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In the Journals, June 2015 - Part I

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By Elizabeth Lewis

[Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute](#)

[Deaf Bodies and Corporate Bodies: New Regimes of Value in Bangalore's Business Process Outsourcing Sector](#)

Michele Friedner

This article ethnographically analyses how groups (and not just individuals) are produced in business process outsourcing (BPO) workplaces. In order to mitigate an unstable labour pool, corporations hire deaf workers to perform identical BPO work regardless of their qualifications and backgrounds. These hiring practices serve to cement existing relationships and produce deaf workers as a group marked only by deafness. This article explores how engaging in the same work articulates with deaf young adults' 'sameness work' to produce ambivalent deaf groups. It also analyses the everyday practices of deaf employees, their relationships with their normal co-workers who 'love' them, and the ways that value is reconfigured in the workplace through the existence of disabled workers. This article argues that in contrast to dominant representations of disabled people as unemployable, the (re)inscription of deafness as a source of multiple forms of value begs for a broader analysis of the role of disability in late capitalism.

[Bodily Rights and Collective Claims: The Work of Legal Activists in Interpreting Reproductive and Maternal Rights in India](#)

Carolyn Heitmeyer and Maya Unnithan

This article engages with anthropological approaches to the study of global human rights discourses around reproductive and maternal health in India. Whether couched in the language of human rights or of other social justice frameworks, different forms of claims-making in India exist in tandem and correspond to particular traditions of activism and struggle. Universal reproductive rights language remains a discourse aimed at the state in India, where the primary purpose is to demand greater accountability in

the domain of policy and governance. Outside of these spheres, other languages are strategically chosen by activists for their greater resonance in addressing individual cases of women claiming reproductive violence within the context of the family as well as localized histories of feminist struggle and social justice. In focusing on the work of legal activists and the discourses which inform their interventions, this article seeks to understand how the language of reproductive rights is used in the context of India, not as a 'Western import' which is adapted to local contexts, but rather as one of multiple frameworks of claims-making drawn upon by legal activists emerging from distinct histories of struggle for gender equality and social justice.

[Medical Anthropology Quarterly](#)

[Salutogenic Education? Movement and Whole Child Health in a Waldorf \(Steiner\) School](#)

Elisa J. Sobo

Waldorf education, an independent alternative to public schooling, aims to produce holistically healthy graduates in a formulation that rejects the conventional distinction between education and health. Also striving to bridge that divide, this article characterizes the pedagogically salutogenic techniques Waldorf teachers use in pre-kindergarten (pre-K) and lower grade classes and explicates the ethnomedical understandings underlying them. Waldorf teachers position children as budding participants in a unified field of spiritual and other forces, prioritizing whole-child activities that keep these forces healthfully motile. Their work entails a critique not only of mainstream public schooling's ostensibly pathogenic "head-to-head" focus, but also of the biomedical approach to pediatric health. My analysis of this conjoined critique takes into account the cultural, structural, and existential realities within which Waldorf education's salutary pedagogy is daily framed and fabricated. Further, it explores the implications for anthropology of attending to movement as a key feature of healthful human experience.

[Works of Illness and the Challenges of Social Risk and the Specter of Pain in the Lived Experience of TMD](#)

Emery R. Eaves, Mark Nichter, Cheryl Ritenbaugh, Elizabeth Sutherland, and Samuel F. Dworkin

Temporomandibular Disorders (TMD) represent a particular form of

chronic pain that, while not outwardly debilitating, profoundly impacts interactions as fundamental to human existence as smiling, laughing, speaking, eating, and intimacy. Our analysis, informed by an expanded “works of illness” assessment, draws attention to work surrounding social and physical risk. We refer to these as the work of stoicism and the work of vigilance and identify double binds created in contexts that call for both. Conflicting authorial stances in informants’ narratives are shown to be essential in maintaining a positive identity in the face of illness. While earlier ethnographic studies report TMD sufferers’ experience of stigma and search for diagnosis and legitimacy, we present a group of individuals who have accepted diagnosis at face value and soldier through pain as a fundamental aspect of their identity.

[Selective Reproduction: Social and Temporal Imaginaries for Negotiating the Value of Life in Human and Animal Neonates](#)

Mette N. Svendsen

This article employs a multi-species perspective in investigating how life’s worth is negotiated in the field of neonatology in Denmark. It does so by comparing decision-making processes about human infants in the Danish neonatal intensive care unit with those associated with piglets who serve as models for the premature infants in research experiments within neonatology. While the comparison is unusual, the article argues that there are parallels across the decision-making processes that shape the lives and deaths of infants and pigs alike. Collectivities or the lack thereof as well as expectations within linear or predictive time frames are key markers in both sites. Exploring selective reproductive processes across human infants and research piglets can help us uncover aspects of the cultural production of viability that we would not otherwise see or acknowledge.

