



Society & Culture Spotlight

PUBLICATIONS 2024

A collection of writings on society
and culture from University of
Warwick Early Career Researchers



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Foreword

SOCIETY & CULTURE SPOTLIGHT PGR AND ECR
WRITING COMPETITION AND CELEBRATION EVENT

On 2nd July 2024, the Society and Culture Spotlight invited Postgraduate and Early Career Researchers to showcase and celebrate their interdisciplinary writing and research interests. This booklet is a collection of the shortlisted work. We hope you enjoy reading it.



Presenters and organisers at the celebration event

The morning consisted of stimulating discussions surrounding Warwick's research culture. A topic of particular discussion was the importance of making research accessible, creative, and above all interdisciplinary. Participants commented on how being given the platform to express their interdisciplinary research freely and without academic restraints on how to communicate themselves added 'richness and nuance' to their writing. This, in turn, led to what many deemed to be a clearer form of expression on societal and cultural issues in their work.

Consensus surrounding the University's role in encouraging the continuation of interdisciplinary research was clear; participants felt the university, as a publicly funded institution, should be required to contribute to the 'common good' of research. This 'common good' included suggestions such as public engagement with local communities, investment in the cultural capital of children in the area, resource hubs for interdisciplinary research, and methodology workshops for the cross-pollination of ideas from different faculties and departments.

The Spotlight Celebration event was an important and necessary meeting of minds between researchers at Warwick who see beyond the binaries of subject delineations. It seems to have established the beginnings of a network committed to bringing themes of society and culture to the four corners of Warwick's research community.

A warm congratulations to PhD student Naomi Williams, winner of the Spotlight writing competition, and to all those researchers who submitted work and whose papers will be published this summer. Finally, many thanks to Dr Briony Jones, Dr Rebecca Morris and Dr Davide Piaggio for chairing and organising the event.

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NAOMI WILLIAMS

New Beginnings



Naomi Williams -
New Beginnings

Naomi Williams, currently pursuing a doctorate in mental health and neuroscience, is the Founding Director of Sensory Learning & Play C.I.C. She is a highly qualified professional in Social Work, Teaching, Training, and Authorship, since 2012, and a Clinical Specialist at Nottinghamshire Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Her versatile skills include Leadership, Bid Writing, Sleep Specialist services, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy and Creative Therapies. Naomi's passion for inclusion is evident in her research on Early Intervention Mental Health Services and inclusion for neurodivergent Children and Young People. She is dedicated to helping individuals realize their potential, irrespective of their backgrounds or past experiences.

INTRODUCTION

The parallel between mental health, society, culture and the footprint of nature is embodied in each experience. The text will seek to capture the significance of strength amidst the changing seasons of life in a fast-paced world. One where no two cultures, individuals and practices are the same but all equally as beautiful and profound in their very entity. Drawing on the similitude between nature's processes and the intimate experiences of individuals within society and extending homage to culture's impact on the cascade of determinants, behaviours, innovations, ideologies and principles. The text will draw specifically on the image of seasons, like the tree casting off its leaves in the autumn, bracing against the cold of winter, and expecting the regeneration of spring while beautifully reflecting the human journey through tribulations and hope. It is a poignant examination of finding resilience in the assurance of new beginnings.

DAYBREAK

The birds sing their song, heralding a new morning; daybreak's promise buries night's pain, offering gratitude for a new beginning. Footsteps stirring in the mind, awakening the age-old question: will today be a fresh start or a repeat of the past? It is a chance to rewrite history, to begin anew. Before the heaviness of the feet begin their journey of merging with the familiar floor beneath, a moment of profound yet fleeting contemplation sparks anticipation in the soul. There is a yearning for connection, a desire to delve beyond superficial conversations and touch something profound, authentic, and enduring. As this thought tugs at the spirit, pulling the body from its rest, a gentle sigh escapes, signalling the start of the day. Shadows dance through the streets, but connections remain elusive. Eyes flit from pillar to post, and footsteps sync with the road's rhythm. "Excuse me, sorry, excuse me, pardon me," becomes a mantra in the dance of the traffic and people. The rush hour cacophony of horns and hurried footsteps reflects the bustling society, where happiness often withers in the chaos. This daily hustle, a reflection of societal pressures, dictates the pace of life and molds the collective mood. The cold edge of winter still bites, while spring hesitates to bloom fully. The transition of seasons mirrors the internal struggle for renewal, the clash between lingering gloom and emerging hope. Grasping at the transport handles, a new body joins the dance, moving

along the river's rhythms. The freedom of movement and the company of the breeze whisper encouragement to the soul. The river, a timeless witness to countless dawns, carries with it the promise of change and continuity. In the delicate balance, the determinants of society, culture, and mental health intertwine. Society's rush and pressure shape the day's rhythm, influencing individual moods and interactions. The weight of societal expectations can be a heavy burden, yet it is also a motivator, pushing individuals to strive, achieve greater, connect, heal, and evolve. Cultural norms dictate the dance of apologies and excuses, reflecting collective behaviour and the unwritten rules of engagement, something that makes one ponder. These norms provide a framework within which people navigate their daily lives, offering comfort and constraint to the unwilling participant and laying helpless as the next victim of the harsh reality of the forecast of thunder when one has dared to be unapologetically authentic in whom they are purposed to be. Mental health, fragile yet resilient, navigates this intricate landscape, finding solace in moments of connection and nature's embrace. The ever-delicate mind battles with the world's noise, seeking pockets of peace amidst the chaos. The encouragement found in the morning breeze or a stranger's smile can be a lifeline, a reminder of the beauty and kindness that still exist. In the solitude of dawn, there is space to breathe, reflect, and hope. The roots of the tree, committed

to the journey, signify growth and resilience for the one held bound to the covenant. Forward, they push, ready for whatever comes. Like the foundations of one's being, these roots are nourished by experiences and memories, both joyous and painful. The grounding process provides stability and strength while navigating the complexities of life. Today is a new day, a new beginning. Be at the ready. Embrace its potential and the promise of new connections, insights, and growth. In the dance of life, every step and breath is a testament to resilience and hope.

DIGITAL AGE

As the sun begins its ascent, resting on the leaves, the gentle breeze moves through each branch of the trees; the digital world awakens with a symphony of notifications and updates. Minds stir, pondering the day ahead, grappling with the weight of societal expectations exacerbated by the relentless pressures of social media. Will today bring innovation? This landscape of digital interaction is fascinating, with a virtual arena where norms are constructed, reinforced, and challenged in real-time. Conformity is the mantra, a foundation laid long ago, wondering if the shield of Wi-Fi will allow genuine change to birth. It is a springboard of conversation and chatters, amongst the muted voices online. Social media platforms have become central hubs for disseminating cultural content and shaping and reshaping the fabric of society, to the detriment of those whose names are

married to poverty. The harsh reality of money means the fast pace of learning cannot save some, the kindred spirit of the digital age. Fashion, art, literature, and language trends are born and circulated. From viral dance challenges to hashtag movements, social media is a powerful amplifier for cultural expression, influencing the collective imagination and shaping cultural identities. They're absorbed into the mind's eye at an unprecedented pace by images, sounds, and the like. Music, the heartbeat of culture, pulsates through the digital ether, transcending geographical boundaries and cultural barriers. However, before the day unfolds, a moment of reflection ensues as individuals contemplate the impact of their online presence on their mental health. Is it cool to have society on the inside, with no boundaries upheld? Today, the door is left wide open, the grim reaper hidden in plain sight. The allure of virtual validation replaces the yearning for authentic connection, which still tugs at the soul, creating a dichotomy between curated perfection and raw vulnerability. In this digital age, innovation thrives amidst the constant churn of information and ideas. Digital platforms serve as incubators for creativity, birthing new trends and movements that shape culture and society. Yet, amidst the innovation lurks a shadow, this tangible pressure to conform to an idealised image perpetuated by filtered feeds and carefully crafted personas. This story is not over; it has only begun in the quest for status within the digital communities.

New Beginnings

Amidst the noise of digital discourse, mental health emerges as a central concern. The perpetual onslaught of information and comparison breeds anxiety and self-doubt, eroding the fabric of individual well-being. Its relentless stream of curated content and performative validation magnifies feelings of inadequacy and isolation, contributing to a pervasive sense of disconnection in an ironically increasingly interconnected world. Can one see the broader structural inequalities and cultural values prioritising visibility and validation over authenticity and well-being? They are screaming, “Someone help me”, as the digital tones of likes drown their cries. Oh Lord, forgive, as I lay down and close my eyes, an innocent bystander to the crimes committed digitally. Since when did jokes and laughs supersede human values and morals? Each facet illuminates the complexities of human interaction in the digital age, offering both challenges and opportunities for understanding and growth. As individuals navigate this ever-evolving landscape, they are both products and producers of social reality, shaping and being shaped by the digital currents that flow around them.

THE EXCHANGE

The morning sun cast a beautiful golden glow over the building, bathing the workspace in a warm, comforting light. Yet beneath this serene surface, a storm of misunderstanding brewed between two equally strong forces. One thrived on structure and clear expectations, each task meticulously planned, each deadline carefully choreographed, a note of strength in a symphony of productivity. In contrast, the other moved with the rhythm of spontaneity, embracing flexibility and boundless

creativity. Ideas had no walls, limits were non-existent, and innovation flowed freely, promising to transform the landscape and let the city bloom. Their differing styles led to daily misunderstandings, with colleagues often playing the role of referees. Today was no exception; the air was thick with tension, sarcasm, and sighs. The once bright room seemed darker, the atmosphere heavy with a sense of foreboding. Many wished they had stayed in the comfort of their homes, safe from the brewing storm. The conflict began with an abrasive command in the morning, urgency in the structured one’s eyes. The creative counterpart, immersed in their process, responded with a brief acknowledgement, unaware of the looming deadline. As noon passed, anxiety mounted. The critical request for an afternoon engagement remained unmet, and patience gave way to frustration. Voices rose, masking the underlying fear. This miscommunication stemmed from differing interpretations of deadlines, influenced by cultural backgrounds and mental health states. For one, punctuality and precision were sacrosanct; deadlines were immovable markers. For the other, time was fluid, a canvas for creativity. Deadlines were flexible and open to interpretation. The tension mirrored broader societal pressures. In a high-paced work environment, the relentless drive to meet expectations often amplified individual mental health struggles. The need for control clashed with a relaxed approach, with both parties unaware of each other’s internal battles. The structured one, feeling the weight of unmet expectations, saw the need for clear and timely communication as a plea for respect and reliability. Misunderstanding settled heavily, questioning the fight against flexibility

and inclusion in a world of differing designs. The creative one, meanwhile, viewed deadlines as fluid, prioritising the flow of ideas over rigid schedules. This conversation revealed layers of cultural and societal influences in a diverse space. Different cultural norms and personal experiences shape individuals’ interpretations and responses. A cultural emphasis on discipline and efficiency drove one’s behaviour, while the other valued creativity and adaptability. This familiar conflict highlighted the pressure of external factors and the rush of unmanageable emotions. Accommodation and reasonable adjustments often yielded to control, predictability, and inflexibility, eroding mental understanding and increasing confusion and distress. Mutual understanding, empathy, and clear communication are vital for maintaining social cohesion. Collaboration should set the tone, creating a peaceful and joyful workspace. The resolution lay in acknowledging cultural, behavioural, and mental health factors, fostering better communication and collaboration.

As the sun continued its daily dance, casting long shadows and then retreating, a transformation occurred. Misunderstanding turned into growth, with everyone more attuned to each other’s needs and aware of the broader influences shaping their interactions. The tension became an opportunity for growth, a new light of understanding and empathy illuminating the workspace. By day’s end, the promise of tomorrow felt brighter, filled with the potential for new beginnings and deeper connections. The sun’s retreat was a testament to the day’s journey, from misunderstanding to mutual respect, tension to harmony. In this

evolving landscape, differences were not just tolerated but embraced, promising a more inclusive and understanding future. As the day drew to a close, a newfound sense of unity and possibility settled over the workspace. The air, once thick with tension, now buzzed with the promise of collaboration and innovation. The storm had passed, leaving a more transparent sky and a brighter horizon. And with that, the city, too, seemed to bloom anew, its inhabitants ready to face the challenges of tomorrow with renewed hope and solidarity.

