



Society for Psychological Anthropology NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021



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cover photo: The cover image shows the opening session of Society for Psychological Anthropology's Biennial 2021 hosted virtually with the support of Shindig platform. This year's theme was 'Interrogating Inequalities.'

From the SPA President:

Dear Fellow SPA Members,

We made it through another academic year, and this one was a doozy. It has been an unprecedented and challenging time, far beyond anything we could have imagined even two short years ago. We have all been called upon to improvise, to adjust, and to develop new strategies for teaching, research, connection, and just getting through everyday life, all while trying to maintain some sense of equilibrium.

The same has been true of the SPA. Despite the world turning upside down, the Board and I worked hard to maintain as much consistency as possible with our programming and offerings, with the aim of providing some beacon of normalcy amid so much uncertainty. We could not have done that without the amazing dedication of many of our members who agreed to serve on various committees and to take on additional labor during these unpredictable and difficult times. I was reminded, again, and again, of the truly remarkable community that makes up the SPA.

While most of the business of the Society proceeded as usual, the 2021 Biennial was unlike anything that came before. At the beginning of the pandemic (before we knew how long distancing measures would last), we began to vet a number of conference venues in the hopes of hosting an in-person conference. It quickly became apparent, though, that we would not be returning to normal anytime soon. Thanks to the recommendation of some of our members who had attended other online events, we discovered the virtual meeting platform Shindig, which seemed to provide something as close to the in-person experience as possible under current conditions. So, we gathered in virtual space—a medium that took some adjusting but brought

a number of exciting opportunities, including increased international and student participation.

The conference theme of **Interrogating Inequalities** was designed to encourage scholars to radically re-encounter their own data, methodologies, theoretical commitments, engagements with the anthropological canon, and forms of writing and research dissemination, as well as the subdiscipline more broadly. Our aim with this theme was to prompt participants to reflect not only on the colonial dimensions and decolonial possibilities of anthropological work, but also to radically reimagine what it means to be a psychological anthropologist in today's world.

Our membership responded to this call with enthusiasm. Attendance at the 2021 Biennial was robust, with over 300 attendees from five different continents. Panels included such topics as Political Subjectivities, Anticolonial methodologies, White Supremacy and Power, Living and Theorizing Racial Subjectivities, Moral Agency for the Marginalized and how Psychological Anthropology Can Help, Phenomenologies of Inequality and Justice, Injustice, and the Future of Engaged Psychological Anthropology. In addition to the academic program, we held a number of other events, including a poetry slam, a new book celebration, a graduate student trivia night, and our Biennial awards celebration, in addition to impromptu gatherings in the virtual coffee room. The events were well-attended and the quality of the papers and discussions (and socializing!) was truly superb.

One of the most exciting parts of the conference for me was the level of participation we saw from graduate students. Almost one-half of the conference attendees were students, and they participated at every level, from organizing panels and plenaries to presenting their research to participating

in social events. And not only did they participate—they knocked it out of the park. I was truly blown away by the quality of graduate student work presented, as well as by their professionalism, confidence, and overall presence (and if they didn't actually feel confident, they did an excellent job of faking it). This generation of psychological anthropologists is simply fantastic, and we all have much to look forward to as their careers develop.

We also had the opportunity to honor some of the SPA members who have fundamentally shaped the field and influenced so many of us. From a roundtable recognizing the extensive contributions of Bob Levine to the Lifetime Achievement Celebration of Carol Worthman, we had the occasion to embrace and honor the scholarship, mentorship, and vision of these remarkable individuals, even as (especially as) we look forward towards the future.

One key theme that ran through the biennial was the need for us, as both a Society and as a discipline, to reckon with some of the colonialist and racist dimensions of our past and our present. Such an invitation comes from a deep appreciation, affection, and respect for psychological anthropology, the generations who have come before us, and the community that makes up the SPA today. The aim is not to erase the work or people that came before or to reinvent the wheel, but to recognize that times do change, awareness (hopefully) continues to grow, and our discipline needs to grow with it. Growth and change are healthy and good and keep us productively reflecting on where we've been and where we want to go. The perspectives and methods of psychological anthropology are unique and critically important, and they are also both robust and nimble enough to grow and change without losing what makes us a unique field. I find this an exciting and hopeful time, and I'm eager to see what we do with this opportunity.

As I near the end of my term as President of the SPA, I can honestly say that the experience has been one of the most rewarding of my life. I am immensely grateful to have had the opportunity to serve this

organization, which has given so much to me over the years. It has been an intellectual home, yes, but even more than this, it is a community of incredible human beings to which I am lucky enough to belong.

I wish you all a restful and/or productive summer, and continued good health for you and your families.

With much gratitude,



Rebecca Lester

SPA President

Letter from *Ethos* Editor-in-Chief

The Editorial team at *Ethos* is excited to share with you some new developments in 2021, including the ability to bring our readers new types of publications and present our authors and guest editors with innovative options for publication. This letter is a chance to look back on 2020, a year that was disrupted by COVID-19 and all the changes it provoked in our work. While we scrambled to cope with the pandemic, we also have some exciting news that we want to share with you.

