Introduction

Anthropology and the Politics of Engagement

Theodoros Kyriakides, Hester Clarke, and Ximin Zhou (University of Manchester)

This special issue of Anthropology Matters brings together selected papers from the 5th Postgraduate Conference of the Royal Anthropological Institute with the theme 'Anthropology and the Politics of Engagement', which took place at The University of Manchester's Department of Social Anthropology on 4 and 5 June 2015. In this Introduction, we provide a summary of how the notion of engagement has developed within anthropology. In doing so, we problematise the relationship between anthropology, engagement, and politics. In addition, we explore the potential for anthropological knowledge to enrich understandings of both engagement and the politics surrounding the distribution of this knowledge. Finally, we provide an overview of the five articles that appear in this issue.

Although anthropologists nowadays shy away from totalities, one can discern the existence of an anthropological zeitgeist. 'Engagement' is an active term of this circulation of ideas and concepts within current anthropological discussions, and has acquired staple usage in the anthropological vocabulary over the past few years. This indicates both an anthropological fascination with the notion of engagement, and the multiplicity of meanings and uses attached to the term. Besides a growing corpus of academic literature (Basu 2016; Eriksen 2005; Hyatt and Lyon-Callo 2003; Low and Merry 2010; Mullins 2010; Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006), the popularity of the term has become evident by its abundant usage at conferences and on social media platforms. We are shortly removed from the start of one of the largest gatherings of anthropologists in Europe this year – the IUAES 2016 congress with the theme 'World Anthropologies and Privatization of Knowledge: Engaging Anthropology in Public'. The American Anthropological Association recently reinstated its Engagement blog and two of the most popular anthropological blogs – SAPIENS and AllegraLab – are holding a

writing competition to 'discover the next generation of public anthropologists' (AllegraLab, 2016). In September 2016, the theme of engagement was picked up once again by another group of postgraduate students halfway across the world, in Boulder, Colorado, who held their own conference entitled 'Engaged Anthropology: Responsibility and Discipline in the Current Political Moment'. To boot, this past June saw the inauguration of the Public Anthropology Institute (Harrison et al. 2016).

Despite this flurry of interest in engagement within the academy, the extent to which anthropology is engaged with life outside of the academy is a subject of debate. Over the course of a year, as we prepared for the publication of this special issue, the world has undergone political changes which for many would have been unthinkable at the time of our hosting the RAI PGR conference a little over eighteen months ago. Whilst there were some voices from within anthropology who took seriously the possibility of Britain leaving the European Union (see Green et al. 2016) and America electing Donald Trump as President of the United States (Forte 2016), many within the discipline were, in the words of Chris Gregory, left feeling 'totally bewildered' (Gregory in Green et al. 2016: 2). Whilst many of the contributors to Social Anthropology's 'Brexit Referendum: first reactions from anthropology' (Green et al. 2016) were quick to jump to the defence of anthropology as a discipline well equipped to contribute to an understanding of people's voting choices, others, such as Açıksöz (Green et al. 2016: 10-11), Dalakoglou and Poulimenakos (Green et. al 2016: 18-19) and Jensen (Green et. al 2016: 16-17) questioned how such topics might lead anthropologists to consider new directions of study and broader questions of relevance outside of academia.

The Vote Leave campaign, and Trump's election campaign alike rallied against established mainstream political norms and the notion of 'specialists', 'intellectuals', and 'experts'. Most memorably perhaps, Michael Gove, then the Secretary of State for Justice and a key player in the Leave campaign stated: 'people in this country have had enough of experts' (Mance 2016). While this appears to be a crisis of elitism, opportunities for other voices to be heard emerged, whether likeable or not. What Trump's ascent to power and the victory of the Leave campaign also indicated to other international players is a sign of opportunities for bargaining and so-called 'business talk'. The centre of the national and international stage is no longer dominated by elites, but by bargain hunters. In light of these comments and uncertainties, several of the contributors to the aforementioned forum in Social Anthropology attempt to envision a way forward for the discipline, suggesting, for

example, that anthropologists should develop a more 'critically engaged practice' (Açıksöz in Green et al. 2016: 10-11); 'acknowledge social class struggle or become socially irrelevant' (Dalakoglou and Poulimenakos in Green et al. 2016: 18-19) and 'contemplate how they can operate in a 'post-plural world', in which 'informed analyses do not inform, because they are ignored, or else . . . refracted beyond recognition' (Jensen in Green et al. 2016: 16-17).

Whilst we perhaps cannot provide a satisfactory response to Jensen's call, we hope that our exploration of engagement as method, ethnographic idiom, form of governance, and means of communicating across disciplines and outside of academia, can shed some light on how anthropology may develop in the future. Although too early to tell what changes anthropology as a discipline will incur, we cannot but join forces with Paul Stoller (Afterword, this issue) in saying that 'there is no better time for an engaged anthropology'.