[Eating and Feeding at the Margins of the State: Barriers to Health Care for Undocumented Migrant Women and the ‘Clinical’ Aspects of Food Assistance](#)

Megan A. Carney

In this article, I examine the various meanings of Mexican and Central American migrant women’s utilization of private food assistance programs. I present findings from 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2008 and 2011 with migrant women, public health workers, and staff and volunteers of

food assistance programs in Santa Barbara County, California. I discuss the barriers undocumented women face in accessing formal health care and the social and moral obligations that underpin these women's role in feeding others. I also document the ways in which private food assistance programs are orienting toward a focus on health in service delivery, and how women depend on provisions from these programs to support feeding practices at home. I argue that these findings are significant for current engagement by critical medical anthropologists in studying framings of "the clinic" and cultural beliefs about "deservingness."

[Communicating 'Evidence': Lifestyle, Cancer, and the Promise of a Disease-Free Future](#)

Kirsten Bell and Svetlana Ristovski-Slijepcevic

In the era of evidence-based health care, conferences aimed at disseminating scientific knowledge perform an essential role in shaping policy and research agendas and transforming physician practice. Drawing on observations at two U.S. cancer prevention conferences aimed at knowledge translation, we examine the ways that evidence regarding the relationship between cancer and lifestyle is articulated and enacted. We show that characterizations of the evidence base at the conferences far outstripped what is presently known about the relationship between cancer and lifestyle. The messages presented to conference participants were also personalized and overtly moralistic, with attendees engaged not merely as practitioners but as members of the public at risk for cancer. We conclude that conferences seeking to bring together knowledge "makers" and knowledge "users" play a potentially important role in the production of scientific facts and are worthy of further study as distinct sites of knowledge production.

[Global Health Care-seeking Discourses Facing Local Clinical Realities: Exploring the Case of Cancer](#)

Rikke Sand Andersen, Marie Louise Tørring, and Peter Bedsted

Using cancer as an example and drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of field and on prolonged fieldwork in Danish general medical practice settings, we examine how discourses about what counts as legitimate help-seeking practices are negotiated in local clinical encounters. Overall, we identify competition between two discourses on help-seeking practices. This competition is present most when people seek help with unspecific, vague, or diffuse

illness complaints, voicing uncertainty as to what counts as signs of illness, characteristic of proactive discourses emanating from global, scientific biomedicine. Such indistinct help-seeking conflicts with the dominant discourse in the local clinical setting and is characterized by an overt focus on identification of the chief complaint. The analysis illustrates how competing discourses may result in conflicting expectations to the clinical encounter and prove counterproductive to ensuring early diagnosis of cancer.

[A Chilling Example? Uruguay, Philip Morris International, and WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#)

Andrew Russell, Megan Wainwright, and Hadii Mamudu

The World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is the first international public health treaty to address the global spread of tobacco products. Ethnographic research at the fourth meeting of the FCTC's Conference of the Parties in Uruguay highlights the role of the FCTC in recalibrating the relationship between international trade and investment agreements and those of global public health. Specifically, we chart the origins and development of the Punta del Este Declaration, tabled by Uruguay at the conference, to counter a legal request by Philip Morris International, the world's largest tobacco transnational, for arbitration by the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes over Uruguay's alleged violations of several international trade and investment treaties. We argue that medical anthropologists should give greater consideration to global health governance and diplomacy as a potential counterweight to the 'politics of resignation' associated with corporate capitalism.

[Medical Humanities](#)

[Thinking Regionally: Narrative, the Medical Humanities and Region](#)

Keir Waddington

Drawing on multiple literatures from history, geography, anthropology, sociology and literature, this essay asks questions about what we mean by region and why narratives of region should matter to the medical humanities. The essay surveys how region can be used as a lens of analysis, exploring the various academic approaches to region and their limitations. It argues that regions are dynamic but also unstable as a category of analysis and are often used uncritically by scholars. In encouraging scholars

working in the medical humanities to be aware that regions are not simple objective or analytical boxes, the essay shows how an awareness of region helps challenge metropolitan whiggism and ideas of core and periphery to give a more prominent place to hinterlands, market towns and rural environments. Furthermore, the essay considers how incorporating region into our understanding of illness can offer new insights. It demonstrates the need for scholars to be attuned to the narratives constructed around regions, suggesting that regions can be viewed as discursive formations that provide a frame for understanding both collective and personal ideas of, and responses to, health and illness, disease and healing, to create what Megan Davies calls a more nuanced 'intellectual cartography'.