Authors and reviewers have also faced obstacles. We had fewer than 80 new submissions for the whole year, down about 25% from the year before. Although it is hardly surprising, the decrease in submissions is especially frustrating given what is perhaps the most important announcement I want to share with the SPA membership and the broader community of scholars: *Ethos* no longer has a page “budget” — we can publish extra pages at no cost to the SPA!

You read that right. No page limit!

We would like to publish more work, and more diverse articles, in the years to come. We are still dedicated to maintaining the journal's quality, so reviews will continue to be rigorous, but we hope to deliver thicker editions, especially as we get ready for our 50th volume in 2022. We will also hold the line on word limits for articles because we want to balance the desires of readers — who have so many things they want to read — and authors — who always want to stick in a couple more citations or another long, digressive footnote.

To take advantage of the new possibilities opened up by the change in page budget and digital tools, we are working on several new initiatives.

1. Special sections: Getting a special edition to press can be fraught with delays, as we have found repeatedly in the past years. Collections can get held up by a single author or a production problem. Early-submitting, conscientious authors are “rewarded” by being saddled with the longest delays. Collections are sometimes uneven in quality, as well. The way they have to come out as a bundle means reviewers and editors cannot work as closely with authors whose work might actually be better served by going through a more substantial revision. And why is six articles of around 132 pages always the right length for a collection?

Given these considerations, we have moved towards more frequent, smaller “special section” model in addition to special editions. A special section can include from two to five papers, or even a larger collection of shorter articles. A special section might be a “position article,” a longer piece of up to 12,000 words, with commentary and responses from other authors. The Editorial team is open to proposals and will consider innovative suggestions, especially because the special section structure means we can publish these unusual collections alongside research reports that follow our more typical structure. We can take more risks because we are not condemning regular articles to a three-month delay as they wait in the queue, as with a special edition. We want to hear your suggestions!

2. “Virtual” special editions: Our publication platform allows us to create online “virtual” special editions: collections of works previously published with those that are just released, with or without a new introduction by an Editor or Guest Editor. We can create virtual special editions to highlight work previously published in *Ethos* or psychological anthropology in another AAA journal (but we're not even limited to these). A virtual special edition

might bring renewed attention to a piece that warrants re-evaluation or re-emphasis, or allow the editors of a special section to virtually bundle it with the earlier seminal piece that inspired that collection.

3. Online early publication: We are seeking to publish manuscripts when they are ready and use Wiley's "early online" publication features more. This just means that, as soon as we get manuscripts through proofreading and prepared for publication, they will appear online, even if their official publication is still weeks or even months off. Given the pattern of downloads, how readers access our articles, and publication metrics, greater use of early online publication can boost our performance and the visibility of Ethos authors.

Ideally, the same online platform that caused us to stumble in 2020 will help make early online publication more frequent and easier. Early online publication rewards authors who respond to queries quickly and gives readers a sense of what is to come in forthcoming editions.

4. Embedded rich media files: If you go onto the author submission page of our Wiley-Blackwell website, you should see four new file designations available when you come to the section where you can upload files: Embedded Video, Embedded Video Placeholder, Embedded Audio, and Transcription. These designations represent terra incognita for us, but we are excited about what this might mean for future publication in Ethos. We are hoping to test-drive our new capabilities with innovative work in the months to come, and we might secure some external support to make these options more viable by providing support.

5. Writing support: 2020 was our biggest year for receiving manuscripts from authors outside North America. We are becoming more global in reach and awareness, something we have hoped to do, not just for Ethos, but also for the breadth and diversity of psychological anthropology. This diversity, however, comes with a price for the editors,

including a lot more hands-on editing and writing coaching. Fortunately, the SPA leadership has agreed to help us provide some targeted support for authors when we have an excellent manuscript that just needs some extra advice and guidance.

2021 will be a year of recovery for us, and we are striving mightily to get back on production schedule. But we also hope that you notice the changes we have worked on: a bit heavier journal (or a longer-than-usual online table of contents), a few innovations, and authors from institutions you may not have seen in our pages before. We look forward to seeing new submissions and working with authors and guest editors to that we can all, together, drive growth in our intellectual community through the pages of Ethos and increase the visibility and recognition of psychological anthropologists.

Sincerely,
Greg Downey

Greg Downey is Chief Editor of Ethos and Professor of Anthropology at Macquarie University in Sydney. He's the author of *Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art*, and co-editor with Daniel Lende of *The Encultured Brain: An Introduction to Neuroanthropology*.