DEAR HATE

The horizon of a different era offered a new sheet for rewriting history, a chance to begin anew. However, hate had lingered like a cold and unrelenting winter, biting into the hearts of the naive and the innocent. Its presence left a bitter taste, hardening those it touched beyond repair. Bitterness filled their hearts, burning bridges without thought or judgement of the consequences. Hate had taken what it wanted, leaving nothing but brokenness in its path. The world, caught in the grip of hate, moved through the seasons without truly living. Did they know it was hate, using and abusing their character? Did they ever wonder or even resist? It always seemed like an afterthought, followed by an apology and the naive expectation that things would return to normal. Yet, hate left a hole in the recipient that only healing, time, and change could mend. Just as winter must give way to spring, one could only hope to thaw and bloom again after hate’s erosion. Everyday life felt like navigating through a landscape of thorns. Hate had turned the loveliest, sweetest, and kindest people against each other. Now, every intention was scrutinised, every behaviour analysed, every word unpicked. The very structure of one’s character was dissected, searching for what they wanted, what lay beneath the surface. It was exhausting, like running a never-ending race with no finish line in sight. Sleepless nights had become a reality, a racing mind, a constant companion,

and restlessness seemed the only portion. Life was not meant to be this way. One had hoped to be better, do better, and want better. Instead, there was a shrinking into oneself, trying not to set off any more alarms in others. Laying low, staying hidden, ensuring no one knew who suggested, helped, or planned to avoid any excuse for sabotage. It sounded unbelievable; living a day in such a life would leave one speechless. The fight against hate had not been chosen, but it had taken everyone away, put one in a box, gifted them with silence, and chained them to the walls. There was a numbness and a flood of feelings all at once. Dreams were dying, souls were crying, and anxiety and worry were destroying peace. Hate had much to answer for. But as the seasons changed, so did the hope for new beginnings. Just as spring follows winter, bringing blooms and renewal, there was a belief that a fresh start would come one day. Dawn would break after the darkest night, and resilience would rise above hate. Until then, the fight continued, holding on for the spring of the soul to finally arrive. The change of seasons became a metaphor for the struggle against hate. Winter’s cold grip would loosen, and the tender shoots of spring would push through the frozen ground. Every sunrise was a promise, a reminder that the darkness could not last forever. The sun’s warmth would melt the ice, and flowers would bloom where once there was only frost. There was a reminder of warmth, community, and connection in the heat of summer. The sun shone on everyone equally, offering equality and justice lessons. The long days were filled with the hum of life, children’s laughter, and nature’s music. It was a season of growth, a time when hearts could heal and relationships could mend. With its rich colours and bountiful harvests, autumn was a time of reflection. Leaves fell only to enrich the soil, preparing it for new growth. It was a season that taught the beauty of letting go, of understanding that endings were not just conclusions but precursors to new beginnings. The

crisp air carried whispers of wisdom, urging souls to prepare for winter’s introspection. The fight against hate was a journey of endurance and hope through these cycles. The roots of resilience grew more profound with each passing season. Winter’s chill might return, but the thaw comes sooner each year, and the blooms become more abundant. The strength to endure came from within and from the beauty and support found in nature, the seasons, and the shared human experience. And so, every day, the battle continued. But with each sunrise and each change in the seasons, there was a renewed promise of healing and transformation. Believing that hate would be conquered one day, until then, the fight persisted, fueled by the hope of a brighter, kinder world where the heart could finally rest and bask in the warmth of peace.

CONCLUSION

In the unclothed scale of the tree, pain’s edge dwells, but does it soften with the transition of seasons, as time surges? Rain falls today, autumn’s breeze ripping off my covering, layer by layer what I give unearthing. Yet I’ll sway and move with the wind, winter’s rhythm as bespoke as my dance. I cling to the promise of spring, a newness in the creator’s grace. Dancing amidst the stories of this moment’s embrace while shifting throughout the time and space of the memories. Each tear shed in loneliness, each leaf I’ve let fall, adds depth to my voyage, standing elevated throughout it all. Sometimes, in the chill of winter’s night, where emptiness has felt barren, the coldness of two cultures bashing for survival. I wonder who will reign above it all and who will truly win. I find solace in knowing spring’s anecdote yet not shared. Therefore, as I contemplate autumn and winter’s tragedy. I welcome the promise of spring, a new beginning to pursue.

¡canarias tiene un límite!

CHRIS WAITE

Chris Waite is a doctoral candidate in Literary Translation Studies on Warwick Writing Programme, supervised by Chantal Wright and Alison Ribeiro de Menezes and funded by the AHRC Midlands4Cities doctoral training programme. His thesis is a practice-based study on the translation of the Tenerife-born author Agustín Espinosa (1897-1939) which will, as well as creating the first English translations of Espinosa, explore the intersections between Benjaminian and psychoanalytic approaches to translation.

On the 20 April 2024 the Canary Islands saw the largest protests against the growth of tourism under the banner *Canarias tiene un límite*, 'the Canaries have a limit'. The implication is that the limits of the islands have been ignored and are being exceeded in some way. This prompted me to think about the various meanings of 'limit' (capacity, boundary, definition and so on) and why we might have ever thought that these islands in the African Atlantic were without limits. I also wondered how this might relate to the common conceptions of the islands as ideal for a holiday, often at a bargain price. During my own research on the translation of a writer, Agustín Espinosa (1897-1939), who was born on one of the islands (Tenerife), I have become interested in how the natural environment in which (and about which) he wrote might be reflected in his writing style. And given that translation involves shifts in both language and time, I wondered how the changes seen in the Canary Islands in the last 100 years might inform my translation. Without realising it I had become an interdisciplinary researcher: suddenly I was not just translating text, but history, politics, geography, environment – the list could be endless – too.

We might not consider Homer an interdisciplinary researcher, but the Greek geographer Strabo thought so, and saw him as 'the originator of the art of geography [...] he was interested not only in human activities [...] but also in each of the places of the entire inhabited world, both land and sea. Otherwise he would not have gone to its farthest limits in his writings.' In his literary exploration of limits, Homer referred to the Elysian Fields, situated 'at the world's end' in *The Odyssey*:

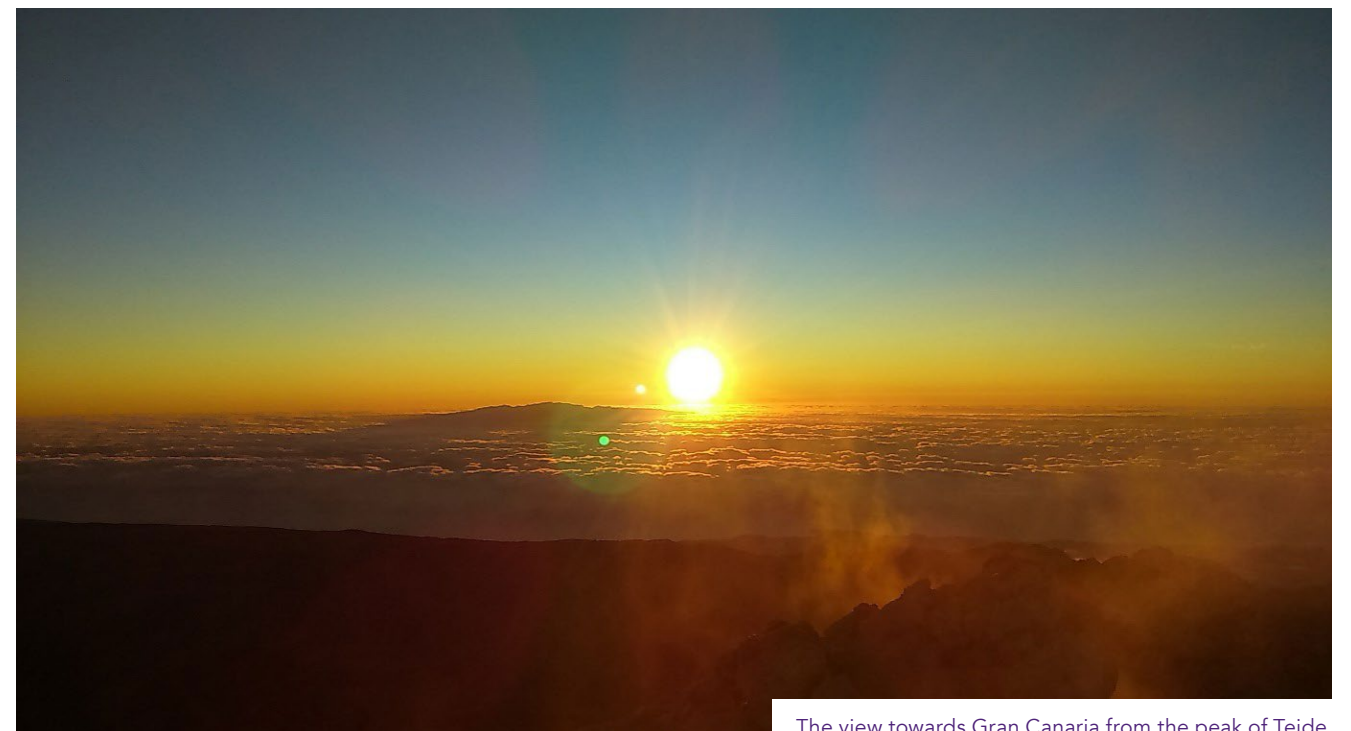
and life is there the easiest for humans.
There is no snow, no heavy storms or rain,
but Ocean always sends up gentle breezes
of Zephyr to refresh the people there.

4.564-567 (Translation: Emily Wilson)

From the time of Strabo, at the beginning of the Common Era, the mythical afterlife of Elysium was beginning to be associated with the islands of Macaronesia (which include the Azores, Madeira, Cabo Verde as well as the Canaries). It was Pliny the Elder who first specifically identified the Canary Islands as the *Fortunatae Insulae* – the Fortunate, or Blessed Islands, which all have 'quantities of fruits and every kind of bird in plenty'. The mythical and literary origins of the Canary Islands seem to resonate with the issue of their limits today: perhaps in our imagination they have become fantastic, beyond reality, beyond the difficulties of contemporary life. Homer tells us 'life is there the easiest', there are 'no heavy storms or rain'. The only limit, it appears, might be our imagination.



Chris Waite -
¡canarias tiene
un límite!



The view towards Gran Canaria from the peak of Teide

And on my visits to Tenerife to carry out research I have seen some extraordinary sights. The view at sunrise from the top of the Teide volcano (the highest point on Spanish territory at 3,718 metres) was particularly evocative of the limitless and unearthly.

But of course, there are real limits. The eight islands – El Hierro, La Gomera, La Palma, Tenerife, Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, La Graciosa, and Lanzarote – have a surface area of 7,557 km² and a total population of 2.17 million (2021 figures). For comparison it is helpful to know that the county of Devon in the UK is 6,564 km² and has a population of 826,319 (2022 figures). Despite these real limits—eight small islands—we seem to enter an imaginary world when we realise that in 2023 13.9 million tourists visited the archipelago, an annual increase of 13.1%. And in the first six months of 2024 8.7 million tourists have already visited the Canaries, an increase of 10.3% on the same period in 2023. There is not just a high concentration of tourists in the Canaries; economic and social problems intensify here

too: figures for wages, unemployment, poverty, and rental costs are some of the worst in Spain. No wonder there are protests. In what way could these islands be considered *fortunate*?

In my research into the imagination of Agustín Espinosa, I have found his most extraordinary writing was in his surrealist experiment *Crime*, written in 1934:

This faraway island, where I now live,
is the island of damnation.
Around me seethes a spiteful sea of cloudy blue,
darkening distantly on a withered horizon,
empty of Latin sails and transatlantic funnels.
Beneath my feet, brown earth
masses around stabbing curved cacti,
delicate dying fig trees and golden gorse.
Violet egrets swoon shadows over the rockface.
Me, bastard child of the island. *El aislado*.

¡canarias tiene un límite!