[Henry's Voices: The Representation of Auditory Verbal Hallucinations in an Autobiographical Narrative](#)

Zsófia Demjén and Elena Semino

The book *Henry's Demons* (2011) recounts the events surrounding Henry Cockburn's diagnosis of schizophrenia from the alternating perspectives of Henry himself and his father Patrick. In this paper, we present a detailed linguistic analysis of Henry's first-person accounts of experiences that could be described as auditory verbal hallucinations. We first provide a typology of Henry's voices, taking into account who or what is presented as speaking, what kinds of utterances they produce and any salient stylistic features of these utterances. We then discuss the linguistically distinctive ways in which Henry represents these voices in his narrative. We focus on the use of Direct Speech as opposed to other forms of speech presentation, the use of the sensory verbs hear and feel and the use of 'non-factive' expressions such as I thought and as if. We show how different linguistic representations may suggest phenomenological differences between the experience of hallucinatory voices and the perception of voices that other people can also hear. We, therefore, propose that linguistic analysis is ideally placed to provide in-depth accounts of the phenomenology of voice hearing and point out the implications of this approach for clinical practice and mental healthcare.

[Choreographing Lived Experience: Dance, Feelings and the Storytelling Body](#)

Karin Eli and Rosie Kay

Although narrative-based research has been central to studies of illness experience, the inarticulate, sensory experiences of illness often remain obscured by exclusively verbal or textual inquiry. To foreground the body in our investigation of subjective and intersubjective aspects of eating disorders, we—a medical anthropologist and a contemporary dance choreographer—designed a collaborative project, in which we studied the experiences of women who had eating disorders, through eight weeks of integrating dance practice-based, discussion-based and interview-based research. Grounded in the participants' own reflections on choreographing, dancing and watching others perform solos about their eating disordered experiences, our analysis examines the types of knowledge the participants used in choreographing their dance works, and the knowledge that they felt the dance enabled them to convey. We find that the participants consistently spoke of feeling as guiding their choreographic processes; they also said the experiences they conveyed through their dance works were centred in feelings, rather than in practices or events. Through dance, the participants said they could communicate experiences that would have remained unspoken otherwise. Yet, notably, dance practice also enabled participants to begin defining and describing their experiences verbally. We suggest, therefore, that through engaging participants in contemporary dance practice, we can begin to identify and address embodied experiences of illness and recovery that may be silenced in speech or writing alone.

[The Impact of an Arts-Based Programme on the Affective and Cognitive Components of Empathic Development](#)

Joyce Zazulak, Camilla Halgren, Megan Tan, and Lawrence E.M. Grierson

Medical education research demonstrates that empathic behaviour is amenable to positive change when targeted through educational programmes. This study evaluates the impact of an arts-based intervention designed to nurture learner empathy through the provision of facilitated visual literacy activities. Health Sciences students (N=19) were assigned to two learning groups: a group that participated in a visual literacy programme at the McMaster Museum of Art and a control group that participated in the normal Health Sciences curriculum. All participants completed an inter-reactivity index, which measures empathy on affective and cognitive levels, prior to and following the programme. Those individuals assigned to the visual literacy programme also completed open-ended questions concerning the programme's impact on their empathic development. The index scores were

subjected to independent within-group, between-test analyses. There was no significant impact of the programme on the participants' overall empathic response. However, sub-component analyses revealed that the programme had a significant positive effect on cognitive aspects of empathy. This finding was substantiated by the narrative reports. The study concludes that the affective focus of humanities-based education needs to be enhanced and recommends that learners are educated on the different components that comprise the overall empathic response.

New Genetics and Society

Epigenetics for the Social Sciences: Justice, Embodiment, and Inheritance in the Postgenomic Age

Maurizio Meloni

In this paper, I firstly situate the current rise of interest in epigenetics in the broader history of attempts to go “beyond the gene” in twentieth-century biology. In the second part, after a summary of the main differences between epigenetic and genetic mutations, I consider what kind of implications the sui generis features of epigenetic mutations may have for the social sciences. I focus in particular on two sites of investigation: (a) the blurring of the boundaries between natural and social inequalities in theories of justice and their possible implications for public policy and public health and (b) a deepening of the notion that the constitution of the body is deeply dependent on its material and socially shaped surroundings (“embodied constructivism”). In conclusion, I advance some cautionary reflections on some of the (known and unprecedented) problems that the circulation of epigenetics in wider society may present.