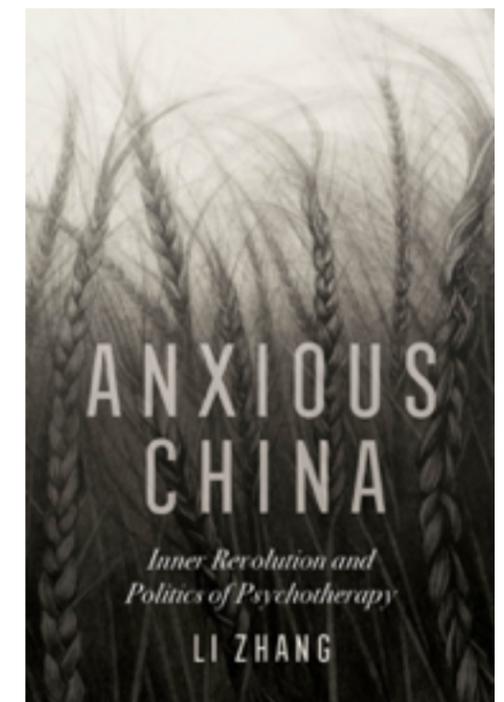
Author's Intro with Li Zhang

This column provides a platform for authors to summarize the significance of their upcoming and/or recently published books in Psychological Anthropology in a short, approachable venue. It provides readers the chance to learn about the significance of the latest research, straight from the source! If you would like to be featured in this column, please contact the Newsletter Editors at spa.an.submissions@gmail.com

The breathless pace of China's economic reform has brought about deep ruptures in socioeconomic structures and people's inner landscapes. Faced with relentless market-driven competition and profound social changes, more and more middle-class urbanites are turning to psychological counseling and training to grapple with their mental distress.

My book is an ethnographic account of how a new inner revolution is unfolding in urban China. As my research shows, this bottom-up, popular psychological movement is reconfiguring the self, family dynamics, social relationships, and modes of governing. I call this phenomenon the "inner revolution" to highlight its transformative impact on so many aspects of life even though it is still in the early stage of development. Unlike the "Cultural Revolution," the "Consumer Revolution," and so on, this inner revolution is relatively quiet but engenders profound changes from within. It is spreading rapidly and its impact goes far beyond the individual realm and clinical space. In the midst of a thriving therapeutic culture, a host of work units such as schools, enterprises, the police, and the military are increasingly keen to incorporate psychological techniques into their personnel management as these organizations face multiple challenges today. Therefore, psychological counseling in China is not limited to the reshaping of the individual and family spheres but also extends to governmental practices and broader social domains. Thus, my ethnographic gaze travels from clinical spaces to broader social spaces such as family, school, and workplace in order to explore how this "inner revolution" is reconfiguring selfhood, psyche, family dynamics, sociality, and the mode of governing in post-socialist times. I show that anxiety—broadly construed in both medical

and social terms—has become a powerful indicator for the general pulse of contemporary Chinese society. While grounded in the ethnographic specificities of middle-class Chinese urbanites, Anxious China seeks to offer powerful insights to scholars working on similar questions in diverse regions of the world.



At the same time, this book is also a deeply personal project for me due to my own unexpected encounter with anxiety attacks a few years ago following the passing of my mother in Kunming, and her long-term torment with undiagnosed mental distress. This unsettling personal and family experience helped me connect more deeply with the people who appear in my book, gaining insights and empathy for their suffering, desire, and struggle. I was no longer an emotionally detached

researcher who was only interested in gathering data. I was someone who could feel their pain beyond words and was able to engage in intimate and heartfelt conversations. For this reason, I hope that my book can reach more readers on this emotional level beyond academic research.

As I write this, the world is struggling with the frightening COVID-19 pandemic. Even though vaccines are on the way and bring a glimpse of hope, the widespread uncertainty and suffering caused by COVID-19 is unlikely to end soon. Meanwhile, the United States faced unprecedented political turmoil in the aftermath of violent Trump supporters storming Capitol Hill and assaulting democracy. In such turbulent and desolate times, it is not exaggerating to say that anxiety captures not only the mood of China but also the general state of being of the contemporary world at this moment. How to live through such an unsettling and difficult time? How to take care of our individual and collective well-being? How to find hope and resilience in the midst of political, economic, and public health crises? These questions become even more pressing for all of us to ponder and grapple with.

Since the publication of this book, I have done many virtual book talks nationally and internationally. It is gratifying to see how my research has sparked new questions, curiosity, debates, and creative interpretations among the readers. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how widespread anxiety and depression are in China and beyond. It emphasizes the urgent need for innovative social and therapeutic intervention. I hope that my book can help cultivate resilience and well-being by destigmatizing mental health issues and by showing how professional help is possible despite some of the pitfalls in this inner revolution. Finally, I hope to contin-

ue this highly productive conversation with more readers in the years to come, especially those interested in the Asian experience of psychological and mental health and its multiple social and political ramifications at a time of profound societal transformations.

Li Zhang is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis. She is the author of *Anxious China: Inner Revolution and Politics of Psychotherapy*, as well as two previous award-winning books, *Strangers in the City* and *In Search of Paradise*. She also co-edited two books: *Privatizing China, Socialism from Afar* and *Can Science and Technology Save China?*. She was a 2008 John Simon Guggenheim Fellow and the President of the Society of East Asian Anthropology (2013-15).