I am sure that Espinosa is questioning the mythical status of the Canaries as the Fortunate Islands here: for him they became islands of the damned, a hellish outpost of the world, leaving him feeling he was the '*aislado*' – the isolated one. Writing in 1934 Espinosa appears to be speaking to the instability in Spanish society and politics that culminated in the attempted military coup of July 1936 and ultimately the Spanish Civil War. And one of the key figures of the conflict, the right-wing military general Francisco Franco, was sent to the Canaries by the left-wing Republican government early in 1936 in an unsuccessful attempt to weaken his power. The futile attempt at exiling Franco in Tenerife seems to evoke both the imaginary of the Canaries as a paradisaical beyond from which there is no (wish to) return and that of a hellish afterlife from which horrors might come back to haunt us.

In J G Ballard's 1978 short story *Having a Wonderful Time* – in the form of a series of postcards sent back to the UK by a couple visiting a holiday complex in Gran Canaria – we see a horrifying vision of tourism in the Canary Islands. The couples' flight home is repeatedly cancelled, and it is

suggested that the 'entire Canaries [are] being developed by the governments of Western Europe, in collusion with the Spanish authorities, as a kind of permanent holiday camp for their unemployables'. These 'unemployables' or 'human reserves' are 'mostly English working class from the north and midlands'. There are many ways of reading this story, but I am struck by the ironic way the Canaries are degraded into a kind of societal dustbin: there is nothing to be valued on the islands, they are just wasteland to be utilised to meet economic and political needs. The promise of cheap paradise attracts the working classes, but it turns out to be a one-way ticket to a hellish means of class segregation. I thought of Ballard's short story when I walked west along the coast from Puerto de la Cruz in Tenerife and came across a hotel of unreal proportions built into the volcanic rock. This hotel (with 18 floors and 286 rooms) was built in 1971 and was the first five-star hotel in the area. Despite the supposed luxury status and coastal location, the building looks – in its high-density uniformity – reminiscent of the social housing blocks built in the 1960s in cities like Coventry.



The hotel 'Best Semiramis', Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife

Interestingly, the Canarians themselves are invisible in Ballard's story, as if they do not exist. The contemporary reality is that, given the extraordinary volume of tourists, the Canarians must feel crowded out, imposed upon. I saw evidence of anti-tourist sentiment further along the coast, on graffiti scrawled on a sign by a beach. The sign reads 'You are in a natural environment, take care of it, and respect it'. The graffiti added in English 'Tourist go home!' makes the sentiments of the writer clear; they have also altered the instruction in Spanish (to take your rubbish with you for a sustainable beach) to include the

term '*guiri*', a term for foreign tourists, often used in a less than complimentary way. Interestingly the flags of all three countries are all crossed out, including Spain. This is a reminder that in the late fifteenth century the Canary Islands were taken through Spanish conquest of the indigenous population, a people likely to be descendants of the Imazighen of North Africa. Perhaps it is not surprising that there is currently a modest renaissance of Canarian nationalism. A nationalism which seeks definition and independence for the islands. A nationalism which wants to clarify just exactly where the limits are.



A local council sign, with graffiti, above Playa los patos, near Puerto de la Cruz

¡canarias tiene un límite!

During the rise of Francoism, such moves towards regional independence in Spain were repressed, with the autonomy granted to Catalonia in 1931 being abolished in 1938. While Franco was initially concerned with defining a self-sufficient and unitary Spain, in the late dictatorship moves to liberalise trade saw tourism become an important vehicle of post-civil war economic recovery and development. From the 1960s tourism in Spain has expanded rapidly, including – especially, given their subtropical climate – in the Canary Islands. This is where the imaginations of foreign investors and tour operators seem to have been unleashed in an uncontrolled way, ultimately pushing the Canaries beyond their limit.

Thinking back to the slogan used in the recent protests – ‘The Canaries have a limit’ – I wonder if we can respond to this by considering how we might limit our own fantasies of escape. If we lived within our limits – if we lived more manageable and pleasurable lives all year round – perhaps we would not crave escape. What is it about contemporary

society and culture that causes us to want to buy into the fantasy of an ‘away from it all’ holiday? What the example of the Canaries teaches us, amongst many other things, is that there is no ‘away from it all’; all the contemporary challenges in the world exist there too, often in more extreme forms. Perhaps we need to definitively break their association with the Elysian Fields and the Fortunate Isles; these are not, and never were islands of perpetual spring, there are storms, clouds and rain (although the islands are currently suffering from the most serious lack of the latter in their history). They are one of the most biodiverse areas of the temperate zone, and nearly half of the islands’ territory is now classed as a protected natural area. How can such a unique natural environment have become so at risk from tourism? In our desperation for holiday escapes, we inadvertently treat the imagined paradise as a dustbin for our stresses and ills. And in the process damage nature and remain stuck in our own unsustainable ways of living; ways of living that leave us exhausted and craving mythical rest in a non-existent paradise.

Reading and translating Espinosa today, he appears strangely prescient of the threats that tourism might represent. In 1929 Espinosa wrote *Lancelot, 28° - 7° A Comprehensive Guide to an Atlantic Island* inspired by his stay on Lanzarote in 1928-9 whilst working as a teacher there. It is a kind of ironic travel guide in which he creates a new mythology for Lanzarote, invoking the Arthurian character Lancelot as muse.

A land without a strong tradition, without a poetic atmosphere, suffers the threat of a fatal diffusion. It is as if those anaemic, inane words of signification carry the roots of this land’s disappearance in their cheap and inexpressive luggage.

What I have tried to achieve, above all, has been this: a poetic world; a unifying mythology. My aim is to create a new Lanzarote. A Lanzarote invented by me. Following the widest tradition of universal literature. Therefore, I substitute a Lanzarote that today already says nothing, that has lost its true sensibility, with Lancelot: hero of the grand knightly Brittany; knight of a passionate lineage; admirable collector of adventures; famous guest of the Middle Ages; teacher of Amadis and of Don Quixote. I substitute a word—Lanzarote—now without sense, for another that is still charged with feelings of a high heroism.

Espinosa’s reference to a ‘fatal diffusion’ resonates with the current, extraordinary, dilution of the Canarian population by the quantity of tourists present all year round. Espinosa locates the solution to cultural diffusion in tradition and poetry, perhaps implying that the loss of tradition after the Spanish conquest is the root of the problem. The ‘anaemic, inane words’ imported during Spanish colonisation contain something harmful, here personified as having ‘cheap and inexpressive luggage’. Whilst the luggage of contemporary tourists might not always be cheap or inexpressive, it has brought with it something damaging. And we now must acknowledge that our conceptions of the Canary Islands as limitless providers of cheap holidays (with optional doses of the extraordinary natural landscapes there) are no longer viable economically, socially, environmentally, or culturally.



It may look like paradise... The view to Teide from Barranco de la arena, near Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife

MEIFANG ZHUO

Addressing knowledge inequality: visual and arts-based methods as a possibility

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Recent years have seen a growing interest in the issue of knowledge inequality, particularly in knowledge production between the world's developed countries (the Global North) and developing and least developed countries (the Global South) (e.g., Castro Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022; Demeter, 2020). However, knowledge inequalities do not only exist at a macro level between two parts of the world. It also exists between two individuals at a micro level. The issue of knowledge inequalities is a pressing challenge for modern society, which can result in other forms of inequalities and other problems, including crimes, poverty, and conflicts.

To address the issue of knowledge inequalities, also the vision of Society & Culture, collective efforts must be made to democratize knowledge. We academics, with both our hats as educators (spreading knowledge by teaching) and researchers (generating knowledge by researching), can play an essential role in closing the gap of knowledge inequalities. In this article, I argue that academics

can employ visual and arts-based methods (VABMs) to democratize knowledge in their teaching and researching, by removing the barriers to non-academic individuals' access to knowledge, involving research participants in knowledge production, and enhancing their participation in knowledge dissemination.

In each of the three aspects: knowledge accessibility, knowledge production, and knowledge dissemination, I will first use a representative example of effective practice to explain the usefulness of VABMs and then explore its implications for our teaching and research. By sharing this article as an entry for Society & Culture Spotlight PGR and ECR writing competition, I hope this proposal can get across to a wider community at Warwick and hopefully it will engender academics' interest in using VABMs to work with our students, research participants, non-academic partners, and colleagues within and beyond our discipline, to play our due role in closing the gap of knowledge inequalities.



Meifang Zhuo - Addressing knowledge inequality: visual and arts-based methods as a possibility

Before proceeding to this main part of the article, I will briefly introduce VABMs and share my reflexivity on putting forward such a proposal.

1. VISUAL AND ARTS-BASED METHODS (VABMS)

VABMs are notoriously difficult to define, due to their nature as a methodology in a constant process of creation and redefinition (Rolling, 2010, as cited in Gunilla et al., 2019). For clarify, this article understands VABMs as an umbrella term for both visual methods and arts-based methods. Visual methods can be interpreted as the use of visual material, although in most cases, these visual materials can also be categorized as arts-based methods. According to Chamberlain et al. (2018), arts-based research can involve various forms, including fiction-based approaches (e.g., flash fiction, short story, or novella), poetic approaches, drama-based approaches, visual art genres (e.g., photographs, collage, drawing, painting, sculpture), film and video approaches and other approaches (e.g., music or dance).

Various forms of VABMs have been widely used in research across different disciplines, primarily in anthropology (e.g., Marcus, 1998), sociology (e.g., Desyllas & Sinclair, 2014), education (e.g., Gray et al., 2022), psychology (e.g., Chamberlain et al., 2018), applied linguistics (e.g., Ahn, 2021; Greenier & Moodie, 2021) and health education (e.g., Kpobi et al., 2024).

The purpose of using VABMs in research is closely related to the issue of knowledge inequality. For example, a systematic review of literature by Fraser and al Sayah (2011) indicates that various forms of VABMs, including visual arts (photographs and drawings), media (performance arts), and literary arts (poetry), have been widely employed in health research for knowledge generation/production and knowledge dissemination/translation. Similarly, an example from applied linguistics also demonstrates the usefulness of VABMs in knowledge generation/production. Ahn (2021) uses participants' drawings and written descriptions of the drawings to explore how Korean undergraduate English learners portray themselves, before and after English mastering English, and after failing to master English. She argues that through drawing, participants are empowered with an alternative means to express themselves and successfully visualize what is in their minds.

2. REFLEXIVITY ON VABMS

My interest in VABMs began in 2022 when I participated in a zine-making workshop organized by colleagues from sociology and successfully visualized my story of navigating challenges in academia as a female doctoral student (see Fig. 1 for the two zine pages I created). I was amazed that zine-making, a typical

VABM, enabled me to tell my lived experiences in such a fun, flexible, and creative way and even open up to share my most challenging life stories with a group of people I had just met (see a detailed account in Zhuo, 2024). Additionally, zine-making allowed me to express what I might not have been able to verbally, reexamine my life through this zine artifact, and get validation/support from other participants through sharing my story with them. This experience inspires me that knowledge production can be fun, ethical, creative, and empowering for research participants when a VABM, like zine-making, is employed. Zine-making as a VABM will be elaborated further with examples later in this article.

In my role as a senior GTA for MA Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) students in Applied Linguistics, I also recognize the usefulness of VABMs in teaching and learning. For example, one typical activity we use to strengthen students' understanding of the importance of Long's (1981) input and interaction hypotheses and the associated theories of conversational modifications is drawing and describing. In this activity, students are arranged to sit in groups of three (students A, B, and C). First, student A draws a street scene with at least five items and describes the drawing without showing it to B.

Addressing knowledge inequality: visual and arts-based methods as a possibility

Then, student B produces a drawing as similar to A's as possible, by listening to A's description and asking any questions to clarify the details of the drawing. Student C observes the whole process and takes notes of any communication breakdown and meaning negation moves. Finally, each group reports their learning from this activity. Through my teaching, I have observed that students not only enjoy this learning experience but also share some valuable insights into how they may use the knowledge in their teaching in the future. This observation convinces me that learning or accessing knowledge can also be fun and transformative through a VAbM.