How the Genome Got a Life Span

Martine Lappé and Hannah Landecker

In the space of little more than a decade, ideas of the human genome have shifted significantly, with the emergence of the notion that the genome of an individual changes with development, age, disease, environmental inputs, and time. This paper examines the emergence of the genome with a life span, one that experiences drift, instability, and mutability, and a host of other temporal changes. We argue that developments in chromatin biology have provided the basis for this genomic embodiment of experience and exposure. We analyze how time has come to

matter for the genome through chromatin, providing analysis of examples in which the human life course is being explored as a set of material changes to chromatin. A genome with a life span aligns the molecular and the experiential in new ways, shifting ideas of life stages, their interrelation, and the temporality of health and disease.

[Epigenetic Determinism in Science and Society](#)

Miranda R. Waggoner and Tobias Uller

The epigenetic “revolution” in science cuts across many disciplines, and it is now one of the fastest-growing research areas in biology. Increasingly, claims are made that epigenetics research represents a move away from the genetic determinism that has been prominent both in biological research and in understandings of the impact of biology on society. We discuss to what extent an epigenetic framework actually supports these claims. We show that, in contrast to the received view, epigenetics research is often couched in language as deterministic as genetics research in both science and the popular press. We engage the rapidly emerging conversation about the impact of epigenetics on public discourse and scientific practice, and we contend that the notion of epigenetic determinism – or the belief that epigenetic mechanisms determine the expression of human traits and behaviors – matters for understandings of the influence of biology and society on population health.

[Metaphors in Search of a Target: The Curious Case of Epigenetics](#)

Aleksandra Stelmach and Brigitte Nerlich

Carrying out research in genetics and genomics and communicating about them would not be possible without metaphors such as “information,” “code,” “letter” or “book.” Genetic and genomic metaphors have remained relatively stable for a long time but are now beginning to shift in the context of synthetic biology and epigenetics. This article charts the emergence of metaphors in the context of epigenetics, first through collecting some examples of metaphors in scientific and popular writing and second through a systematic analysis of metaphors used in two UK broadsheets. Findings show that while source domains for metaphors can be identified, such as our knowledge of electrical switches or of bookmarks, it is difficult to pinpoint target domains for such metaphors. This may be indicative both of struggles over what epigenetics means for scientists (natural and

social) and of difficulties associated with talking about this, as yet, young field in the popular press.

[Epigenetics: Localizing Biology Through Co-Laboration](#)

Jörg Niewöhner

This paper reports on a co-laborative laboratory ethnography in a molecular biology laboratory conducting research on environmental epigenetics. It focuses on a single study concerned with the material implications of social differentiation. The analysis briefly raises biopolitical concerns. Its main concern lies with an understanding of the human body as local in its working infrastructure or “inner laboratory”, an understanding that emerges from the co-laborative inquiry between biologists and anthropologist. This co-laborative mode of inquiry raises productive tensions within biology as to the universal or local nature of human nature and within anthropology as to the status of human biology within social theory. The paper cannot resolve this tension. Rather it explores it as an epistemic object in the context of interdisciplinarity, ontography and co-laboration. In concluding, it specifies co-laboration as temporary, non-teleological joint epistemic work aimed at producing new kinds of reflexivity.

[Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine](#)

[‘Trust my Doctor, Trust my Pancreas’: Trust as an Emergent Quality of Social Practice](#)

Simon Cohn

Growing attention is being paid to the importance of trust, and its corollaries such as mistrust and distrust, in health service and the central place they have in assessments of quality of care. Although initially focussing on doctor-patient relationships, more recent literature has broadened its remit to include trust held in more abstract entities, such as organisations and institutions. There has consequently been growing interest to develop rigorous and universal measures of trust.