Although notably popular recently, engagement carries a long ethnographic and conceptual lineage within anthropology. Disparate precursors and proto-concepts of engagement appear in the ethnographic archive at different points, by different authors, and related to various social, political, and conceptual projects (Low and Merry 2010: S204-207; Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006: 179-183). Ghassan Hage traces the emergence of a socially involved anthropology to Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's notion of 'participation', as 'a mode of living and thinking where we sense ourselves and others as participating in each other's existence' (Hage 2015: 189, emphasis in original). Also relevant here is literature which locates in the work of great ethnographers the methodological and political implications of what today might be understood as 'applied', 'public', 'collaborative', or 'engaged' anthropology with accumulated knowledge that can be assessed and replicated (e.g. Baker 2004; D'Andrade 1995; Fassin 2013; Hyme 1969; Lassiter 2000; Peacock 1997; Singer 2000). The multiple manifestations of engagement within anthropology at different historical periods and fieldsites lead us to suggest that anthropology, in its guises as ethnography, fieldwork, and writing, has always been engaged. Engagement is, one way or another, a methodological fact and a prerequisite of conducting research, and predicated on the encounters, events, and relations in which the ethnographer becomes involved during fieldwork.

When Lévi-Strauss (1961: 286) distributed pencils and papers amongst the Nambikwara (and before them the Caduveo), their leader tried to impress his people through imitating writing. The irony of this event is that even one of the greatest figures of our discipline did not anticipate the impact this writing lesson would have for the Nambikwara. Perhaps

Lévi-Strauss' actions are indicative of the partial blindness which ethnographers displayed to the engaged nature of their craft. More importantly however, this incident unveils a causality and continuity between ethnographic engagement and the politics of the people anthropologists engage with. As Lévi-Strauss later clarified: 'This episode also drew my attention to another aspect of Nambikwara life: the political relations between individuals and groups' (1961: 293). In this sense, the turn to engagement can be understood through a developing anthropological 'image of thought' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 37) of the ethnographer not as a passive and objective observer, but as a social agent actively implicated in the milieu where he or she conducts ethnography (Law 2004). According to this latter perspective, the challenge ethnographers face is to become aware, sensitive, and attuned to the multiple ways through which they 'touch' the people they do research with, and steer such encounters, relations, and events towards public good (although the relationship of anthropological engagement and public good is problematised in the following section of the Introduction).

If anthropology's relationship with public engagement is well trodden, then why does the term engagement manifest so intensely in anthropological imageries and agendas at this particular juncture in time? The obvious answer would be 'because anthropology has not been engaged enough', but we think this is an answer which only tells half the story. A more productive space of possibility for us to work with would unfold if we examine the anthropology of engagement, not only through practices and writing styles of knowledge production within academia, but also through the social and political changes in which they take place. What we would like to suggest is that, although criticisms of academic obscurantism and esotericism are partially legitimate (we return to this point in the next section), the need for further anthropological engagement can likewise be attributed to the fact that ethnographic fieldsites display a political volatility and precarity that anthropologists must increasingly grapple with. The turn to engagement can thus be understood through a blooming anthropological involvement with political processes of civil unrest, austerity, war, neoliberalism, and, stemming from these, social solidarity, the emergence of grassroots communities, and activism (Kalir 2006; Low 2011; Ortner 2016; Rakopoulos 2015; Speed 2006; Susser 2010).

Nevertheless, if we are to learn anything from Lévi--Strauss' writing lesson, it is that anthropological engagement can also have undesirable effects. In this regard, we perceive awareness and sensitivity to the places within which it unfolds to be an essential part of an

engaged anthropology. The relation between engagement and public good should not be unproblematically received. The history of international development is saturated with case studies and schemes which, in their overwhelming and blinding desire to become socially engaged, ignore local cultural categories and practices, instead becoming toxic (Scott 1998). Engagement becomes complicated when different societal and international players, for example, new aid donors with diverse political and business agendas, are taken into considerations (Mosse 2013). The assumption that engagement is good, which anthropologists and non-anthropologists alike are often guilty of adopting, is more forcefully commented on in the next section.

The Importance of Politics When Thinking about Anthropological Engagement

In 2008, this very journal produced a special issue themed 'Engaging Anthropology' (Shah 2008). This issue also examines the relationship between anthropology and engagement, but through the prism of politics. What does such addition bring to the table? As discussed in the previous section, the increasing popularity of the term engagement can be attributed to calls for anthropology to be more publicly and actively involved in social and political predicaments faced by the people with whom anthropologists conduct research. Engaged anthropology can thus be understood as part of an intensifying disciplinary inclination that emphasises the need for anthropologists and their projects to become socially and practically meaningful (Cervone 2007). Yet, if one is to take one thing away from the call to engagement, it is that, besides practicality and application, being engaged demands the politicisation of ethnographic practices and, to a large extent, the politicisation of the very discipline of anthropology itself. As such, although overlapping with 'applied', 'collaborative', and 'public' anthropologies, we understand an engaged anthropology to extend beyond such labels and, in addition, to explicitly revolve around considerations and practices of collective political representation and action.

