing in the different postcolonial national landscapes of Europe.

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Anti-anthropology

In the contemporary past, archaeology and anthropology coincide. Here, the residues of the past – the ruinations of colonial encounters and capitalist transformations in particular – are not merely distant marks, but active traces cutting deep into the fabric of contemporary life. They create the pain, destruction and sacrifices people have to live with – decaying industries, degraded environments, repossessed homes. And they are equally responsible for the things people have to live without – like healthcare, social security or access to education. These particular presences and absences function as the coordinates of what I call 'abandonment zones' – structural and physical spaces that bear the wounds of racialised state violence, patriarchy and labour exploitation.

As anthropologists we are neither fully embedded within nor entirely situated outside the abandonment zones of the contemporary past. Studying them, we sit at their limits observingly, yet we remain essential to their functioning, their maintenance. Past colonial encounters and capitalist take-overs are not just a history that accompanies us. As contemporary past, they are emergent forms that we are a part of and partake in, precisely because anthropology is 'an activity which is part of what it studies' (Fabian 1983: 157). Anthropology exists in the encounter with the Other, who was first sacrificed to colonial and capitalist violence, then has been offered up to be studied, examined, explained, understood. Of course, we all know the tale: Anthropology has brought the Other into existence, has made her and, in mirroring her, has made itself. This is the logic of the anthropological machine that operates by way of an 'inclusion of an outside' (Agamben 2004: 37). Its violent machinations, its brutal churnings, create ourselves by delineating exteriorities from within, thus producing distance. Here, anthropology finds its limit. Here, it draws a line '*in order to clean and maintain its imperial space*' (Mignolo 2007: 14; emphasis in the original).

We thought we had finally regulated the anthropological machine, had gotten a hold of its levers, switches and controls. We have after all made it through a number of epistemological crises and turns. In the end, however, little has changed: Anthropological knowledge remains not merely descriptive but generative of specific practices and worldviews. In the context of academic anthropology, in the firm grip of the neo-liberal knowledge economy, these practices and worldviews are still shot through with the blood and the gore of (neo-)colonial violence and capitalist exploits. And we continue to make our contributions, feeding into the anthropological machine. True, we may no longer ignore the limits of anthropology, pushing boundaries instead; we may cast our dragnet wider and become more inclusionary, generous, even visionary.

Yet, the net's headline stays just as indissoluble, its innermost enclosure, its heart, just as impervious.

But if anthropology really constructs itself through the Other, then the very limit of our discipline, the unbearable weight of its boundaries, also entails a revolutionary possibility. Could we harness our position as anthropologists to launch a critique that goes against and beyond anthropology as we know it? This is not an epistemic quest aimed at overturning the inside/outside divide by trading exteriorities against interiorities. It is a strategy of inversion that imagines a new positioning – one that knows no decisive binary, no mutual exclusivity (Thompsett forthcoming). It redefines the inside by taking it as a 'fulcrum point' from which we can reach 'someplace outside' (Bousquet *et al.* 2009: 167).

And as you look closely, the fulcrum actually turns out to be no point at all, but an interstice, an opening, a tiny crack in a much larger structure. It is the place that refuses itself. In this refusal we can imagine an entirely new anthropology – an anti-anthropology that is, estranged and distanced from itself, finally able to set aside the search for the Other. This can never be a purely scholarly exercise, but has to be a political and an ethical act, which starts from the recognition of otherness within ourselves. Always affected by the infinite alterity of others, anti-anthropology embraces human relationships not as knowable, prescribed, predictable. It lives and breathes not because it knows the Other, but because it is ever so gently in touch with the 'stranger within' (Barad 2012: 206). Our romance with this stranger is necessarily unanticipated, vulnerable and open to all sides, but also probable and full of promise.

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Towards an anthropology of virtual and augmented realities

Whoever follows technology news feeds will know that 2016 is considered the year of another digital revolution: the one of Virtual and Augmented Reality. While this digital

development discourse has not been acknowledged much in our subject, I believe that it is an important task for European anthropologists to start engaging with the matter. We need to initiate a broader, critical and comparative conversation about human practices of virtual worlding and world augmentation.

Virtual reality (VR) devices such as Google Cardboard (low-end) or the Oculus Swift (high-end) immerse users deeper into digitally generated, virtual worlds. Augmented Reality (AR) devices like Google Glasses or Microsoft HoloLens are capable of projecting layers of information onto the environment in our field of vision, as well as giving us the illusion of creating digital artefacts in our physical environment. Digital visionaries view humanity at the doorstep of a 'profound and surreal change', one that is both 'scary and awesome', as VR-developer David Holz (2016) put it in a recent talk in San Francisco. He predicts that future generations of children will grow up in a continuously mixed world of atomic and digital matter, in which uncountable smart-dust cameras will translate the body into its digital counterpart and track our emotions; also that they will live in a mixed reality of perception surpassing prior human experiences.