Certainly, my experiences with VAbMs are not limited to the above two stories and it is beyond the scope of this article to list all the relevant scenarios. Nevertheless, the two examples have sufficiently explained why I value VAbMs in my research and teaching and why I believe that VAbMs can be a possibility for us academics to tackle the issue of knowledge inequality by democratizing knowledge in our work. Now I will proceed to explain how VAbMs contribute to the three aspects of achieving knowledge equality: knowledge accessibility, knowledge production, and knowledge dissemination.



Fig. 1

3. VABMS IN CLOSING THE GAP IN KNOWLEDGE INEQUALITY

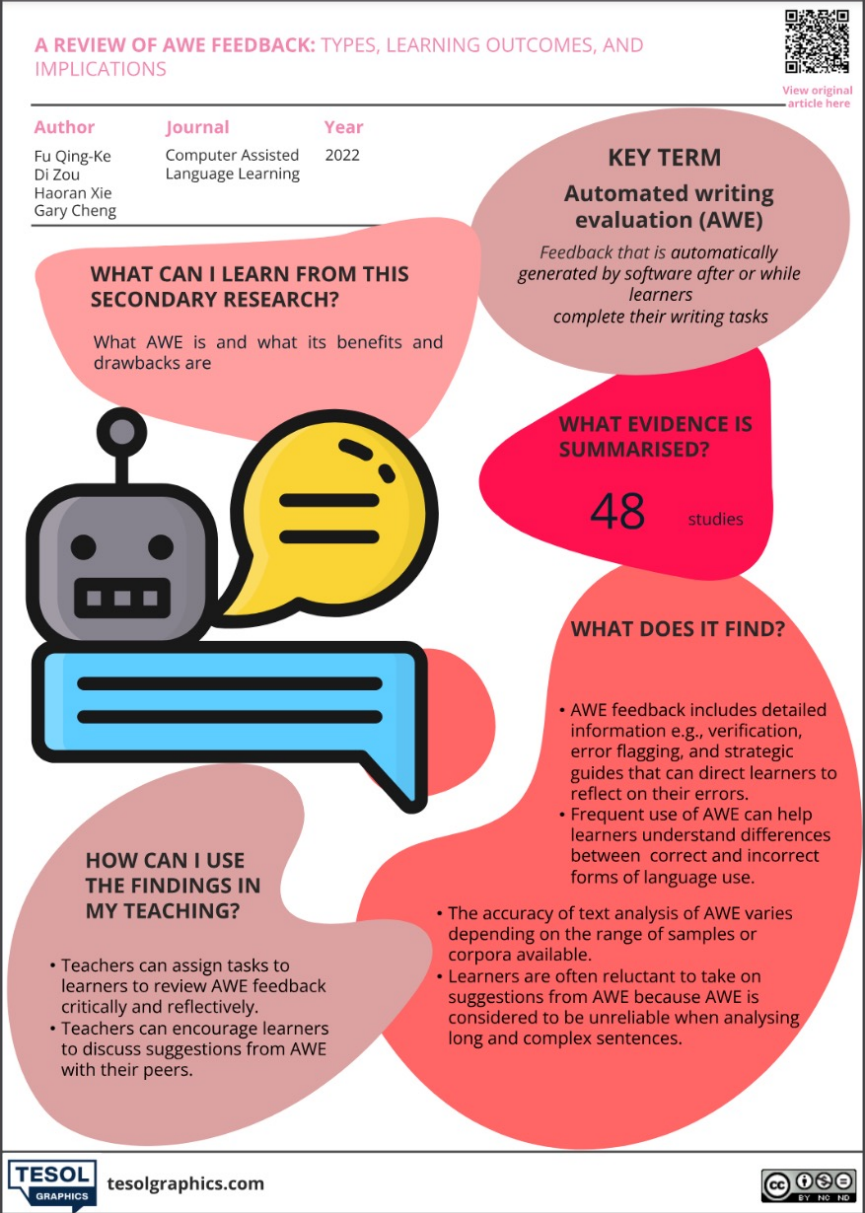
3.1 VAbMs for knowledge accessibility

The arts are considered powerful and accessible forms of communication that can effectively convey knowledge by capturing attention and fostering meaningful connections (Scott et al., 2013). Research also indicates that promoting arts-based methods, like drawing, can make a visible difference in students' learning, even those identified as reluctant readers and/or struggling with print literacy (Vicars & Senior, 2013). Therefore, academics can consider the use of VAbMs in their teaching and research to effectively impart knowledge to their students and non-academics.

One representative example of the usefulness of VAbMs in enhancing non-academics' access to knowledge is infographic summaries of selected secondary research, each of which can be finished in 5 minutes and practitioners can gain new evidence-based knowledge for their everyday work. In applied linguistics, this has been promoted by a team of TESOL researchers on their website **TESOLgraphics**. The infographic summaries are produced by these TESOL researchers and promoted to teachers in the TESOL, who are interested in evidence-based language teaching and learning practices (see Fig. 2 for an example of their infographics).

By reading Fig. 2, teachers can easily understand the key findings of the review research and have their key takeaways for their teaching. If interested, they can also scan the QR code above to read the original article. As TESOLgraphics proudly promotes on its website, these infographics can enable "digest-able TESOL secondary research at your fingertips". Indeed, teachers are busy (Farrell, 2004; Shaddock, 2014) and often lack the luxury of spending a considerable amount of time reading research. These infographics not only enhance

Fig. 2 (Automated writing evaluation feedback by TESOLgraphics, from: https://c918c033-46a8-4a3f-ae89-5831781dcd8.filesusr.com/ugd/a10835_a5df994973594914ab63108c78ad2328.pdf)



their access to more knowledge produced by academics but also might arouse their interest in exploring the findings in their practice. In a word, these infographics, as a form of visual arts, demystify research and make academic findings socially inclusive knowledge of the public.

This example has multiple implications for our role as an educator and researcher. For our teaching, infographics can be incorporated into reading tasks and as a form of formative assessment. For example, to arouse students' interest in required and optional readings for the module we

teach, we can produce a collection of similar infographics based on each of the articles on the list. By sharing these infographics instead of a list of readings with our students, it is more likely that students will read the original articles or at least have a brief understanding of all that are on the reading list. Certainly, we can also ask students to produce infographics based on their reading, constituting a form of formative assessment. For our research, we can produce corresponding infographics based on our research project or research publications. This can contribute to the public's easier access to our research findings and increase the impact of our research.

Addressing knowledge inequality: visual and arts-based methods as a possibility

3.2 VABMs for knowledge production

As the famous quote from Benjamin Franklin goes, **“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn”**. To gain knowledge, one must be involved in the process of knowledge production. In fact, knowledge coproduction is essential in ensuring the effectiveness of the democratization of knowledge (Arocena et al., 2018). Additionally, enhancing knowledge production capacities can contribute to significant improvement in human welfare (John & Rempala, 2024).

VABMs have been found effective in knowledge coproduction with community members in different disciplines. For example, in social work, VABMs have been used to access the often-silenced knowledge of

marginalized groups and thus enable the development of interventions based on the knowledge (e.g., drawing in Segal-Engelchin et al., 2020). Similarly, in consumer culture research, VABMs enables participants to share details of their fantasy experiences (the conscious experiencing of something as not real) with emotions and thus allows researchers to transgress the restrictions of traditional linguistic and textual research methods (Seregina, 2020).

One good example of knowledge coproduction with VABMs in teaching and research is through zine-making. Zines are small DIY magazines, created by “piecing together” (Lonsdale, 2015, p. 8) multimodal resources, as shown in Fig. 1. Through zine-making activity, participants/students reflect on their life experiences based on a given

topic, visualize their life stories in a zine artefact, and share their life stories through oral/written zine-explanations. Researchers/teachers then can gain insights into their participants’/students’ inner voices in the process and gather data to triangulate their analysis of participants’/students’ life stories. Additionally, by collecting and compiling all the zine pages/zines, a collective zine can be produced, a form of knowledge primarily contributed by participants/students. Fig. 3 shows a collective zine produced by international PhD students in the UK on the interplay of language, wellbeing and productivity (Zhuo, 2024). In my article, I argue that zine-making, as a form of VABMs, enables participants/students to engage in knowledge production in a fun, creative, ethical and empowering way.



Fig. 3

Zine-making for knowledge coproduction can also provide some inspiration for us to democratize knowledge in our teaching and research. For our teaching, zine-making can be easily integrated in diagnostic teaching, to explore individual students’ understanding and experiences of the teaching topic before, during and after our teaching. For research, zine-making can be particularly useful in narrative inquiry, exploring people’s life challenges, identity, resilience, burnout, and other emotions based on their life stories depicted in their zines.

3.3 VABMs for knowledge dissemination

In addition to knowledge production, VABMs also play a crucial role in knowledge dissemination, particularly in health research (Boydell et al., 2012; Lafrenière et al., 2013). It has been found that VABMs generate a deeper understanding of the experiences of human subjects’ participation in health research. With VABMs, researchers can improve the effectiveness of communicating their findings to the public. For example, in biomedical science, a form of VABMs, visual storytelling is found to enhance knowledge dissemination (Botsis et al., 2020).

One example of how powerful and compelling VABMs can be used to tell stories in health research is short films on **MOVIE-MENT**, a website uses VABMs to promote, support and ignite action and change, particularly in the areas of mental health, suicide prevention, and women/child/human rights. In a mental health research project conducted in Ghana and Indonesia, two ethnographic films are used to explore collaboration between faith-based healers and mental health workers to improve care for patients with mental illnesses. In the film about the research in Indonesia (see the screencast of the trailer in Fig. 4), the film shows the collision between mental health care and faith-based/traditional healing and the urgent need for the improved care for people with mental illness in this region.

Fig 4. (Source: <https://movie-ment.org/together4mh/>)



Fig 5. English Teacher Education - L1 and L2 in Mentoring



The film is informative and intriguing for non-academic audiences and someone outside of health research, including me to learn about the attempts by mental workers to establish collaboration with local healers, in contexts where ritual and spiritual healing practices are prevailing.

Films or videos for knowledge dissemination can also have implications for our teaching and research. For our teaching, films or videos can be used as an introduction to some abstract or challenging teaching points or as a tool for assessment. For one module on Specialism in Teacher Education and Development I took at Warwick as a MA TESOL student in 2020, the assignment included a video presentation on the assignment (20%) and a written assignment (80%). **The video** I created by using VideoScribe not only satisfied the assessment

requirement but also deepened my understanding of the topic of my written assignment. Additionally, it also allowed me to disseminate my learning/research with the wider public when I make my video publicly available on YouTube (see Fig. 5 for the screencast of the video).

For our research, we can also consider video as a medium for the dissemination of research, if this is contextually feasible and appropriate. Additionally, to maximize the benefits and power of VABMs to disseminate our research, we need to be aware of some difficult decisions, including product issue (whether to involve professional artists), representational issues (the degree of alignment between creative work and actual research findings), and ethical issues (the authorship and the protection of the anonymity of human subjects) (Lafrenière et al., 2013).

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CONCLUSION

In this article, I have argued the potential of VAbMs for academics like me to play our role in addressing the issue of knowledge inequality. With VAbMs, academics can enhance knowledge accessibility for non-academics, involve participants in knowledge production, and enable effective knowledge dissemination among the public. To explain the usefulness of VAbMs in the three aspects, I used concrete examples of effective practices and provided detailed suggestions for teaching and research. These examples and suggestions in turn prove the value of VAbMs in different disciplines. In this sense, VAbMs offers enormous opportunities for academics to work across disciplines.

It is worth mentioning that although the three aspects are argued in separate sections, they are interconnected in nature. The issue of knowledge inequality results from the complex interplay among the three aspects, and VAbMs can be a possibility for addressing this issue by contributing to the three aspects concurrently, as shown in Fig. 6.

Potential. As can be inferred from my reflexivity and the examples of effective practices, VAbMs transform individuals from passive knowledge consumers to active knowledge (co)producers, translators, or disseminators. This aligns with a powerful quotation from Paulo Freire's seminal works, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*.