A question and challenge arises following our proposed focus on politics: What might shifting attention from practices to engagement, to the political implication of such practices entail? On first impression, engagement probably holds positive connotations for many anthropologists, constituting evidence of our discipline's ability to contribute to public good. This, however, could be a problematic and dangerously overly simplistic suggestion.

As Michael Herzfeld writes, the majority of ethical considerations in anthropology 'arise from a conflict of values that in its complexity far exceeds simplistic dualisms of good and evil' (2010: S259). Unproblematically receiving an engaged anthropology as socially positive and b eneficial empties it of such ethical complexity. Put differently, the understanding that engagement will undeniably result in public good assumes there is singular and homogenous public perspective with which anthropologists wish to engage and affirm. Indeed, an ethnographic modality of engagement might require anthropologists and ethnographers to 'take sides'. As Paul Stoller, one of the most publicly visible and involved anthropologists of our generation, writes in this issue's Afterword, anthropological engagement demands building 'deep relationships of trust' and 'involves a commitment to social justice, but also a willingness to learn new skills, which may or may not be appreciated in the academic world' (Stoller, this issue).

More than promising social improvement, engagement is thus a premise which conceals moral and ethical considerations. Critical to any assessment and promise of engagement should be the question of how anthropologists become engaged, and with and for whom. Although anthropological engagement often aims to explore social inequalities and hierarchies, these can also emerge out of the very act of engagement, courtesy of what does or does not becomes the subject of anthropological engagement. It is hard to shake off our discipline's colonial roots – what Ghassan Hage calls anthropology's 'original sin' (Hage: 2015: 74). Neither is the involvement of anthropology with colonialism a thing of the past. Take, for example, the formulation of the Human Terrain System by the US Army – a programme with the task of using anthropologists and anthropological research methods to establish rapport between US troops and local leaders. Programmes such as the Human Terrain System demonstrate how the potential for anthropologists to become socially and politically engaged can arguably be put to work in further affirming neo-colonial and imperialist global inequalities (Forte 2011).

By equating anthropological engagement with public good, one risks stripping each of these terms and disembedding them from their political contexts. The danger of ignoring engagement's political dimensions is that of unwittingly succumbing to an anthropological messianism and, most gravely, of imagining and placing our ethnographic interlocutors in positions of subordination and disenfranchisement. Kamari Clarke (2010) questions the simplistic divisions of the powerless and the powerful, action and inaction, and asks how anthropologists should conceptualise the relationships between local voices and other

interested parties. In defending his decision to share his anthropological knowledge and methods with the US Army in Africa, he argues that a distinction between groups and power 'reproduces the idea of anthropology as the executioner of colonialism through representing the elite or lower classes of society' (2010: S310). Clarke suggests that in order for anthropologists to inhabit their traditional position defending the marginalised, they should be open to collaboration with a range of interlocutors.

Anthropology cannot be, and arguably should not be, entirely separated from its emergence within colonialism. At the same time, it is important to not be hindered and defined by our past and to celebrate aspects of academic maturity and political prowess achieved by our discipline. Anthropology 'came of age' during the Cold War and matured under neoliberal governance (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004), culminating in the particular form that it takes today. We agree with Low and Merry when they write that an engaged anthropology largely involves 'a rethinking of its methods and modes of writing to create a postcolonial relationship to its subject' (2010: S203). The question for many anthropologists today likewise becomes, how can anthropology be engaged without replicating its colonial past?

Instead of thinking of engagement as having a direct correlation with public good, we suggest that anthropologists additionally pay more attention and develop a more nuanced appreciation and understanding of the political hierarchies, affective intricacies, and ethical ambiguities which permeate fieldwork, and through which the impetus for anthropological engagement arises. We perceive the cultivation of an ethnographic sensibility and awareness to such political complexities as an essential part of an engaged anthropology. Viewed through the prism of politics, the premise of engagement evades its instrumentalisation as simply a process of social welfare, and instead itself becomes a powerful tool for fleshing out and attending to the messy political contours of contemporary ethnographic milieus.

The recognition of the complexity of perspectives and political interests through which anthropological engagement becomes highlighted, showcases the ways in which it is not to be understood as a linear process, but as one of multiplicity, complexity, and transformation. The relations we establish through fieldwork are often tangled and thus the question arises of how we position ourselves amongst these relations. The politics of engagement highlights the relational dynamics between actors, on the one hand, and the negotiations of the anthropologist's positionality on the other. By gesturing to engagement's essentially incomplete and open-ended character, we follow Paul Mullins

when he writes that 'the specific contours of an engaged politics which likely always remain somewhat ambiguous because there are myriad contexts in which engaged scholarship is conducted' (2011: 235). Nevertheless, we do not necessarily perceive such open-ended ambiguity in definition, method, and purpose as a negative trait of engagement practices: anthropology's continuous political involvement demands that modalities, strategies, and tactics of engagement are continuously shaped and negotiated according to shifting political landscapes and the struggles in which they become embedded.