Mentoring Matters - Greg Downey

Reflections on writing your first journal submission

Journal editors are fortunate to receive submissions from new authors, previously unpublished researchers or scholars early in their careers. If they are like me, we love to publish these for so many reasons: the manuscripts often offer novel ideas and share projects the field doesn't already know about widely, and we can see the future of a field to which we are dedicated. When I see an article by a new author or mentor someone less experienced in publishing, it's an opportunity for me, too. I hope we can publish the original research, as long as the editorial office and author together can shepherd the piece through review, revision, and acceptance.

But junior authors sometimes misunderstand what editors expect, so I thought I'd collect some of the feedback I send repeatedly to early-career researchers and share it here:

1) Ethos reviewers are asked whether a manuscript is sufficiently 'innovative' or presents material novel enough to warrant publication. Whether a manuscript offers a distinctive contribution to the field is the most important consideration when deciding whether to publish. We do not ask if an author has exhaustively reviewed all the previous literature on the topic. In fact, given word restrictions, we do not want an over-abundance of literature review. Key texts? Yes. Relating your work to predecessors that inspire it? Of course.

Any journal article has to balance how retrospective and comprehensive it will be with how constructive and suggestive the author is. Check out the length of references lists in a journal before you submit: if your references list is a lot longer than typical, you might be giving the readers too much literature review (if you're writing a review article or synthetic essay, you might need more).

2) On the other hand, everything you do need not be revolutionary or unprecedented. Do not heap abuse on predecessors, some of whom might be asked to review your article. Most innovation is incremental, not paradigm-overthrowing. Bad faith or unbalanced critique, such as twisting an author's assertions out of context or belittling others' intellectual work will often lead reviewers to be equally ungenerous. Academic writing is not bloodsport; you do not have to cast down your ancestors to get published!

3) To get the balance right with prior scholarship, my advice is to focus on including literature you want to engage with substantially, either constructively or critically. A one-off citation of a text in a laundry list citation at the end of a sentence – those lists of six or eight author names and dates strung together in a parenthesis – are not helpful. Likewise, a drive-by 'diss' of another theorist is not scholarship: it's a kind of intellectual insult comedy routine we don't need (and not nearly as sophisticated as it might sound).

4) Reduce excessive meta-essaying. Many junior authors waste verbiage telegraphing where they will go and inserting themselves into their texts. "I conclude..." "I will argue..." "I am interested..." "I seek..." "I will explore..." The work is inherently yours. You can just "conclude" or "argue" without narrating. And for heaven's sake, don't tell us that something is interesting to you; get the reader interested in it instead!! Every self-reference is not "reflexivity": sometimes it's just unnecessarily complex, sloppy writing or interjecting yourself where you don't belong. Removing this layer of unnecessary first-person reference can be like wiping a cloudy film from your arguments. They will suddenly seem bolder, clearer, and more direct.

The point is not that all first-person references must be erased. Rather, superfluous or obscuring first-person interjection complicates prose and drains arguments of their force. Write, “I will argue that...” and then go back and delete the phrase and see if you don’t like it better. When reflexivity adds substantially to the article’s key arguments, it’s entirely appropriate, but often it does not.

5) Most ethnographic research reports should be rhetorically structured inductively. Start with something from the ethnography fairly concrete – an example, a fact, a case study -- and lead into your theory. Most readers prefer to see a clear case or example for a theoretical argument before a lengthy abstract discussion.

Junior authors sometimes front-load their theory, making their introduction a dense literature review and “burying the lede,” as journalists say. The innovative part of the author’s argument is only revealed after the reader has struggled through an intellectual obstacle course. Often, this makes the introduction a slog, with readers unsure whether the article merits perseverance.

Presenting a bit of the ethnographic material or data up front as a provocation or puzzle, coupled with the overarching question or argument, usually makes the most engaging introduction. Don’t wait until 3000 or 4000 words into a 10,000-word article to introduce your own research. In a theoretical or synthetic essay, this rule may not hold, but most of what we publish at Ethos are original research reports.

5) The quickest way through criticism in the reviews can often be reducing the number of points you seek to make. Articles are often hampered by tangential arguments. If a reviewer pushes back on a minor point, or if a paper you present provokes criticism for a secondary argument, consider taking it out if you don’t need it. Too often, when junior authors get criticized, they redouble

their efforts to make a contentious point, often just making the section that attracts the most criticism more obvious and elaborate. If the argument is worth making, maybe it needs its own article, rather than being shoehorned into a piece where it’s underdeveloped.

The most important advice I can offer new writers is to work on writing itself. Don’t approach writing an article. Don’t approach writing your piece like a theoretical project of escalating sophistication and elaborateness; rather, treat it as a craft where clarity, elegance, and impact are foundational virtues. Revision is so often in the direction of greater simplicity.