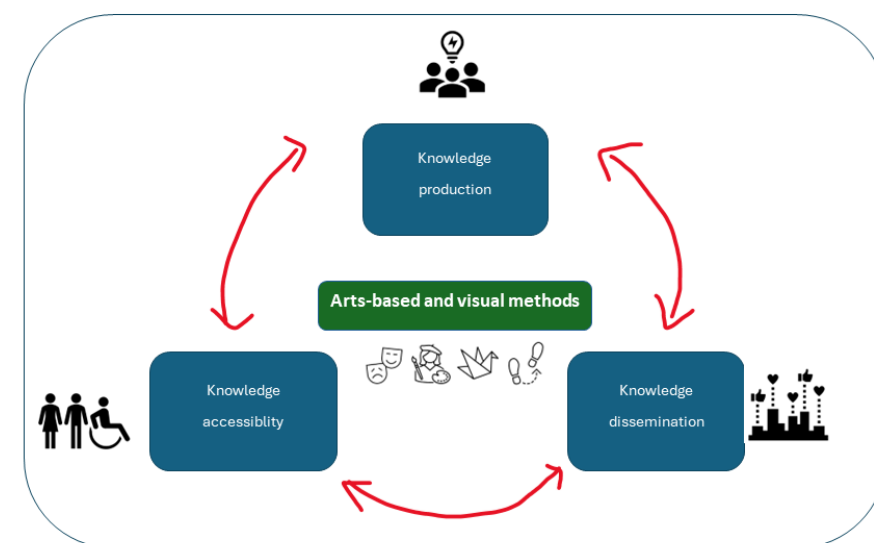


Fig 6.

"Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other."

(Freire, 2005, p. 72)

This quotation highlights the fact that knowledge does not emerge in a vacuum or through passive reception. Instead, learning is a social act, and individuals generate new knowledge only through constant inquiries into real-world problems and challenges. This quotation also reinforces my argument for VAbMs as a possibility for us to play our role address knowledge inequality.

It is my hope that this article will provide inspiration for academics across disciplines in their teaching and research and take joint efforts with both academic and non-academic stakeholders in addressing the evident knowledge inequalities in today's world.

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蘇宗鴻 TSUNG-HUNG (WILLIAM) SU

Seeing Is Believing, Seeing Is Not Believing, and Seeing Is Believing Again

Tsung-Hung Su is a PhD candidate in Department of Education Studies, the University of Warwick. And I taught PGT Module: Policy, Strategy and Resources in Education in Department of Education Studies in 2024, and Warwick Online Learning Certificate Programme during the pandemic period.

Being an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, I presented my pedagogy in University of Oxford Department of Education Conference 2021, as well as making a speech on the 18th International Conference on Teaching and Learning Chinese in Higher Education in July 2021.

Besides, I was the Chair in the Session of Migration, ESRC Midlands Graduate School DTP Conference in 2021 and in the Session of Sociology of Education, British Sociological Association Annual Conference in 2024.

ABSTRACT:

In the contemporary Eurasia, peace-making¹ interconnectedness between 'antiwar sentiments in Ukraine' and 'antiwar sentiments in Gaza' is still under construction. Since both Ukraine War and Gaza War have profound impacts on the entire global society, this article argues the controversial cleavage between 'exclusive European affairs' and 'exclusive Asian affairs' in such a geographically connected Eurasia. In order to bridge cultural heritages between Europe and Asia, it makes efforts to combine the Zen Master's triple levels with Hegelian three-paragraph dialectics, presenting the correlations. In particular, three-level dialectical logic of mind mapping addresses each stage with the effect of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, respectively. Most importantly, I have provided conceptual visual aids as well as making examples of well-known incidents to assist the readers for a better understanding of the above ideas. Hopefully, it may bring new light on relevant studies for epochal oriental-occidental academic exchanges, especially on the feedback to the query 'how are society and culture understood and experienced in the contemporary world?' through my approach of dialectics-associated mindfulness.

Keywords: Zen Buddhism, Dialectical Logic, Peace Interconnectedness in Eurasia

BIO:

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1.RESEARCH MOTIVATION/AIM:

The scenery of hippy tents of antiwar demonstration on campus (see Figure 1) caught my attention to launch a set of mindfulness understanding/ experience for peace² in this piece of work. This article attempts to establish a conceptual framework of constructive thinking for contemporary scholarly exchanges between oriental philosophies³ and occidental thoughts. On the one hand, it recalls the renaissance of Sinology in Zen Buddhism and Western idealism in dialectical logic. On the other hand, it integrates the given disciplines across Eurasia for an innovative interconnectedness – normality, inversion thinking, and resilience.

In addition, my argument is that both Ukraine War and Gaza War have profound impacts on the entire global society. Therefore, peace-making is across Eurasia, rather than a controversial cleavage between exclusive European affairs and exclusive Asian affairs within geographically connected Eurasia. In detail, this study discusses three-paragraph Zen/ dialectics linked to peaceful, contested, or reconciliated sentiments. One may find out the basic element (e.g., ying-yang)⁴ in the dialectical level I, or the extent of reflexivity⁵ in the dialectical level II, whilst one embraces the circulation of 'back to spring again'⁶ in the dialectical level III. And experiencing my three-paragraph dialectical journey is as same as the storyline of A-ha's music video, 'take on me'⁷.

Figure 1: Antiwar Demonstration Tents in the University of Warwick



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2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

There is a conventional wisdom of conceptual integration, 'Western education in practice, with the basis of Chinese pedagogy' (中學為體, 西學為用 chung-hsueh wei-t'i, hsi-hsueh wei-yung), which was implemented on the late nineteenth century in China, as the stronghold of my research. Remarkably, this meaningful idea was found from a literature of Buddhism⁸ which actually contributed cross-cultural communication and exchanges since the Han dynasty in China.

Here I focus on Zen Buddhist Mindfulness. Thus, I review the most famous gatha poem of Huineng (c. 633-713) who was the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism and founder of the School of Mindfulness with my Mandarin/English bilingual interpretation:

*Neither is Bodhi-tree,
Nor stand of a
mirror bright.*

Since all is void,

*Where can the dust
alight on and from?*

With the inner strength, Huineng endorsed the concept of enlightenment to be mindfulness through an in-depth understanding of natural laws to the extent of self-fulfilment, where dust finds no place to settle itself.⁹ Regardless of sunny or rainy days in contemporary lives, this poem is to inspire us humankind to be open-minded about phenomenology whilst we are engaged in the beauty of nature (please see the main discussion section of this study).

3. RESEARCH ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY, AND METHODOLOGY:

The ontology is 'optimising' as the progressive nature which exists in a focus of merits ('de'德) and its field ('dao'道)¹⁰ (Ames & Hall, 2003). The epistemology adopts dialectical logic of Hegelianism after Kantianism linking dialectical logic of teacher Socrates and student Plato. Hegelian dialectics expresses itself in triad of thesis-antithesis-synthesis¹¹, which emphasises concepts being developed from practical experience or empirical learning. Hence, the analyses mind-map Hegelian three-paragraph dialectics associated with the above Zen Buddhist enlightenment foundation in knowledge acquisition. And, the methodology is divided into macroscopic appraisal, microscopic evaluation, and holistic review, which de facto the triple levels I would like to illustrate below.

4. THE MAIN ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS:

The Level I of the Dialectical Logic:

In the first level of the dialectical logic, 'seeing the mountain is the mountain, and seeing the water is the water'. So, 'seeing is believing' is the theme of the level I. This stage of self-awareness is subjectivity of ego but in a form of self-limitation. And this metaphor can be presented through the visual aid – a ping-pong ball exists in the bottom of an empty glass (see Figure 2).

The Level II of the Dialectical Logic:

In the second level of the dialectical logic, 'seeing the mountain is no mountain, and seeing the water is no water'. So, 'seeing is non-believing' is the theme of the level II. This type of experiencing – one fully engages



Figure 2: A ping-pong ball in the bottom of the empty glass

oneself with – varies from the law of self-proof.

This stage of self-awareness is self-negation, a subjectivity of non-ego, which presents a ping-pong ball on the top of a full glass of water and nearly utmost of the water (see Figure 3). While one has been through lengthy self-negation, a desire to breathe fresh air surges oneself to be emerged on the top of a full glass of water. Remarkably, at the outermost surface stage, one may think reversely to the extent of Zen Buddhist transcendent openness.



Figure 3: A ping-pong ball on the outermost surface of a full glass of water

The Level III of the Dialectical Logic:

An endless cycle in the dialectical level III is based on the conceptual trio of Confucianism (the Zhou-I 周易), Taoism (the Book of Changes 易經), and Buddhism (the Zen 禪). Due to the full glass of water, the marginalised ping-pong ball is easily blown to another empty glass of water (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). This stage of self-awareness is self-awakening, a subjectivity of neo-ego (a reflexive new epoch).

'Tian-Xia' (天下 i.e., Commonwealth) have been the orthodox view of the world throughout thousand years of Chinese history. Figure 4 illustrates the miracle of a turning point. At this turning point, the dainty transition makes one revival from seasons alike circulation (see Figure 5). In other words, when one has suffered self-denials to the full, their torn in transit brings about revolutionary dynamics. After having experienced the transition, one begins to see themselves from a new position. On this stage, the ego is being empowered and enhanced. Hence, this level of the dialectical logic is 'seeing the mountain is the mountain again, and seeing the water is the water again'. But, seeing is renewal believing, as the theme of the level III.

The Significant Circle:

Finally, a formula is created, as three-paragraph metaphors are disclosed on the different stages for a circulation. One is more likely to see through the tricks¹² when one believes in natural laws and lives up naturally, e.g. Zen living¹³. In short, the above images demonstrate a renewal of the essences of Zen Buddhist mindfulness. On the one hand, it talks about an in-depth metaphysical awakening for a 'sacred' vision. On the other hand, it links to easing one's mind in 'secular' comfort zone.

Last but not least, there are two practices for peace-making in the contemporary world: non-violent measures and peacekeeping forces.

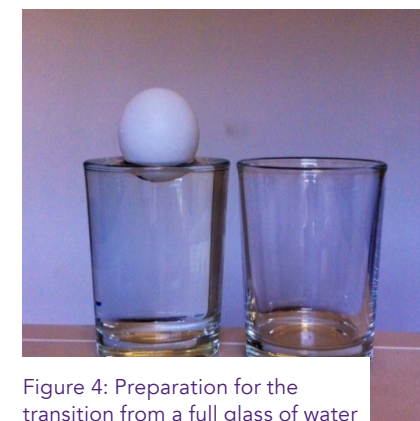


Figure 4: Preparation for the transition from a full glass of water

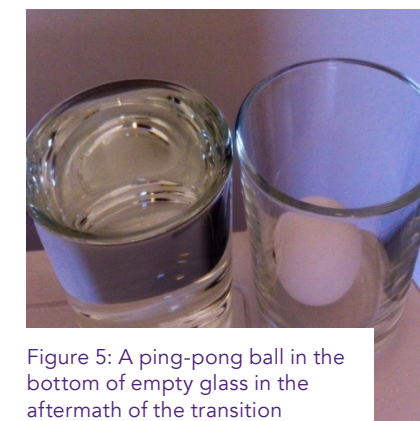


Figure 5: A ping-pong ball in the bottom of empty glass in the aftermath of the transition

NON-VIOLENT MEASURES

'Wuwei' (無為) means doing nothing (or non-coercive actions) which is a form of null in accordance with the particular focus 'de' (德), a focus of merits. Nevertheless, this type of non-coercive actions may be effortlessly resulted into non-contentious efficacy. For instance, one who takes non-violent measures (e.g., hunger strike) in the dialectical level II may render 'those who are good at waging war are not belligerent' cited from the Daodejing (Ames & Hall, 2003) towards a successful peaceful revolution. Thus, mindfulness with natural laws or in nature (as this study denoted) may bring to new light upon and be equally considered to situate oneself from the disputed hotspots.

The well-known cases include US-USSR (Russia) Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, and Alliance of Peace (579 BC and 546 BC) during the Period of Spring and Autumn in China.

PEACEKEEPING FORCE

Apostles of contradictory Bodhisattva Disciplines (菩薩道), however, may suggest monks/nuns to produce merits of greater compassion through killing scoundrels so as to rescue more victims during the Sino-Japanese War I & II (c.1894-1895, 1937-1945). It could be viewed as alternative salvation or religious altruism, reducing the sum of depravities made by the villains through terminating their lives earlier. Ones who believe in contemporary factitious regimes (e.g., governments, religions) transform themselves in the dialectical level II to join the force for peacekeeping, e.g., UN Peacekeeping Force integrating power to increase the impact on collective security (Jones and Lühe (eds.), 2021, p. 37).