It is with such open-endedness, that we approach the relationship between anthropology and engagement. Our aim in this issue is thus not to define, to say what engagement is for anthropology, but rather gesturing to the multiplicity of forms – ethnographic, textual, and conceptual – through which the relationship between anthropology and engagement can be actualised and acquire generativity. In the following two sections we further explore the politics of anthropological engagement as enacted through the circulation of anthropological knowledge. The reasons for such a focus are twofold. Firstly, each of the five papers in this issue provide powerful conceptual traction to notions of anthropological engagement. Secondly, we feel that knowledge, theory, and concept-work are often elements which remain unexplored in discussions of anthropological engagement, often being cast aside as 'abstract' and 'textual' as opposed to 'practical' and 'concrete' – qualities assumed to be most fitting for such a genre. As Barbara Rylko-Bauer et al. (2006: 185) write,

Usually overlooked in this debate are the basic parallels that exist between domains of theory production and of policy and action. Applied anthropologists use essentially the same epistemological processes except that the referent is different…. If theorizing means positing a causal link between domains, then application is inherently theoretical.

In further affirming the relationship between theory and action, we suggest that anthropological knowledge has a tangibility and force of its own, which if deployed correctly can provide powerful foundations for anthropological engagement. As we argue in the following section, the main challenge of an engaged anthropology is re-articulating anthropological knowledge and public perception in more potent combinations.

Engagement and Anthropological Knowledge

The position of anthropological knowledge within an engaged anthropology is one which merits further attention. Does anthropological engagement only take place during fieldwork? Or can thinking, writing, and concept-work be modalities of engagement which intensify in their dissemination? Alpa Shah points out that 'the tension between intellectual rigour as cultural critique and the mainstreaming of solutions for effective practical action is one that faces all of us' (2008: 2). Shah continues to raise the understated question of the division between 'a strictly theoretical anthropology' and 'an anthropology that has applied relevance' (2008: 2). We understand such a division to question and also restrain the relevance of anthropological knowledge to engagement. Insofar as the notion and demand of application and 'action' largely arises in relation to a problem or predicament, does this mean that anthropology is only engaged on occasions of social discontent and turmoil? Does the lack of such contested social processes likewise exclude the possibility of anthropological engagement and critique? Or, more importantly, does it mean that intellectual critique is not socially relevant?

As Rylko-Bauer et al. (2006: 178) point out, 'The decoupling of theory from practice is a uniquely Western phenomenon. In many other parts of the world, the applied-academic division is largely irrelevant because anthropological work...is often driven by critical socioeconomic and structural issues.' Such a divide can be largely traced to institutional agendas which link notions of engagement to those of 'impact' and 'collaboration', as advocated for example by the research agenda of Research Councils UK (RCUK). According to such a perspective, the term engagement indeed implies a dichotomy and separation between anthropological practice and theory, and favours the public visibility of the former through mutual projects and collaborations between anthropologists and the publics they do research with. We do not consider this to be a far-fetched evaluation: the term 'ivory tower' (Berreman et al. 1968) is used to denote the segregation of the academy from society and the formulation of ideas which bear no practical application and cannot address real world circumstances. It is a term gaining traction inside and outside the academy, and is widely used to denote the political and practical irrelevance of the humanities and social sciences.

We, too, felt that the ultimate purpose of our conference was to escape the ivory tower. When on a rainy Manchester afternoon one of our classmates currently conducting fieldwork

on the refugee crisis in Lampedusa suggested the theme of 'Anthropology and the Politics of Critical Engagement' for our conference, it was swiftly and unanimously accepted. After a brief deliberation, we decided to drop the term 'critical'. Our point of departure at the time was to explore how anthropology can move away from the practice of critique, which we understood to be more of an antithetical and textual device than a connective and practical one.

And yet, perhaps we were mistaken in denying critique its practicality and removing it from our title. To once again quote Ghassan Hage, 'anthropology becomes critical [when] it invites us to see that there are whole realities or dimensions of realities that were hidden from us even though they have always been constitutive elements of our life worlds'. (Hage 2015: 186; see also Fassin 2013). In other words, the potential of an engaged anthropology does not lie in collaborative projects between anthropologists and publics, but rather in infusing such projects with a critical perspective which they would not otherwise attain. Like Hage, Kim and Mike Fortun emphasise that 'anthropological and ethnographic insight is clear and pressing, offering ways to understanding and change how problems are identified, conceived, addressed, or discounted' (2015: 366). Such anthropological modes of thinking and surveying the world – of unveiling previously unacknowledged affective dimensions and worldly modes of being – can be powerful tools for creating a politically aware anthropology of engagement. Such methods of conducting research suggest that social turmoil is not the sole impetus for anthropological engagement. On the contrary, and as shown by certain articles in this special issue, rethinking and fleshing out the intricacies and complexities of the mundane – unemployment, child's play, and education – can provide powerful incentives for anthropologists to become publicly, socially, and politically engaged.