I catch myself buying into the digital developers' vision of the future as I start asking anthropological questions about possibilities and inequalities of this future. How will we share spaces and experiences in this re-assembled sensory post-modern world, which transgresses the digital subjectivities from Whitehead and Wesch's (2012) *Human no more*? What new forms of togetherness will people want to create with the new possibilities of temporally deferring and displacing experiences? How will we mix and match our sensory perception? If thanks to omnipresent screens and holographic AR-glasses the virtual need not materialise (as through 3D printing, see Favero 2015) to manifest itself in the concrete world, how will humans make sense of the co-presence of different matters in space?

And what about questions of power and the politics of perception in VR and AR? Since the field of VR and AR technologies is already deeply embedded in global, corporate capitalism, we will need to ask about the commoditisation and gating of experiences as well as with the danger of dispossession and loss of self in the process of translation into the virtual. I imagine how anthropologists could continue their collaboration with projects like the Spanish Medialab (Corsín Jimenéz 2015) for fairer, self-governed VR and AR environments. And couldn't the sensory assemblage in VR and AR also become an incredibly powerful tool for ethnography and ethnographic storytelling? Milina Zec's 2016 pioneering 360° film about Serbian War experiences, *Giant*, points to an interesting direction of possibilities.

It is really hard not to get immediately carried away by these developments, not to immediately accept them as 'the future' and to instead search for the broader picture. Yet, putting the digital VR and AR debate in its place and making analytical distinctions is vital for initiating a critical and constructive anthropological debate. Practices of virtual world-making (through the work of imagination) and reality augmentation (and animation) are an integral part of being human and have evolved differently in different cultural environments. In the context of tourism in post-Cold War Northeast Poland, I found that many German tourists to the area used bilingual maps with contemporary Polish and former German toponyms not only to orient themselves, but also to immerse themselves into an imagined, familiar geography of East Prussia. However, some former German residents of the area, from before 1945, never dared to return; they preferred holding on to the ideal virtual world of their memories (Wadle and Verschaeve 2014).

Such ethnographic observations are why I believe that we will benefit from addressing the issue more broadly than by just focusing on the particular context of *digital* Virtual and Augmented Realities (using the capital letters might help). We need to set up an analytical and comparative framework about human engagement with virtual worlds and about cultural techniques of augmenting worlds that opens an exciting anthropological conversation by synergising the rich insights about imagination, materiality and virtuality from different corners of anthropology: I am thinking here in particular (but not exclusively) about the anthropology of religion, of tourism, of kinship, of economy, of the body, of technology, of indigenous worlds, of the state, of morality.

In this anthropological conversation, we will unpack (moral) negotiations between the virtual and the concrete (Shields 2003), the boundary drawing between the abstract and the material in very different contexts. It will be a conversation about the human skill to create and inhabit virtual worlds and to augment spaces, and about people's tools to achieve this. Our conversation will address people's access to virtual and augmented worlds and the risks they take by accessing them. From our ethnographic contexts we will learn about different models of governing virtual and augmented worlds and share that knowledge for more participatory, empowered virtual and augmented futures.

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A European anthropology for the present century

What is the point of anthropology? The discipline's founders were so clear on this. It loudly announced itself the study of the 'primitive' or 'savage' (Kuper 2006: 2) – of particular groups of non-Western people. This subject matter was also indistinguishable

from its express intellectual purpose, to uncover earlier stages of civilisation. Anthropology was born at the very apex of European developmentalism, and its progenitors keenly tasked themselves with documenting human beginnings through the scientific method.

In subsequent decades every one of these *raison d'êtres* fell away or was called into question. By mid-century it was reasonable to do anthropology 'at home'. By the 1980s the teleologies of modernity were being systematically dismantled. By 2010 anthropology in America was no longer calling itself a science. A variety of other goals have since rushed in to fill these spaces, but by and large the discipline's cluster of existential crises were managed through the advancement of theory. Prominent French and German and even ancient Greek philosophers were enlisted to help anthropologists think through asymmetries of power from which they had benefited, to peck at Western categories, and attend to their techniques of representation. Systematic comparison was mostly abandoned.

Many of these were necessary moves, but now it is time to transcend them. This is an incipient sense. In fact when I first arrived in the discipline in 2008, philosophy was very much in vogue and I consumed it hungrily. I could abandon myself to the complex mental shapes conjured by Alfred North Whitehead, or to the beautiful reasonings of Deleuze. Yet as the political and economic crises deepened in Europe a nagging impatience took hold. What work were these philosophers, venerated by the discipline, really doing? What, after all, was the point?

Fellow scholars who began their doctoral ethnography after the financial crisis just as I did (e.g. Alex Flynn or Michal Murawski) seem to participate in this gnawing sense of urgency. Philosophy is no longer sufficient to fill the gaping holes left by the collapse of the discipline's original sense of purpose. Instead we seek a truly postcolonial anthropology that is comparative in each and every direction, and know too that we have a key role to play in the wars of representation raging in the publics that surround us.

A European anthropology for the present century cannot lose any more precious years proving some philosopher right. We must recover our forebears' sense of purpose, but invert it. While they journeyed thousands of miles, we have limitless work to do here in Europe. While they took their categories with them, we can use other notions they brought back. And while their eyes gleamed with the private thrill of the collector, we can train instead the steady gaze of the hunter. Because for them the future was a lens through which the present was refracted, but for us, anthropology can be a means to discover hidden promises *for* the future, deep within the depths of the present.

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