This study of oriental philosophy is associated with occidental interpretation to construct the analytic framework on perceptions of visual effects and implications of major Eurasian disputes. Whether violent or non-violent by means, resilience would be shown in the dialectical level III in the aftermath of a required self-transformation for the protest or the combat. Hopefully, world peace¹⁵ in Eurasia may come back instead of concurrent conflicts, i.e., Ukraine War and Gaza War. Indeed, the prospective resilience here (see Figure 5, the third level of dialectics) is aliasing with a British conventional wisdom, 'keep calm and carry on (寧靜致遠)'.

Seeing Is Believing, Seeing Is Not Believing, and Seeing Is Believing Again

5. CONCLUSION:

In Eurasia, Europe and Asia are geographically connected. So are many shared beliefs. This study addresses twin beliefs or philosophies, which could be viewed as the implication of butterfly effect from this end of Asia to that end of Europe. Along with my visual aids, I address sayings of Zen Master Weisin (惟信) - Seeing is Believing, Seeing is not Believing, and Seeing is Believing again – on three stages of the dialectic logic. In addition, the essences of scared/secular mindfulness are unveiled through the conceptual images.

Furthermore, I conclude Zen Buddhist Mindfulness with melody/rhythm below:

I: Gatha poem of Shenxiu (c. 606-706) (Gao, 2004) with my bilingual interpretation:

Bodhi tree is the body,
Mirror is the mind.
Cleansing frequently,
So that no dust alights on.

Alongside the musical song, Edelweiss from the *Sound of Music*¹⁵ which illustrates one's national sentiments of homesick with ego of self-limitation, Shenxiu's gatha poem presents the dialectic level I to understand/experience societal and cultural incidents in the contemporary world.

II: Gatha poem of Huineng (c. 633-713):

Neither is Bodhi-tree,
Nor stand of a mirror bright.
Since all is void,
Where can the dust alight
on and from?

Alongside the folk song, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?*¹⁶ which illustrates haunting grief-stricken sentiments of the devastation of war with non-ego of lengthy self-negation, Huineng's gatha poem presents the dialectic level II to understand/experience societal and cultural incidents in the contemporary world.

III: The Aftermath of War, and Peace in a Promising Land to K.C.C.O.¹⁷:

A flower dreams himself/
herself/themselves a black
cat, so he/she/they never
walk(s) across himself/
herself/themselves –

A good luck.

A cat dresses himself/
herself/themselves up with
flowers, but he/she/they
walk(s) into a catfight –

A bad romance.

A loss, no bad thing or a
blessing in disguise (得失心別
太重) – Mum is always right!

Alongside my own songwriting with neo-ego with self-awakening, the poem/lyrics presents the dialectic level III to understand/experience societal and cultural incidents in the contemporary world.

Knowledge is power, especially the above knowledge for peace. In sum, normality, reflexivity, and resilience are the strongholds of my three-paragraph understanding of profound emotional intelligence. Hopefully, this article will bring new light on relevant studies for oriental-occidental academic exchanges – an experiential exploration both in society and culture of the contemporary world.

6. NOTE:

Beans are boiled to
make broth,

Pulses are filtered to
extract juice.

Under the pot the
Beanstalks are burnt,

In the Pot the Beans weep,

Since the twain from
one root,

Why shall we grow so hot?

(Seven Steps Verse/ Cao Zhi c.192-232)

Last but not least,
I write a note as the
interconnectedness
between Cao Zhi's
Seven Steps Verse
and my piece of
work for peace,
no war:

Since humans
are one kind
as humankind,

Why shall we
treat each
other unkind?

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹ The peace symbol ☸ represents pacifism, which motivates this article's presentation to the extent of resilience in the illustrated dialectics.
- ² Peace here means peacebuilding, a de facto dynamic social construct, which transforms conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relations (Jones and Lühe (eds.), 2021, p. 38).
- ³ For example, an ideological trio of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism (釋道儒) was being authorised throughout the ancient Chinese history and taught in the cultivation education.
- ⁴ p. 27, Ames, R. T. and Hall, D. C. 2003. *Daodejing 'Making This Life Significant' – A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine Books. In the I-Ching, experience itself is simply a yin-yang succession (一陰一陽之謂道). The sum of merits needs one half and the other to complete our field experience which is made explicitly in the metaphorical cosmology of ying-yang (陰陽) and the five phrases (五行): taiji (太極), liangyi (兩儀) or so-called yin-yang (陰陽), sixiang (四象), and baqua (八卦).
- ⁵ Bourdieu, P. 2004. *Science of Science and Reflexivity*. Oxford: Polity. French Bourdieu was the significant philosopher of reflexivity. Reflexivity here involves doubting one's own taken for granted assumptions, and it requires openness and an acceptance which one is part of the whole.
- ⁶ Back to spring again here refers to the seasons circulation but is alike back-to-school for a new study.
- ⁷ The video of experiencing is shown on the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djV11Xbc914>
- ⁸ Heisig, J. W. and Maraldo, J. C. 1995. *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School & the Question of Nationalism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, p. 155.
- ⁹ Gao, X. 2004. 'Snow in August'. Translated by Gilbert C.F. Fong. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, p. viii.
- ¹⁰ It is referred to Daoism as the philosophy (道家) rather than the religion (道教), which is based on a cosmological Daodejing (道德經) as 'the classic of a focus of merits (道德)' and its field ('dao道').
- ¹¹ Waldman, T. 2019. *Science of Logic* by G.W.F. Hegel. Amenia, NY: Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia.
- ¹² Heisig, J. W. and Maraldo, J. C. 1995. *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School & the Question of Nationalism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 322-325.
- ¹³ see p.55, Humphreys, C. 1996. *Zen Buddhism*. London: Diamond Books. The cover of Christmas Humphreys' Book, Zen Buddhism perfectly denotes its research theme: the duo concept of null-full.
- ¹⁴ My 'world peace' tone is after War and Peace written by Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (c. 1828-1910).
- ¹⁵ Edelweiss reveals one's national sentiments for the homeland against genocide and any form of war. Its video link goes below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bL2BCiFkTk>
- ¹⁶ Where Have All the Flowers Gone? was written by American singer-songwriter Pete Seeger in 1955. This haunting song explored the devastation of war. Its link goes as the following: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbWFL_F2fjo
- ¹⁷ K.C.C.O. is referred to 'Keep Calm & Carry On'.

Opinion piece

BETH CUMBER



Beth Cumber -
Opinion piece

SUMMARY

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma are linked to significant short and long term negative physical and mental health outcomes for both children and adults. Extensive research emphasises the need to prevent and address trauma across various services and societal levels. However, trauma approaches are often rooted in the medical model of pathologisation which can result in additional complexity and potential harm.

Trauma extends beyond psychiatric implications into political and social dimensions. Trauma describes human experiences and influences self-perception, with terms like "trauma survivor" reflecting this shift. Despite this broader understanding, the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders remain medicalised, isolating trauma pathology within individuals. This approach overlooks trauma's relational nature and broader social contexts, prioritising symptom reduction over a holistic understanding of individuals' experiences. This can perpetuate stigma and shame associated with complex trauma and may cause iatrogenic harm.

In young people's mental health services, increased demand and long waiting times exacerbate the crisis, leading to higher emergency referrals and hospital admissions. Inpatient care can be essential, however, safe avoidance of hospitalisation is preferable due to the potential harm from restrictive practices and reliance on psychotropic medication. Inpatient settings can involve complex power imbalances, acute distress and separation from family/social networks.

A case vignette illustrates these points. Alex, a 15-year-old residing in foster care, was admitted to a mental health unit due to severe mental health concerns. The structured environment of the ward provided stability, but Alex's self-harming behaviours intensified with positive reinforcement. Home leave, initially a motivator, also increased incidents of self-harm due to the tension

between connection and instability. The ward's predictability and consistent care offered Alex a sense of security, but restrictive practices used to manage distress could evoke memories of previous trauma.

Advocates for trauma informed care call for a shift from traditional biomedical models to strengths-based perspectives, recognising the adaptive strategies survivors develop. However, focussing on trauma without addressing its social and structural roots risk a reductionist view. Trauma discourse must incorporate a social perspective, acknowledging economic and gender-based causes of suffering. Effective responses require a structural critique of economic and political systems, moving away from pathologizing trauma toward empowering survivors and addressing broader social factors.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma are linked to negative physical and mental health outcomes, both in the short and long term for children and adults. Extensive research underscores the significant impact of ACEs, emphasising the need to prevent and address trauma across various services and society (Felitti et al., 1998; Hughes et al., 2017; Hiller & St.Clair, 2018). However, the way that trauma is conceptualised, and the support offered in contemporary society often pathologises it, creating additional layers of complexity and potential harm.

Trauma's implications extend beyond the psychiatric realm into political and social dimensions. Originally a psychiatric category, trauma has evolved within public discourse to describe human experiences and influence self-perception. Terms like "trauma survivor" have entered common usage, reflecting how individuals understand and narrate their experiences.

Despite this broader understanding of trauma, the diagnosis and treatment of its associated suffering is medicalised. This medical model, which seeks to identify treatments for symptoms based on categorised diagnoses, tends to isolate the pathology of trauma within the individual. By doing so, it overlooks the relational nature of trauma and the broader social and societal contexts in which it occurs (Peckham, 2023). This approach can be pathologizing as it prioritises symptom reduction over a holistic understanding of the individual's experiences and needs.

The medical model's focus on symptom management often leads to misidentification of trauma-related suffering as pathology, which in turn prompts responses that rely heavily on diagnosis and medication (Gomez et al., 2016). Such responses can perpetuate stigma and the shame associated with complex trauma and may cause iatrogenic harm. By failing to consider the relational and contextual factors of trauma, this approach risks neglecting the deeper

healing process necessary for true recovery.

I have included below a case vignette that illustrates how previous trauma can shape the experiences of those admitted to inpatient psychiatric units. This is based on my clinical practice as a mental health nurse and is shaped by my opinions on how Tier 4 services often do not best meet the needs of those who have experienced trauma and focus on pathologisation of symptoms. The current demands on community mental health services mean that, whilst hospitalisation rates for most paediatric conditions decrease, the number of admissions to child and adolescent inpatient mental health units are increasing (Torio et al., 2015). Mental health inpatient admissions can provide vital, intensive care for CYP, however, it is widely recognised that safe avoidance of hospital admission is favourable (Edwards et al., 2015; Alderwick & Dixon, 2019). Inpatient care involves complex power imbalances, risk management, acute distress, separation from family/carers and restrictive practices (Clark and MacLennan, 2023).

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Opinion piece

CASE VIGNETTE

Alex, a 15-year-old, was admitted to a Tier 4 child and adolescent mental health unit from foster care due to severe mental health concerns. Upon admission their foster placement broke down, exacerbating their already unstable home life. Alex has a history of disordered eating and referred to this as a mechanism to exert control over their unpredictable home environment.

Upon arrival to the unit, Alex demonstrated an ability to manage an adequate diet, and the structured environment of the ward provided a stark contrast to their prior living conditions, offering a semblance of stability. Nonetheless, during their admission, Alex's self-harming behaviours intensified, especially when praises or acknowledgement were made to their improvements in managing their diet. This appeared to trigger a counterproductive response, highlighting the complex relationship Alex had with receiving positive reinforcement. Home leave is often used as a motivating factor for young people in hospital. For Alex whilst initially home leave served as a motivator and was used for goal setting, it also led to an increase in self-harming behaviours. This dichotomy highlighted the tension between Alex's desire for connection and their fear of returning to instability and potential loss of the relationships built at the hospital.

The predictability of the ward environment and the consistent care from nursing staff provided Alex with a sense of security, they developed relationships with staff members who maintained secure boundaries and effectively managed the stresses inherent in a hospital setting. These

relationships were characterised by reliability and dependability, offering Alex a new model of stable care. Throughout their admission, Alex exhibited behaviours aimed at testing the stability of their relationships with staff. This manifested in differing patterns of risk and diet intake depending on the staff working that day.