Take the time to look at the journal in which you are trying to publish, to understand its audience and the community to which it speaks. The editor’s job is not just to evaluate articles, but to find and help develop manuscripts that will engage our journal’s readers and be pieces the authors are proud of for many years. Ethos will not publish your work because you cite trendy terms, bury us in scholarly review, or cut down rival thinkers. We look for innovative work that will engage intellectually with the people who have entrusted us to look after this journal: psychological anthropologists and the other scholars who engage with us.

Please send us your work, even if you are a first-time academic author! We would love to publish original work that is up to our standards, and we are excited to help new voices join our community. It’s one of the best parts of an editor’s job.

Greg Downey is Chief Editor of Ethos and Professor of Anthropology at Macquarie University in Sydney. He’s the author of *Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art*, and co-editor with Daniel Lende of *The Encultured Brain: An Introduction to Neuroanthropology*.

Stirling Prize Feature - Sarah Willen

Fighting for Dignity: Migrant Lives at Israel’s Margins

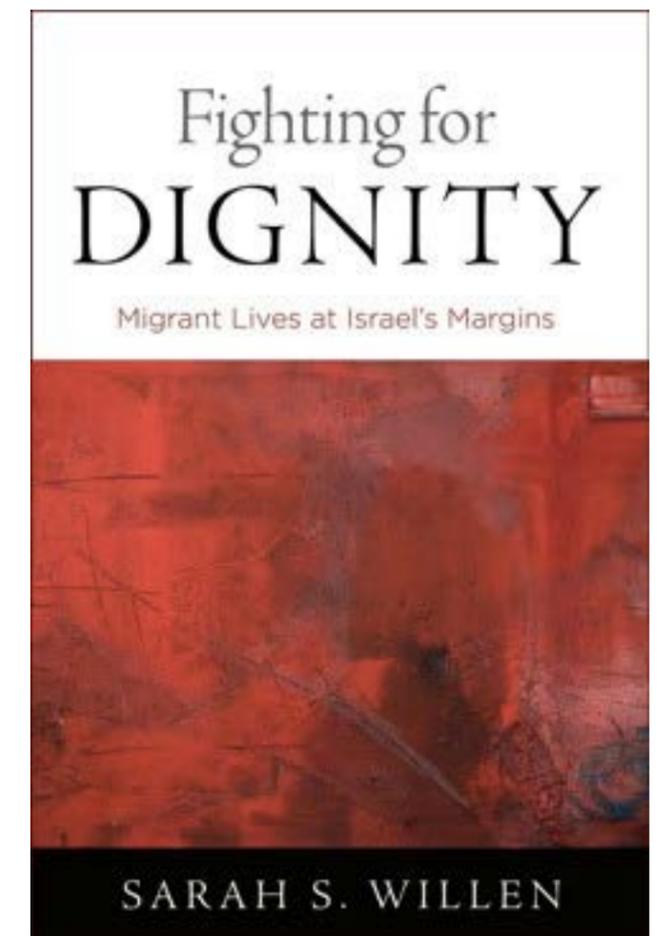
According to Ellen Corin, “an element of inquietude”—of restlessness, worry, or anxiety—should always be part of anthropologists’ “habitual ways of working” (2012:110). As I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to the SPA for recognizing my book *Fighting for Dignity: Migrant Lives at Israel’s Margins* as this year’s Stirling Prize winner, Corin’s reminder—to always make room for that which vexes—reverberates in my mind.

Why inquietude? Shouldn’t this be an occasion to reflect on the central aims of the book itself—to explain that *Fighting for Dignity* explores

- how sociopolitical abjection is experienced by precarious migrants (primarily from Nigeria, Ghana, and the Philippines);
- how migrants struggle to safeguard their sense of *dignity*, craft *inhabitable spaces of welcome*, and perhaps even flourish in an unwelcoming sociopolitical landscape (in Tel Aviv, Israel);
- how local dynamics of membership and belonging are rooted in local moral economies that establish the parameters of everyday discourse, political imagination, and collective moral reflection; and
- how citizen-activists can refuse complicity with policies that Other and abject and strive to build a “decent society”—a society that does not humiliate (Margalit 1996)?

Perhaps. Yet it is May 2021, and the joy of seeing one’s work—to wit, this particular work—celebrated is dampened by the times in which we live. This is especially true since *Fighting for Dignity* itself is an extended meditation on the “destabilizing power of Otherness” (again borrowing from Corin) —and an invitation to readers to destabilize their own assumptions as well. As I write these words, the world is reeling and recovering with appalling unevenness from a

global pandemic. In Israel/Palestine, a fragile cease-fire has stilled this month’s violence, at least momentarily, even as root causes fester amid the rubble, the fresh graves, and the shifting landscapes of both geopolitics and public discourse. And somewhere between the side with the missiles and the side with the war-planes, three migrant workers—an Indian woman and two Thai men—join the ranks of the dead.



After spending the better part of two decades trying to spin complex Middle East realities into prose that can provoke deeper and more nuanced thought, I cannot help but wonder: Can words on a page truly forge a path

from one lifeworld into another? Even if we manage, in our articles and books, to interpret our interlocutors' lived experience with sensitivity and compassion, what can we—as scholars, as ethnographers, as psychological anthropologists—truly accomplish in a world that spins rapidly and far beyond our control?