In this sense, the version of an engaged anthropology presented in this issue is, in contrast with our initial objective, not one predicated on a distancing of ethnographic theory and practice, but one which questions and re-examines such a longstanding divide. We are not alone in such a task. Michal Osterweil argues that such a divide 'perpetuates a number of false oppositions between political action and intellectual work' (2013: 599). Based on the ethnographic research on the Italian Movimento dei Movimenti (MoM), Osterweil argues that the rigid divisions between the 'real world politics' and the 'ivory tower' of the academia and categorisations prevent further engagements with alternatives. The practice of engaged anthropology is therefore about developing 'a better understanding of how

[textual practices and practices in the real world] intersect and overlap' (2013: 615). The politics of engagement thus opens up radical alternatives that ethnographers can analyse and theorise. It is about giving room for uncertainties to destabilise political hegemonies. In a similar fashion to Osterweil, Luke Lassiter points out the problem concerning 'the integration of theory and practice', and cautions that the practice of collaboration between researchers and their subjects 'is increasingly conditioning … our so-called pure research' (2005: 84). The production of ethnography becomes a political act that involves not only researchers within the boundaries of anthropological discourse, but also publics, thus rendering collaborative ethnography 'a grassroots public anthropology' (2005: 97).

When Raymond Firth received the 1981 Malinowski Award at the 41st meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, he also attended to the metaphor of the ivory tower and its relationship with anthropology. As he explains, the term originated in the work of French literary critic Sainte Beuve to describe the sometimes seclusive working mannerisms of poet Alfred de Vigny. As Firth writes, 'It has sometimes been said that anthropologists are living in an ivory tower, with no connection with the world of reality'. Yet, as Firth hurriedly went on to add, 'If Vigny did retreat into his ivory tower, it was not to shut himself off forever from the world and its problems; on the contrary, it was to re-equip himself for struggle on the literary and political sense' (Firth 1981: 199). Indeed, one of the main points that emerged from the conference, and which is highlighted by the five papers in this issue, is that the textual, theoretical, and stylistic mannerisms of anthropological prose should not be abandoned, but rather become more sensitive to political, public, and social issues. The future of an engaged anthropology lies in making anthropological knowledge more accessible and relevant for non-anthropologists through renewed ways of writing and communicating (Stoller 2013). The main task we face as anthropologists and public scholars might very well involve not tearing down the ivory tower, but making it transparent.

Our answer to the long-posed problem and dichotomy between theory and practice is that there is no dichotomy between the two, but rather connections, relations, and multiplicities in the making. Take, for example, the circulation of slogans of anthropologist and social activist David Graeber's essay 'Bullshit Jobs' (2013), in the London Underground. For lack of a better term, a certain 'division of labour' between theory and practice, anthropologist and public, made such an event possible: on the one hand, a powerful essay written by a prominent anthropologist and, on the other, the distribution of such knowledge by a social collective. In such an example, anthropological engagement is not simply predicated on the

ethnographer understanding and becoming sensitive to widespread social predicaments and political struggles, but to their empowering these through the creation of something new – a new concept or way of thinking which can renew and enhance political perspectives and struggles. In this sense, an engaged anthropology can act as the impetus for reconciling and recombining anthropological theory and social activism in more powerful and innovative guises (Martin and Flynn 2014; Kyriakides 2014).

Also relevant in this regard are the politics and growing contestations surrounding the production and distribution of anthropological knowledge. Although on this occasion we do not have the luxury of adequately exploring it, we think it is urgent to at the very least gesture to a growing corpus of anthropological literature forcing us to rethink, and hopefully reclaim, the potential for anthropological knowledge to be engaged (Miller 2012; Jackson and Anderson 2014; Corsin Jiménez et al. 2015). Spearheaded by prominent journals such as American Ethnologist, HAU, and Cultural Anthropology, chants for anthropological knowledge to be freely available and to resist the increasing neoliberalism of higher education are becoming more powerful. The emergence of open-access publication platforms (including, since 1999, this journal) serves in problematising and exposing kinks in faulty academic systems which reward citations instead of intellectual vigour and public involvement (Mitchell 2014).

In order to maximise the potency of anthropological critique, theory, and knowledge, we need to reconsider and reconfigure the platforms through which these are made available to publics broadly defined. Experimentalism, not only in writing, but also in opening up the conduit towards the distribution of anthropological knowledge and thinking, provide some of the needed conditions for anthropological engagement. We agree with philosopher Isabelle Stengers when she writes that the call for a politically engaged academy provides 'the outline of a possible new kind of researcher, inventing the means for independence in relation to their sources of finance, which enslave their practices, [and] is the order of the day' (Stengers 2015: 115). The future of an engaged anthropology does not simply depend on becoming aware and grappling with politics taking place outside academia, but with those within it.