When Alex was unable to manage their difficult thoughts around self-harming and diet restriction, restrictive practices were used as is often the practice within inpatient psychiatric services. These experiences may have been re-traumatising for Alex, and often resulted in disagreements among staff about whether this was the best care approach.

Alex's case illustrates the impact of an unpredictable home life on a young person's mental health. Their disordered eating and self-harm can be understood as ways of surviving chronic instability and neglect. The structure environment of the ward, combined with consistent care provided, a crucial therapeutic space for Alex, however, this made working towards discharge challenging and Alex was witness to and involved in restrictive practice that may have evoked memories of previous trauma. This journey highlights the ongoing challenge of navigating support in mental health units, home leave as a motivator and the complex interplay of attachment and relational support.

*This case vignette is based on my clinical experiences with multiple patients, and all identifiable information has been removed and a pseudonym has been used.

Many of those with lived experience of trauma are advocating for an approach that de-emphasises diagnosis and the narrative of pathology inherent in the medical model of psychiatry. Instead, they advocate for an approach that recognises the adaptive strategies survivors of complex trauma have developed to navigate and survive traumatising environments (Sweeney & Taggart, 2018).

Proponents of trauma-informed care suggest a shift from traditional biomedical models to a strengths-based perspective. However, it is important to caution that the current focus on trauma does not necessarily signify a radical departure from the biomedical model. There is a risk of creating another reductionist understanding of human experience and its responses (Smith & Monteux, 2023). The failure of trauma discourse to adopt a more social perspective on human distress has led to critiques around medicalisation of suffering. Trauma discourse often neglects the structural causes of suffering, whether economic or gender based and it has been argued that many roots of social suffering can be traced back to austerity and social inequalities.

Any social welfare response needs to offer a well-developed structural critique of the current economic and political systems. Without this, trauma-based approaches will serve as temporary solutions to deeper social issues (Smith & Monteux, 2023). As far back as 1978 Lasch recognised that psychologising the social origins of suffering prevents more effective and lasting solutions to social problems.

Pathologising trauma makes symptoms reduction the primary goal of treatment, viewing psychological distress and abnormal and thus requiring interventions to change the person's behaviours or coping strategies (Peckham, 2023). In contrast, a non-pathologising model of trauma posits that the abnormality lies in the situation, not in the individual (Gomez et al., 2016). This approach emphasises the need for care systems to move away from institutionalising, iatrogenic harm and further traumatising, focusing instead on empowering survivors and addressing the broader social and structure factors contributing to their suffering.

The way that society and culture are understood and experienced in the contemporary world is intertwined with our approach to adverse childhood experiences and trauma. Early social experiences and caregiving systems contribute to our development as members of society and our ability to be integrated members of social groups, collaborate with others and provide meaning to our lives. Many behavioural patterns that are associated with mental illness are rooted in social conditions, without recognition of this, trauma discourse risks becoming another reductionist understanding of human experience. Prioritising child protection, adopting a non-pathologising model of care and addressing the roots of social suffering often linked to austerity and social inequalities could facilitate lasting solutions to social adversity, that I believe could lead to a shift in cultural understanding and a healthier society.

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ELOISA OCANDO THOMAS

Colonialism and consumption: material identities in global perspective

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Source: "Brazilian cannibals". In De Bry, Theodore, *Americae tertia pars, Grandes voyages: India occidentalis*, 1st edn, 13 vols (J. Wechel et S. Feierabend, 1592), III <https://bodmerlab.unige.ch>

Consumer society, consumerism, overconsumption. Even in the midst of climate crisis, why is consumption so hard to leave behind?

This piece argues that consumption is a key aspect of human life and as such, contemporary consumption dynamics affect global power relations that particularly touch colonial and post-colonial spaces. By using consumption as a window, I aim to examine past and contemporary colonialism and colonial relationships in a wide perspective.

THE THINGS THAT MAKE US: CONSUMPTION AND IDENTITY

Having, gifting and using things, in the most general sense, is a key aspect of social life. At the most basic level, we are what we choose to have, use, eat or pass on. This is not an individual endeavour: these material choices are socially constructed, through exchange and daily renegotiation with others.



Eloisa Ocando Thomas - Colonialism and consumption: material identities in global perspective

Material distinctions help us become part of a group, and the society where we live largely defines what "things" to have, eat or gift. Therefore, this relationship between consuming and identity works in two directions: to belong to a group, and to determine those that do not belong.

A classic example lies in the beginnings of European colonial expansion in the Americas during the 16th century: the indigenous people encountered by those early colonizers were immediately characterized as "savage". In this shock, the locals' food choices were the main "proof" of their monstrosity. Not only did the natives eat bugs, roots and other unknown beasts, but early colonizers started "seeing" one-eyed, blood-thirsty natives easily recognizable by their alleged cannibalism. The construction of difference between colonizers and locals started by their consumption habits, and then was consolidated through myths.

While nowadays it is less socially acceptable to judge people based on their likings or consumption choices, the identity implications of consumption remain. Why is it that "culture shock" is particularly noticeable with food? Why do we consider specific clothing items as "necessities"? How do you know when it is appropriate to wear a tie, and when it could be "too much"? Consumption is deeply embedded in our everyday life, from choosing your daily outfit to your lunch.

CONSUMPTION AND COLONIALISM: GLOBAL BEGINNINGS

When thinking about consumption, most people imagine shopping malls, huge Amazon orders and Shein clothes filling landfills in Chile. They are not wrong. However, consumption is not a 20th, or even 19th-century phenomenon.

If, as outlined above, consumption is deeply linked to identity and human societies, it is a phenomenon as old as humanity itself. What humans decide to grow, gather, gift and keep has taken different shapes throughout history, but at its core it serves the same social purpose.

The need for "things" has shaped our contemporary world at every level. For instance, in the 16th century European colonial expansion was largely led by the quest for food. The "discovery" of the American continent was partly driven by the need of growing European monarchies to find fertile land to feed their people (and their soldiers).

The colonization of the Americas, Africa and Asia, and the immense exploitation this brought, was spurred by demands for food, exotic goods and manpower. At its most basic level, consumption was one of the drivers of imperialism and slavery. This consolidated specific power dynamics that often placed Europe and the United States at the pinnacle of a narrow view of "development" and "progress".

These dynamics did not stop after the independence of colonized territories in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The unprecedented flows of people, things and knowledge spurred by colonialism cemented the inequalities of global capitalism as we know it today.

MATERIAL CONSEQUENCES OF COLONIALISM: CONSUMPTION IN COLONIAL & POST-COLONIAL SPACES

The unequal power dynamics caused by colonialism in Africa, Asia and the Americas did not only shape global capitalism and transnational economies. Colonialism also instituted new ways of consumption in colonial territories. People living in these spaces not only produced goods demanded in Europe and the United States, but also engaged in new consumption patterns themselves. The material needs of colonial societies around the globe sometimes replicated imperial tastes, but not always. In many instances, the logics behind colonial consumption were locally constructed.

In colonial societies of the past, as is still the case now, using specific things showcased one's social standing. So, for instance, in colonial Spanish America, certain clothing items were only reserved for white people. This was the case of "mantillas", a type of head covering reserved for high end white women.

The links between dress, race and socioeconomic power in colonial Latin America are also evident in casta paintings. Typical of 17th- and

Colonialism and consumption: material identities in global perspective



Source: Detail of groups 5, 6, and 7, Casta Painting, 18th century (Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Mexico)

18th-century Spanish colonies, these painting series depicted the result of racial mixings. While the goal was to showcase the racial variability of the region, artists often added further elements that characterized every "mixture". As such, the individuals shown were dressed in the socially appropriate clothes for their standing, and sometimes even included foods that represented their place in society.

The material needs of colonial societies and the significance of items was specific to their own cultural context. As such, items considered "luxuries" in Europe were in some cases worn by people of all social standings in other parts of the world. In this sense, 18th and 19th-century travellers marvelled -sometimes in horror- at south American black women wearing pearl bracelets, delicate dresses and satin stockings even when they belonged to the lower social groups.

However, consumption in the colonies was not always done on European terms. Recent research has shown that instead of simply desiring European goods or imitating the tastes of the Global North, people living in colonial spaces demanded goods for their own reasons. For example, 19th century Senegal was a relatively large importer of Indian cotton, instead of the more readily available British cotton. In contrast to neighbouring African regions, West Africans preferred Indian cotton and actively engaged in south-south trade, effectively bypassing British taste.

NATIONHOOD & CONSUMPTION IN POST-COLONIAL CONTEXTS

Consumption choices have also served to unify national communities. In this sense, 19th-century nation-building often linked citizenship to consuming specific goods, particularly

in post-colonial contexts outside of Europe and the US.

In many nations, consumption of industrial goods has been actively promoted by political elites to create a "modern nation", often taking countries in the global north as examples of modernity. In 19th-century Mexico, machine-rolled cigarettes, department stores and billboards served as a way to create a feeling of national belonging: the "new Mexican citizen" would try these new technologies and bask in the prowess of local and foreign industries.

The use of consumption to consolidate a specific national ideology was not exclusive to the 19th-century. Countries around the world have used food in the last few decades to promote the nation at an international level, purposefully

creating an image of the "local cuisine" that is then taught to citizens in a stark top-bottom motion. In successful cases, like Peru, the middle and lower socioeconomic groups eventually reproduce these consumption patterns, with internal variations.

Consumption demands in post-colonial spaces have also sparked controversy. In the 1980s and 1990s, many scholars aligned with post- and de-colonial movements heavily criticized the consumption of goods from the US and Europe. Sometimes called "coca-colonization", scholars worried that foreign goods were replacing local ones, eventually erasing cultural differences and deeply changing indigenous communities. However, recent research has shown otherwise.

While some consumption of foreign goods aims to imitate foreign taste, this is not always the case. Neither colonial nor modern consumers blindly follow imported tastes. Instead, locals outside of Europe and the US have used goods (local and foreign) to claim identity on their own

terms, forge new political views and grapple with new ideas about nation, citizenship and belonging.

AMERICAN GOODS MADE IN CHINA? OVERCONSUMPTION, MASS PRODUCTION & POST- COLONIAL SPACES

While people all around the world have always engaged in consumption of material things, contemporary consumption demands spurs specific inequalities and exploitative dynamics. Oftentimes, the places that were ravaged by colonialism in the past engage nowadays in mass production of goods to feed the global demands of industrial capitalism.

Since the 1970s, western companies have outsourced the production of many products, notably clothes, to countries in the global south (Africa, Asia and Latin America). Within global capitalism, post-colonial spaces are considered sources of cheap labour, with more than 75 million factory workers. Unfortunately, these workers are subject to dangerous labour conditions, exploitation and modern slavery.

Modern-day overconsumption is only possible due to underpaid and overworked labourers that make as little as 2 USD a day, sometimes even less. In a similar fashion to what happened with the exploitation of colonized lands, modern-day consumerism places regions and people outside the global north in a disadvantaged position. In this sense, global consumption demands perpetuate the exploitation of post-colonial spaces, feeding a toxic cycle with dangerous consequences for workers and the environment.

ROOM FOR GROWTH? OUT OF THE CONSUMPTION CYCLE

Understanding the deeper logics of why we consume might make us more aware of the possible pitfalls when trying to lower our consumption. Stopping the shopping cycle is hard, among other things, because it helps us recreate our self-identity.

However, this does not mean all is lost. As more people strive to reach a more balanced relationship with material things, we might look at what people in the global south are doing. While oppression and harsh inequalities still plague post-colonial spaces, there are also pockets of resistance, innovation and change. From upcycling to reusing "discarded" materials, improving the lifecycle of consumables and trying to stick to local supply chains, communities around the globe are trying to deal with overconsumption in different ways.

For those of us living in Europe and the US, we hold weight as consumers. Re-thinking the global supply chain, trying to improve local workers' working conditions and holding companies accountable for their production practices are all within our sphere of influence and might help rebalance the inequalities present in modern-day consumption practices.

What Should Feminists Do About Lactation?

JENNY BROWN

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IF MEN BREASTFED.