Michael Jackson, arguably the greatest interpreter of Arendt for anthropologists, sees a kinship between the work of ethnography and Arendt's view that to understand others, we must allow our imagination to go "visiting." Sometimes, such efforts bring pain: "Understanding others," Jackson writes, "requires more than an intellectual movement from one's own position to theirs; it involves physical upheaval, psychological turmoil, and moral confusion" (2009:239).

Perhaps it is naïveté or wishful thinking, but I do believe that ethnography can bridge lifeworlds—and effect change. In *Fighting for Dignity*, I share lessons learned from my Ghanaian, Nigerian, and Filipino interlocutors about Hannah Arendt's notion of natality, perhaps best captured in her view that, "We are free to change the world and start something new in it" (1972:5). Isn't the pursuit of natality our goal when we write, or teach, or seek out moments of ethnographic encounter?

In a sense, the book is a multi-sited journey of the "visiting imagination"—a journey that tacks back and forth between two ethnographic dispositions. On one hand is a perpetual attunement to the "destabilizing power of Otherness" and to the upheaval, turmoil, and confusion that can accompany the pursuit of understanding. The other is an Arendtian view that speech and action—our interlocutors' and our own—can, indeed, change the world.

And so, I close this rather peculiar expression of gratitude and appreciation with the closing words from the introduction to *Fighting for Dignity*:

Some may find these pages difficult to read. They certainly were not easy to write.

Regardless of readers' particular inclinations, I hope all will find in them a sincere effort to reflect on a complex set of human predicaments without falling into the trap of feeling obligated to choose between what Hannah Arendt described as "reckless optimism and reckless despair" (1973:vii). In lieu of these bleak options, let us instead choose ethnography, which brings us closer to the vital if turbulent lifeworlds forged in between.

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Sarah S. Willen is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut, PI of [ARCHES | the AmeRicans' Conceptions of Health Equity Study](#), and Co-Founder of the [Pandemic Journaling Project](#). In addition to the Stirling Prize, her book, *Fighting for Dignity: Migrant Lives at Israel's Margins* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), received the Edie Turner First-Book Prize in Ethnographic Writing (Society for Humanistic Anthropology, 2020) and the Yonathan Shapiro Prize for Best Book in Israel Studies (Association for Israel Studies, 2019) and was named Finalist for a Jordan Schnitzer Book Award (Association for Jewish Studies, 2020).

Condon Prize Feature- Parsa Bastani

Feeling at Home in the Clinic: Therapeutics and Dwelling in an Addiction Rehabilitation Center in Tehran, Iran

What does it mean for patients to feel "at home" in a rehabilitation center? And how does this feeling shape experiences of recovery from mental illness and addiction? I explore these questions in my article "Feeling at Home in the Clinic: Therapeutic Dwelling in an Addiction Rehabilitation Center in Tehran, Iran." This article is based on two months of participant observation and interviews in 2018 at a rehabilitation center for poor and homeless drug using women in Tehran, Iran. I was drawn to this facility because it was one of the first, free residential rehabilitation centers for addicted women in Iran, a country with an estimated 2-3 million drug addicts out of a population of 81 million people.

While spending time alongside patients and staff, I realized that official treatment protocols and technologies were not the only factors influencing rehabilitation outcomes. Instead, what seemed to matter most was women's experiences of social belonging and community life at the Center. Based on this observation, I argue in the paper that the treatment team's emphasis on "therapeutic dwelling" had significant ramifications on the rehabilitation trajectories of patients. I define "therapeutic dwelling" as a patient's ability to form mutual relations of care and concern with others in therapeutic settings. For some patients, a culture of dwelling nurtured a supportive community that helped them through their recoveries. Yet for patients who were unwilling or unable to contribute to the treatment team's vision of an equitable and supportive living environment, therapeutic dwelling threatened to marginalize and exclude them from the rehabilitation process. In this way, I found dwelling to be an ambivalent force and form of sociality in the lives of patients.

This finding theoretically engages with the anthropological literature on dwelling, which has long

emphasized the ethical, life-enabling possibilities that grow out of a sense of mutual concern for others in spaces of cohabitation. Rather than assume that dwelling is inherently related to positive experiences and outcomes, I have suggested that it should be approached as a malleable concept that both has the power to exclude and welcome, to provide and withhold personal connection and intimacy. While I highlight the limitations of dwelling in the paper, this ethnography should be seen as a testament to the importance of care and concern in therapeutic settings. I believe that the key is not to rid treatment settings from an emphasis on dwelling but to think about how these institutions can adopt a more capacious approach to dwelling. I saw how dwelling had the capacity to help patients make new, critical social relations as they worked through their recoveries, and I only wish that more patients could share this experience. It is my hope that rehabilitation centers, such as the one I studied, can obtain the resources, skills, and resolve to be more patient and welcoming to their clients, even those who find it difficult to conform to community rules and expectations.