Contributions to the issue

In her contribution to the issue, Phaedra Douzina-Bakalaki uses the theme of engagement to explore the political ambivalence surrounding a soup kitchen in crisis-ridden Greece. Her work provides a timely and critical addition to anthropological literature of 'solidarity' which surrounds volatile ethnographic milieus. As she writes, despite the importance anthropologists attach to the notion of solidarity, she never witnessed the given term used by the women working in the soup kitchen during her fieldwork there. Likewise, she never heard the term 'engagement' being used. Rather, as Douzina-Bakalaki writes, engagement in her work acts as a 'prism'. Instead of an ethnographic object, which her interlocutors discussed and debated, engagement – or rather engagements, as she makes clear – is a term which conveys the multiple positionalities and ways of thinking and acting in the world that the women working in the soup kitchen employ: that of the mother, the housemistress, the volunteer, and so on. The notion of engagement manifests out of the multiplicity of meanings, values, and practices which permeate such overlapping identities. Put differently, engagement does not simplify and singularise, but rather complicates. Engagement, as a suggestion of ethnographic insight, evades the ideologically homogeneous facade suggestive of notions of solidarity, and instead gestures towards the multitude of messy political, religious, and discursive spaces constituting the affective contours of both food provision and Greek society at large.

If in Douzina-Bakalaki's article engagement manifests as an ethnographic lens, in Ines Ponte's paper, it takes the form of a method and, most importantly, of an ethnographic ethic. Ponte's task is to decouple doll-play, an important part of child development and world-making, from ritual which, thus far anthropologists have insisted on linking it to. Ponte thus uses the term engagement to denote the dimensions of the recurrent encounters, intimacies, and proximities that she developed with both children and adults during her fieldwork. Engagement, in Ponte's sense, demands an intensified ethnographic ethic of 'being there', aiming to situate the activities and perspectives of children beyond anthropological conceptualisations of social structure and ritual. Ponte's extensive engagement with a family in her fieldsite in rural Angola allows her to situate child's play in the back-alleys of ritual – in other words, in the intimacy of everyday spaces and familial encounter which 'combine different dimensions of labour and play' (Ponte, this issue). In this way, Ponte echoes Stoller's suggestion, articulated powerfully in this issue's Afterword, that an anthropological ethic with engagement surpasses analytic considerations, and extends into forging and nourishing relationships of trust, and even kinship, with the people with whom we do research.

Landi's contribution to this issue argues the importance of anthropological sensibilities in researching and developing effective (and often controversial) sex education programmes. Her multi-layered role working in the local youth centre Spazio Giovani in Bologna highlights the common but often neglected tensions of which Shah reminded us eight years ago. As a professionally trained sex educator, she has access to the institutional system that influences how public policies are translated into educative practices, which, in turn, reflect dominant social representations of teenage sexuality. Her anthropological training also influenced the processes of researching, developing, and testing that inspired programmes such as W l'amore. Landi casts a critical gaze at the institutional constraints upon the implementation of such education practices. With her ethnography of Spazio Giovani as a work place and a space of creative and innovative thinking, Landi makes a strong case for the role of anthropology in deconstructing socially accepted barriers and re- and co-constructing frameworks for educational practices.

Datta's paper explores how North-East Indian activists engage with academic works emanating from Europe and America, exploring the importance of these works to legitimise their cause. Through ethnography, Datta explores how the members of Sappho for Equality, a grassroots organisation concerned with 'empowering' lesbian, bisexual, and female to male transsexuals in Kolkata, critique and work with the concept of 'homonationalism' as it is developed by the U.S scholar Jasbir Puar (2007, 2013). Datta argues that as academics, we should take activists' engagement with academic texts seriously, noting that instead of treating non-academic interpretations as misinterpretations or as a reframing of the text, academics should consider these gaps between academic and non-academic interpretations of works as opportunities to explore new creative forms of knowledge production. Furthermore, Datta urges, academics should contemplate how their tropes, buzzwords, and assumptions about who is reading their texts and why, excludes people, particularly those outside of Euro-American academic context, from engaging with their work.

Whereas Datta's paper explores the difficulties of engaging with academic ideas and the global hierarchies of power inherent in these ways of engaging, Foster's paper demonstrates how engagement can be at once crucial for everyday life and at the same time near impossible to achieve. Through exploring how the term 'engagement' has been utilised within the unemployment sector in Manchester, Foster's work considers engagement in two ways. Firstly, he describes how the government's employment incentives both encourage and measure a person's willingness to engage with their search for work. The narrative of

engagement in this instance takes the form of Foucauldian disciplinary acts of self-production, in which the unemployed person is urged, and arguably coerced, into enacting neoliberal personhood premised on marrying a sense of self-realisation with the job search process. Secondly, Foster considers how unemployed people's attempts to interact with bureaucratic mechanisms through enacting engaged personhood do not always result in the promised gains, leaving many alienated from the process of securing work. In concluding with Foster's paper, we draw attention to the negative ramifications of engagement as a mode of state bureaucracy and control, and a means of handing responsibility for high unemployment rates back to unemployed people, as opposed to tackling structural inequality and failing methods of global capitalist production.

About the Authors

Theodoros Kyriakides is currently a temporary lecturer at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Manchester, where he was awarded his PhD. His research interests revolve around and combine patient activism, illness narratives, witchcraft, and ethnographic theory. theodoros.kyriakides@manchester.ac.uk, @bio_karneia.