[Science as Culture](#)

[State-Supported Science and Imaginary Lock-in: The Case of Regenerative Medicine in Japan](#)

Koichi Mikami

Regenerative medicine (RM) in Japan lays strong emphasis on a specific trajectory of its development, which deploys human induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells as the primary sources for the technology. The technique to create these stem cells was developed in 2006 by a Japanese stem cell scientist, Shinya Yamanaka, and since its applicability to human cells was established about a year later, this new type of cells has become to be considered as a potential substitute for human embryonic stem cells. While the clinical value of these cells are yet to be confirmed, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology decided to concentrate its support on iPS cells research and turned it into a national project. This decision reflected the state's vision of initiating the transition to a knowledge-based society, which was adopted in the 1990s to tackle the prolonged deflation in the country. As the research became intertwined with this policy vision, however, the Ministry came to see bringing its success as more important than ever, while other trajectories of RM were left underrated and largely unsupported. Industrial actors counteracted this situation and developed an initiative to recognize existing technical capability in the country, but its impact has been so far negligible. This indicates that the nation is locked in the particular trajectory of RM. Hence, this Japanese RM research enterprise presents an interesting case to understand how states' commitment may not only shape the course of scientific research but also reduce flexibility in technological development.

[Myths of Modern American Sleep: Naturalizing Primordial Sleep, Blaming Technological Distractions, and Pathologizing Children](#)

Matthew J. Wolf-Meyer

Across different kinds of modern influences on human sleep—from communication and media technologies, to medical interventions and chemicals used to modify sleep and wakefulness, to the organization of social life—some are seen as interfering with human nature. Others, like many institutions, are accepted as natural. This is apparent in the example of school start times, which are widely assumed to be based on an agrarian past. Unlike modern media technologies, school start times are often implicitly accepted as based in nature, and help constitute a sense of a historical primordial natural state in which humans lived in harmony with nature. The presumed naturalness of institutional times stands in opposition to modern media technologies and laboratory-derived chemicals, which are often criticized for being disruptive to our human natures and as having negative impacts on our sleep

patterns. In some cases, technology may be serving as a distraction, interfering with a child's sleep, but technology also provides an easy object of criticism, for physicians, scientists, and parents. In doing so, normative social expectations and the institutions that frame them escape criticism in the face of blaming the disorderly behavior of individuals.

[Turning Aggression into an Object of Intervention: Tinkering in a Crime Control Pilot Study](#)

Francisca Grommé

Real-world experiments that test new technologies can affect policy and practice by introducing new objects of intervention through tinkering; the ad hoc work of realigning relations in the face of frictions, surprises, and disturbances that occur when introducing a technology. In a pilot study on aggression detection, tinkering moved aggression in and out of the human body. In the end, the pilot defined aggression as a set of acoustic-physical variables representing the aroused human body, alongside other signals of aggression. How aggression as an object intervention was shaped by tinkering is relevant because it involved inclusions and exclusions by the authorities who identified aggression, the methods they applied, and mandate for intervention. A focus on relations that are tinkered within a real-world experiment permits critical engagement with this format. Although the real-world experimental format is credited with producing knowledge about a technology's 'actual' performance, actors and events at the pilot study location were made only selectively relevant. Analyses of real-world experiments should therefore explain how experiments selectively make the world relevant, giving only particular objects of intervention a truth status.

[**Social Science & Medicine** \(July 2015\)](#)

[Lives Matter. Do Votes? Invited Commentary on 'Black Lives Matter: Differential Mortality and the Racial Composition of the U.S. Electorate, 1970-2004'](#)

Jonathan Purtle

Racial health disparities in the United States are produced and perpetuated through public policies that differentially allocate risks and resources for health. Elected officials have the ability modify the structural determinants of racial health disparities through policy decisions and, through voting, the electorate can influence

the extent to which these policy decisions promote health equity. In this commentary, I synthesize research on the voting behavior of electorates and policy decisions and present strategies to foster sociopolitical environments that are conducive to the implementation and enforcement of racial health disparity reduction initiatives. There is a need for research that contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of voting in health policy making processes and further development of empirically-based policy advocacy strategies.

[Birth-Cohort Trends in Older-Age Functional Disability and their Relationship with Socio-Economic Status: Evidence From a Pooling of Repeated Cross-Sectional Population-Based Studies for the U.K.](#)

Marcello Morciano, Ruth M. Hancock, and Stephen E. Pudney

We examine birth-cohort trends behind recent changes in the prevalence of functional disability in the older population living in private households in the United Kingdom (UK). By using three different socio-economic indicators available in the nationally representative cross-sectional data on older individuals interviewed between 2002 and 2012 in the Family Resource Survey (FRS) (96,733 respondents), we investigate the extent to which the overall trends have been more favourable among more advantaged than disadvantaged socioeconomic groups. Compared to the cohort of people born in 1924, successive cohorts of older men have lower odds of having at least one functional difficulty (FD), whereas no significant trend was found for women. Among people with at least one FD, however, the number of disabilities increases for each successive cohort of older women (incidence rate ratio 1.027, 95% confidence interval 1.023 to 1.031, P