Parsa Bastani is working toward his PhD in Anthropology and Master of Public Health at Brown University. His dissertation research concerns the transformation of law enforcement officers into behavioral health service providers during the opioid crisis in the United States. He also has an ongoing project on addiction therapeutics and harm reduction interventions in Tehran, Iran. His research has received funding from the National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, National Institutes of Health, and the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University.

Condon Prize Honorable Mention Feature - Nikita Simpson

Ghar ki Tension: Distress and Domesticity in Contemporary North India

As I criss-crossed the Himalayan villages in which I conducted 15 months of doctoral fieldwork, stopping for tea by the hearths of the Gaddi housewives who live there, I was struck by a familiar refrain. We would be chatting, often about mundane household goings-on. Then suddenly, the woman would look up at me directly, a gap would open in her story, and I would hear the familiar refrain *mujhe bahut ghar ki tension hai* - I have so much 'household worry'. Then, the window into this tension closed as quickly as it had opened, and they hurried to change the subject.

My essay 'Ghar ki Tension: Distress and Domesticity in Contemporary North India' delves deeply into the somatic experience of this condition and how women use it to scale upwards from their bodies to register the precarity in their aspirational attempts at inclusion in the burgeoning Indian middle class. As I began my interviews with married women of the village, attempting to understand their daily routines, housework, and marital relations, I realized that such a condition of distress within and about the household or *ghar ki tension* was almost ubiquitous. Though some women laughed it off, many needed only the gentlest probe - an inquiry about their marriage, about the state of their finances, or their children's prospects - to be flooded with anxiety or go to pieces. Their retellings of sicknesses, stretched household budgets, alcoholic husbands felt like vain struggles to be free of a sticky web of worries.

Women described *ghar ki tension* as a condition of rumination, typified by thoughts swirl-

ing around in their heads. This condition made them dizzy (*chakkar ana*), or unable to sleep. Women who had too much *tension* were unable to relax or complete their daily tasks. Emotionally, they were quick to anger, or felt excess fear, shame or guilt about the inability to meet expectations of their family or community. They would experience hot flushes in their body, chronic headaches and abnormal blood pressure, as 'high BP'. High BP, though not necessarily medically diagnosed as hypertension, was experienced as an excess of heat and energy in the body, a state of excitement (*utshuk*). Women also explained that this condition left them vulnerable to attacks of witchcraft and black magic; and very commonly from visits of the *Jungle Raja* - an incubus who stole into their dreams and tempted them into sexual relations.

Used mostly by Gaddi married women, *ghar ki tension* described a state of strain that simultaneously afflicted a woman's household and her body. It spoke to distressed relationships - marital discord, conflict with or within their husband's family, conflict with their children; economic distress - food insecurity, lost employment, and physical distress - adverse reproductive events as well as the impact of household work and poor self-care on the body. It was used as a negative discourse to refer to everything from the ordinary, daily demands of the household through to major disruptions to wellbeing caused by death, disease, and violence. Deeper symbolic mapping revealed a homology between the woman's body and the household, such that its disruption in *ghar ki tension* indicated imbalances and



Image: A Gaddi woman sits besides the hearth of her mud kitchen

incompatibilities in the substances and sentiments that sustained domestic relations as they were shaped by broader structural forces. This community has experienced a rapid shift in livelihood over the past century, from agro-pastoralism to military service or waged labour. This has been paralleled by a transformation in structures of kinship, marriage and respectability. The breakdown of the pastoral economy has precipitated the nuclearisation of the Gaddi household, increased control over women's sexuality and rising wealth inequality between households.

I found that *ghar ki tension* provides a window into what is at stake for women as they seek to build a respectable household and maintain the relations within it; and the place of this respectable household in a wider communal project of respectability. My essay hence tells a uniquely Gaddi story of a tribal woman's embodied place in processes of upward social mobility, but it speaks to trajectories of contemporary Hindu femininity as cut by class and caste across India.

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SPA/RLF Lemelson Foundation Feature- Talia Katz

When Embodied Healing Moves Online: Constituting Psychodramatic Clinical Discourse as an Object of Anthropological Inquiry Under Pandemic Conditions

“We have to continue to find ways to create because we are not just a theatre of applause and shows, we are a theatre of therapy. The virus won’t disappear, but neither will we,” Ora, psychodramatist and director of the Lod Theatre Center, told me in April 2020. Amidst stringent lockdown protocols, increasing economic precarity, and failed elections, my Israeli interlocutors articulated that it simply was not an option for them to cease to produce therapeutic theatre. The aim of my second summer of preliminary dissertation research, which coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, was to understand how the pandemic was shifting techniques of healing.

During my first two years of graduate school, I had taken World War I, the Shoah, and the Nakba as the “critical events” whose shadows mark the world in which psychodrama is practiced in Israel (Das 1996). However, by March 2020, it had become clear that the COVID-19 pandemic needed to be addressed as another critical event. Remembering that psychodrama was first conceived as a departure from Freudian psychoanalysis, catalyzed by the violence of World War I (Moreno 1946), I took studying the pandemic’s impact on psychodramatic practice as an extension of my broader research interests in violence and subjectivity. How were clinicians and communities imagining new modes of responding to suffering when embodied, performance-based therapeutics now posed new dangers under pandemic conditions? Answering this question hinged on developing fluency in my interlocutors’ technical vocabularies.