Hester Clarke was awarded her PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Manchester in August 2016. Her current areas of interest include aesthetics, beautification, beauty work, race and ethnicity, class, Islam, gender, social inequality, and multiculturalism in the UK context. clarke.hester@googlemail.com

Ximin Zhou is currently a PhD Candidate in Social Anthropology with Visual Media, at the University of Manchester. Her research interests lie in urban development, infrastructures such as roads, inequalities and negotiations in the time of change, and the imagination and materialisation of the 'future' in a Chinese context. xzhou424@gmail.com, @ximinzhou.

Acknowledgments

References

Basu, Paul. 2016. 'Anthropology education and public engagement: Where do we go from here?' Anthropology Today 3(2), 3-4. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12236.

Berreman, Gerald D. 1968. 'Is Anthropology Alive? Social Responsibility in Social Anthropology'. Current Anthropology, 9(5), 391-396. https://doi.org/10.1086/200923.

Clarke, Kamari M. 2010. 'Toward a critically engaged ethnographic practice'. Current Anthropology, 51(S2), S301-S312. https://doi.org/10.1086/653673.

Cervone, Emma. 2007. 'Building Engagement: Ethnography and Indigenous Communities Today'. Transforming Anthropology, 15(2), 97-110. https://doi.org/10.1525/tran.2007.15.2.097.

D'Andrade, Roy. 1995. 'Moral Models in Anthropology, Objectivity and Militancy: A Debate'. Current Anthropology 36(3), 399-408. https://doi.org/10.1086/204377.

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. 1994. What is Philosophy? New York: Columbia Press.

Eriksen, Thomas H. 2005. Engaging Anthropology: The Case for a Public Presence. London: Bloomsbury Press.

Fabius, Maximus. 2016. 'An anthropologist explains why Trump will win in November'. Fabius Maximus website. Available at: https://fabiusmaximus.com/2016/05/05/maximilian-forete-explains-why-trump-will-win-in-november-96431/ (accessed 3rd December, 2016).

Fassin, Didier. 2013. 'Why Ethnography Matters: On Anthropology and Its Publics'. Cultural Anthropology 28(4), 621-646. https://doi.org/10.1111/cuan.12030.

Firth, Raymond. 1981. 'Engagement and Detachment: Reflections on Applying Social Anthropology to Social Affairs'. Human Organization 40(3), 193-201. https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.40.3.c035k82pm2651531.

Forte, Maximiliane. 2011. 'The Human Terrain System and Anthropology: A Review of Ongoing Public Debates'. American Anthropologist 113(1), 149-153. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2010.01315.

Fortun, Kim and Mike Fortun. 2015. 'An Infrastructural Moment in the Human Sciences'. Cultural Anthropology 30(3): 359-367. https://doi.org/10.14506/ca30.3.01.

Gjessing, Gutorm. 1968. 'The Social Responsibility of the Social Scientist'. Current Anthropology 9(5), 397-402. https://doi.org/10.1086/200924.

Gough, Kathleen. 1968. 'New Proposals for Anthropologist'. Current Anthropology 9(5), 403-435. https://doi.org/10.1086/200925.

Graeber, David. 2013. 'On the phenomenon of bullshit jobs'. Strike Magazine. Available at http://strikemag.org/bullshit-jobs/, (accessed 23 September, 2016).

Green, Sarah, Chris Gregory, Madeleine Reeves, Jane K. Cowan, Olga Demetriou, Ines Koch, Michael Carrithers, Ruben Andersson, Andre Gingrich, Sharon Macdonald, Salhi.C. Açiksöz, Umut Yildirim, Thomas. H. Eriksen, Chris Shore, Douglas R. Holmes, Michael Herzfeld, Marilyn Strathern, Casper.B. Jensen, Keir Martin, Dimitris Dalakoglou, Giorgos Poulimenakos, Stef Jansen, Čarna Brkovič, Thomas M. Wilson, Niko Besnier, Daniel Guinness, Mark Hann, Pamela Ballinger, and Dace Dzenovska. 2016. 'Brexit Referendum: first reactions from anthropology'. Social Anthropology 24(4), 478-502. https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12331 .

Hage, Ghassan. 2015. Alter-Politics. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Harrison, Faye V., Carole McGranahan, Matilda Ostow, Melissa Rosario, Paul Stoller, Gina A. Ulysse, and Maria Vesperi. 2016. 'Introducing the Public Anthropology Institute', Savage Minds, http://savageminds.org/2016/06/27/introducing-the-public-anthropology-institute/, (accessed 29 August, 2016)

Herzfeld, Michael. 2010. 'Engagement, Gentrification, and the Neoliberal Highjacking of History'. Current Anthropology 51(2), 259-267. https://doi.org/10.1086/653420.

Hyatt, Susan B. and Vincent Lyon-Callo. 2003. 'Introduction: Anthropology and Political Engagement'. Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development 32(2), 133-146.

Hyme, Dell. ed., 1969. Reinventing Anthropology. New York: Pantheon.

Jackson, Jason B. and Ryan Anderson. 2014. 'Anthropology and Open Access'. Cultural Anthropology 29(2), 236-263. https://doi.org/10.14506/ca29.2.04.

Jiménez, Alberto Corsín, John Willinsky, Dominic Boyer, Giovanni da Col, and Alex Golub. 2015. 'Why an Open Access Publishing Cooperative can work'. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 5(2), v-xii. https://doi.org/10.14318/hau5.2.002.

Kalir, Barak. 2006. 'The field of work and the work of the field: Conceptualising an anthropological research engagement'. Social Anthropology 14(2), 235-246. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0964028206002564.

Kyriakides, Theodoros. 2014. 'Stillness as a Form of Imaginative Labour'. The Unfamiliar 4(1), 47-55. https://doi.org/10.2218/unfamiliar.v4i1.1095.

Lassiter, Luke E. 2000. 'Authoritative texts, collaborative ethnography and Native American Studies'. American Indian Quarterly 24, 601-14. https://doi.org/10.1353/aiq.2000.0020.

———. 2005. 'Collaborative Ethnography and Public Anthropology'. Current Anthropology 46(1): 83-106. https://doi.org/10.1086/425658.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1961. Tristes Tropiques. London: Hutchinson and Co.

Low, Setha. M. 2011. 'Claiming Space for an Engaged Anthropology: Spatial Inequality and Social Exclusion'. American Anthropologist 113(3), 389-407. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2011.01349.x.

Low, Setha. M. and Sally E. Merry. 2010. 'Engaged Anthropology: Diversity and Dilemmas An Introduction to Supplement 2'. Current Anthropology 51(S2), S203-S226. https://doi.org/10.1086/653837.

Mance, Henry. June 6th 2016. 'Britain has had enough of experts, says Gove'. Financial Times.
https://www.ft.com/content/3be49734-29cb-11e6-83e4-abc22d5d108c accesessed 4/01/2017, subscription required).

Martin, Keir and Alex Flynn. 2015. 'Anthropological Theory and Engagement: A Zero-Sum Game?'. Anthropology Today 31(1), 12-14. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12153.

Miller, Daniel. 2012. 'Open Access, Scholarship and Digital Anthropology'. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 2(1), 285-411. https://doi.org/10.14318/hau2.1.016.

Mitchell, Jon. 2014. 'Anthropologists behaving badly? Impact and the politics of evaluation in an era of accountability'. Etnográfica 18 (2), 275-297. https://doi.org/10.4000/etnografica.3673.

Mosse, David. 2013. 'The Anthropology of International Development'. Annual Review of Anthropology 42, 227-246. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155553.

Mullins, Paul. R. 2011. 'Practicing Anthropology and the Politics of Engagement: 2010 Year in Review'. American Anthropologist 113(2), 235-245. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2011.01327.x.

Ortner, Sherry.B. 2016. 'Dark Anthropology and its Others: Theory Since the Eighties'. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 6(1), 47-73. https://doi.org/10.14318/hau6.1.004.

Osterweil, Michal. 2013. 'Rethinking public anthropology through epistemic politics and theoretical practice'. Cultural Anthropology 28(4), 598-620. https://doi.org/10.1111/cuan.12029.

Puar, Jasbir. 2013. 'Rethinking Homonationalism'. International Journal of Middle East Studies, 45(02), 336-339. https://doi.org/10.1017/s002074381300007x.

———. 2007. Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Time. Duke University Press.

Peacock, James L. 1997. 'The Future of Anthropology'. American Anthropologist 99, 9-29. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1997.99.1.9.

Rakopoulos, Theodoros. 2016. 'Solidarity: The Egalitarian Tensions of a Bridge-Concept'. Social Anthropology 24(2), 142-151. https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12298.

Rylko-Bauer, Barbara, Merrill Singer, and John Van Willigen. 2006. 'Reclaiming Applied Anthropology: Its Past, Present, and Future'. American Anthropologist 108(1), 178-190. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2006.108.1.178.

Scott, James. 1998. Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shah, Alpa. 2008 'A tribute to Paul Hendrich: Engaging Anthropology'. Anthropology Matters 10(1), 1-6.

Singer, Merrill. 2000. 'Why I Am Not a Public Anthropologist'. Anthropology News 41(6), 6-7. https://doi.org/10.1111/an.2000.41.6.6.

Speed, Shannon. 2006. 'At the Crossroads of Human Rights and Anthropology: Toward a Critically Engaged Activist Research'. American Anthropologist 108(1), 66-76. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2006.108.1.66.

Stengers, Isabelle. 2015. In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism. Translated by Andrew Goffey. Paris: Open Humanities Press and meson press 2015.

Stoller, Paul. 2013. 'Anthropological Musings on Blogging Bliss'. Anthropology Now 5(3), 92-96. https://doi.org/10.5816/anthropologynow.5.3.0092.

Susser, Ida. 2010. 'The Anthropologist as a Social Critic: Working toward a more engaged anthropology'. Current Anthropology 51(S2), S227-233. https://doi.org/10.1086/653127.