My second summer of preliminary fieldwork (May - November 2020) was thus aimed at scaffolding technical knowledge of psychodrama so that I could constitute psychodramatic discourse as an object of an anthropological analysis. I deepened my knowledge of psychodrama while also looking at how this knowledge was

rapidly shifting under pandemic conditions. My methods were three-pronged: 1) I audited psychodrama and drama therapy coursework at the California Institute of Integral Studies and participated in independent workshops led by psychodrama clinical supervisors. 2) I collaborated with two clinicians at Tel Hai Academic College in Israel to study the impact of COVID-19 on the clinical practice of drama therapy in 22 countries. By participating in this project, I was able to better understand internal debates in the field as well as understand Israeli psychodrama and drama therapy in comparative context. 3) I continued to attend virtual rehearsals and performances with two Israeli therapeutic theatre centers that I had initially made contact with in Summer 2019. This component centered community voices and allowed me to build out my understanding of how techniques and vocabularies of healing are shaped in debate with the milieu (Canguilhem 2012). That is to say, my research looked at the clinical not as separate from everyday life but as co-evolving with it.

First, I am most grateful for the generosity of the SPA/RLF Fellowship which allowed me to audit three clinical courses: *Drama Therapy & Social Change*, *Autobiographical Therapeutic Theatre*, and *Foundational Skills in Psychodrama*. In *Drama Therapy and Social Change*, I tracked how therapists constituted the concept of historical trauma, both accepting and rejecting dominant discourses in epigenetics and trauma theory. The course culminated in designing our own clinical workshops, an experience that provided insight into my fieldwork materials that I would not have had from the vantage point of an observing anthropologist. In *Autobiographical Therapeutic Theatre*, I tracked how clinical and aesthetic norms shaped one another as clinicians debated treatment strategies. For example, I learned how a clinician might emphasise different verb tenses based on patient needs. Second, in the Tel

Hai Research collaboration, through semi-structured interviews with clinicians my colleagues and I learned how virtual reality was shaping dramatic reality, how concepts like risk and play were transfiguring online, and how “expert knowledge” was shifting in relation to what patients termed “the black hole experience” of meeting online. Provisional results from the project show that for clinicians who reported successfully transitioning their practice online, drama therapy was not simply an assemblage of aesthetic techniques. Rather, they saw it as an orientation towards the world that understands relationships through the lens of role-play.

Third, I continued to partake in virtual rehearsals with Israeli community theatres. This allowed me to maintain relationships from my first summer of preliminary fieldwork and to see how communities were adapting creative processes to COVID-19 conditions. Interestingly, the online setting led to an emphasis on cinematography that had previously been absent from these productions. I observed how it was through youth interest in film, digital art, and improvisational theatre that clinicians/directors allowed new media into the clinical space. This pointed to George Canguilhem’s formative insight that it is in relation to the patient’s subjective experience that new techniques of healing enter into medical practice.

My future dissertation research (set to begin September 2021) will build on this strong scaffolding of technical knowledge in order to track the evolution and practice of psychodrama and drama therapy in Israel from the early 1950s to the present. My research will consider how Israeli psychiatry experiments with dramaturgy under the pressures of both catastrophic events and everyday violence by looking at how attention to role-play may inflect anthropological theorizing on the absorption of violence into processes of self-making. The SPA/Robert Lemelson Foundation Fellowship has been an invaluable source of support for advancing my research. The fluency in technical vocabularies that I gained during this period will sharpen the archival portion of my dissertation fieldwork, which looks at how psychodramatic

debates on the interpretation of the body, emotions, gestures, and speech shift in relation to diverse forms of violence in Israel. I am most grateful for this foundational psychodrama experience as the increased precision with which I will be able to conduct interviews, interpret case studies, and participate in professional meetings will enhance the quality of my future fieldwork. By examining how Israeli psychiatrists turn to theatre under conditions of violence, my project’s intellectual commitment is to trace how, at the limits, people grapple with alterity – their own and that of their neighbors.

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Image: Photo of the Lod Theatre Center, located in central Israel. The Center is run by a psychodrama therapist and hosts community theatre groups for adults, teenagers, children, and people living with disabilities. Productions respond to historical and current events in the municipality of Lod and in Israel more broadly. Photo taken by Talia Katz in August 2019, during her first summer of preliminary dissertation fieldwork.

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Your co-editors for the SPA column in the AAA Anthropology-News (Sugandh Gupta, Ellen Kozelka) would like to hear from you! Do you have pictures from the field or any accolades, publications, or news you would like to share with SPA members? Throughout the year, SPA-AN features research by our members. If you have an idea for a piece or for a series, be in touch (spa.an.submissions@gmail.com)!