A few years ago, an advert for a breast pump did the rounds on social media. Entitled “If Men Breastfed”, the two minute-long film imagines an alternative universe where women give birth to babies, but men breastfeed them. Within this altered division of labour, we follow a man, dressed in a business suit, being supported by male colleagues after the breastmilk that is leaking from his nipples becomes visible through his shirt during a work meeting. Met with sympathy, he is taken and given a tour of the in-office “Lactation Lounge”, which resembles a man cave or gentleman’s bar - decked out with leather Chesterfield sofas, and adorned with Madonna-like portraits of George Washington, Teddy Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill nursing their young - in which a number of male colleagues are relaxing and pumping breastmilk. In this masculine celebration of breastfeeding, “lactation steaks” are served; a bow-tied barman cheerfully polishes up empty bottles, flanges, and tubes; and colleagues compete with each other on a live-updated “lactation leaderboard” tracking fluid ounces expressed, and by proudly comparing notes on their various pumping tech, whether it be the sleek silver and white touch-screen “iPump”, or the manual bicep-curl gym-workout inspired “Nordic Vac”.

This alternative universe is then juxtaposed with a more accurate portrayal of the reality of

breastfeeding – a woman pumping in a stationery cupboard, a process disturbed by an embarrassed male colleague who is on the search for printer toner, the location of which, judging by the woman’s response, she knows intimately given the amount of time she has already expended perusing the supplies. In a blog-post, the creators of the advert, Naya Health, express their desire to playfully imagine that if men had to bear the costs of breastfeeding, and if male dominance in the workplace then included breastfeeding, what accommodations and perks would result, and to simultaneously highlight the inconvenience, the indignity, and the generally ignored workplace inequality that combining breastfeeding and work currently involves for women.¹⁸

This kind of counterfactual imagining is useful in our moral reasoning, to imagine alternative possibilities, and to help us to articulate reasonable expectations of adjustments that could or perhaps even should be made to workplaces to include breastfeeding women. It highlights the way that breastfeeding, a practice that is gendered as female, has low visibility and low status, both culturally, and in medical research. It makes one wonder whether, if it was men that lactated, we would know more about human milk, and sooner, given the dearth of research into women’s health and the centring of the male subject as the norm in the biological sciences. Since human milk contains cancer killing cells (known as



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HAMLET – human alpha-lactalbumin made lethal to tumour cells¹⁹) the male Madonnas on the Lactation Lounge wall might as well have been superheroes with capes as well as world leaders. But it also prompts another question, perhaps one not intended to provoke: why can’t men breastfeed?; or to rephrase it more directly, can men breastfeed?

LACTATION AS A FEMINIST ISSUE

My exploration of that question came out of a feminist interrogation of breastfeeding (hereafter referred to by the gender-neutral term, nursing) that began in the context of the persistence of the gender pay gap. In the world of work, gender equality has stalled. One aspect that has proved incorrigible is the continual specialisation in child-care by women. Economists demonstrate that in the last 50 years there has been great progress towards gender equality on a global scale: female participation in paid work has increased, girls are excelling in education, and the gender pay gap has been shrinking, but in many places, progress of the latter area has slowed.²⁰ Recent research has found that the persistence of a disparity in pay between men and women can overwhelmingly be accounted for by the disproportionate adoption of the primary caregiving role by women. Henrik Kleven et. al. describe the difference in pay between men and women as consisting mainly of a “child penalty” wherein for many women performing work roles in a manner identical to their male counterparts, and identical

to their pre-parenting performance, is often not an option.²¹ As a result, sectors of industry, job roles, and working arrangements that are more amenable to family life are chosen by women over positions that bring greater financial rewards. Marianne Bertrand identifies two remaining “pain points” that continue to fuel the gender pay gap – the first concerns gender differences in educational choices, the second is the large difference between the pay of men and women that emerges when the latter have their first child.²² Data from Denmark, Sweden, the US, the UK, Austria, and Germany shows that while the birth of a first child is practically a non-event for men in terms of earnings, for women, an “immediate, sharp, and persistent” negative impact on pay is felt, with the difference still there 10 years afterwards.²³

The alternatives to female specialisation in childcare are equal sharing, and male specialisation.²⁴ The policy proposals advanced to enable these alternatives involve a move away from maternity leaves and long parental leaves, which further entrench the gendered division of labour, keeping women out of work for extended periods of time and reinforcing gender stereotypes.²⁵ Even improved family support and increased workplace flexibility are found to strengthen the gendered division of labour as they are disproportionately taken up by women.²⁶ Institutional attempts to undo gender norms, such as generous paternity leave, of the non-

transferable “use-it-or-lose-it” or “daddy quota” type, are designed to incentivise male-caregiving and promote equal sharing or male specialisation.²⁷ These policies can function to change the choice structure within which childcare decisions are made, incentivising counter-stereotypical behaviours²⁸ and ultimately forcing a change in norms, giving men the ability to choose caregiving. By interrupting the behaviour-norm reinforcement cycle and reducing the cost of individual defection, the previously robust mechanism that socially reproduces gender can falter.²⁹ In the long-term, this strategy might work to break the association of women and femininity with caregiving, challenging stereotypes, subverting norms, and raising the status of the caregiver role because, as Nancy Fraser suggests, it “values female-associated practices enough to ask men to do them, too.”³⁰

The issue of nursing and its place in parenting reveals significant tensions within feminism between pursuing gender equality in a manner that erases biological difference as much as possible - treating men and women as equally fungible as parents - and embracing and celebrating the specialised abilities of women’s bodies and centring the mother-child dyad in family narratives. In the early 1980s, these two aspects of feminism, whether understood as outright rivals or in productive tension with each other, were characterised by Iris Marion Young as Humanist feminism, and Gynocentric feminism, respectively.³¹ Humanist feminism, in

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the spirit of degendering, heralded the development of safe alternatives to human milk, in the form of Commercial Milk Formulas (CMFs), as part of the liberation of women, who can return to the workplace soon after birth, leaving their child in the care of bottle-wielding partners, family, friends or paid caregivers. Gynocentric feminism decried the pursuit of male-coded success, which both entailed the devaluation of women's experiences and contributions, and, in a moment of catastrophising that has since found its day, threatens the survival of the planet and the human race.

Any personal or public policy commitment to breastfeeding pulls against a commitment to feminism as degendering. It appears that the most gender-neutral and egalitarian method of infant feeding is bottle-feeding with CMFs. By contrast, nursing is currently sex-patterned, gender-coded, and intensive. Instead of challenging stereotypes, and degendering infant feeding, the increased uptake of nursing by mothers would further entrench the specialisation of women in childcare. Nursing has features that seem to be incompatible with the incentivisation of equal sharing and male specialisation. Since the task of nursing will fall on those humans who lactate, of whom a significant majority are women, the distribution of the capacity to nurse could function as a "lactation penalty" for women, where equal performance with men in the workplace and beyond would be less achievable. The "child penalty" that we have seen is incurred by women soon after the birth of their first child will be partially composed of a "lactation penalty" paid by women, whether they willingly choose to nurse, or just feel they have to.

Back in 1985, Young sought to tread a troubled path, avoiding both the uncritical coopting of male standards by Humanist feminism and the (often reactionary, sometimes transphobic) essentialism of Gynocentric feminism: "[w]e need to rethink our analysis, not to form a synthesis of the two, but to cook up a better mixture out of some of the old ingredients." In the spirit of revising recipes, with a bit of imagination, feminists can blend a better milkshake.

LACTATION BEYOND GESTATIONAL MOTHERS

We began with a hypothetical scenario, one in which men lactated. Let's consider another now. In a possible future world, human milk is the only food available and safe for feeding to newborn and young babies. The precise reason why this is the case is not important,³² but however it occurs, all babies that are born into this world are dependent on human milk to survive, so that nursing would no longer be an optional extra to caring for a baby.³³ If this were to happen now, this would have disastrous consequences. Some babies, premature or otherwise, are too ill or weak to latch on and nurse at birth. Some new parents cannot nurse their children, as they do not produce sufficient milk, or medicines they are prescribed may transfer through their milk to their child.³⁴ Children born in these circumstances would be undernourished, some would starve, others would fail to thrive.³⁵

Once a period of adjustment had elapsed, how would things have settled? Alternative sources of human milk would have had to be made accessible to those who could not or should not feed their children. Those who were currently lactating might

donate their excess milk to human milk banks, to be distributed to babies who needed it (this is currently the case with some generous lactators). However, this would be unlikely to be sufficient to sustain all the babies that would have been fed CMFs instead. In this emergency scenario, we would probably soon learn to exploit a few things about human lactation:

1. **Re-lactation** is possible. Those who have nursed children before, and even those who only produced milk briefly after birth, but did not use it to feed a child, can follow a protocol to cause them to re-lactate, which usually involving a regime of pumping and/or the use of drugs (galactagogues) to stimulate milk production, or it can, in some cases, happen by regularly and repeatedly placing a nursing child to one's chest.³⁶ This means that **all former lactators** potentially could be mobilised to nurse babies.
2. Lactation is a process that continues even as children grow up. Although the components of human milk change as a nursling ages, once a milk supply is established, the human body can continue to produce milk for as long as a demand is present, so that nursing persons with older children can nurse the younger children of others, and even grandparents can nurse their grandchildren, either by continuous nursing through their life, or through re-lactation. This means that there is no upper-age limit to lactation³⁷ (the only hormonal requirement is a functioning pituitary gland – meaning that post-menopausal women can still nurse), and therefore **no upper-age limit** to the pool of former lactators that could be called upon to nurse babies.

3. Lactation can be achieved **without gestation**.³⁸ Although lactation is most often caused by a series of hormonal processes that are triggered by pregnancy and birth, it can occur in persons who have never been pregnant, by following a protocol to **induce lactation** (again, using pumping and/or galactagogues to stimulate milk production). This means that never-gestated parents, and never-gestated non-parents, can potentially lactate and feed children human milk.

4. **Male lactation** is possible.³⁹ Jared Diamond argues that lactation "lies within a male mammal's physiological reach", and that "[s]oon, some combination of manual nipple stimulation and hormone injections may develop the confident expectant father's latent potential to make milk."⁴⁰ Steve Jones asks "Why is the milk of human kindness made by only half the population? After all, men have nipples and the capacity to use them. Males given certain chemicals lactate with no difficulty."⁴¹ As male lactation is likely to be non-gestational lactation, it will usually need to be induced as it is for non-gestational females, although there are some anecdotal and unsubstantiated accounts of spontaneous male lactation.⁴² Some transgender men choose to chest feed their babies, and studies have confirmed that trans women can lactate and nurse their children.⁴³ This means that there could be some flexibility, at the very least more than there is currently, in the sex (and certainly the gender) of who feeds a child or provides a child with human milk.

In this No Alternative scenario, things would be quite scary initially for Audrey, who has been feeding her baby Zara with, now unavailable, CMF. Through donation networks, she is able to connect with Bisi, who has already volunteered to donate excess

milk she produces to feed her baby to a human milk bank. Audrey's friend Carmela, who is nursing her own child, offers to feed Audrey's baby to help establish her latch. Audrey's male partner Dahir (baby Zara's father), her brother Emet, and her mother Faye, all offer to attempt to induce lactation (or relactation, in the case of Faye), alongside Audrey who is doing the same. In a matter of weeks, Audrey, Dahir, and Faye are able to produce enough milk between them to be the exclusive sources of nutrition for baby Zara, so that they are no longer reliant on donations from Bisi, whilst Carmela still offers to feed baby Zara when she babysits. Once their supplies are established, and baby Zara is less dependent on milk for their main source of nutrition, Audrey, Dahir, and Faye agree to pay their lactation forward by offering their own milk to family, friends, and strangers who need milk for their babies. Unfortunately, Audrey's brother Emet was unable to produce milk for baby Zara, despite trying to induce lactation, but when his partner gives birth to Baby Yan soon after, Baby Yan's uncle, auntie, and grandmother can assist in feeding them alongside their birth mother.

If needs must, many more people could be lactating than currently are, which means that in the No Alternative scenario, there would likely be enough milk available to feed infants, and the burden of who does the feeding could be met through sharing. People would probably enter into "**co-nursing**" arrangements, where they shared the nursing of their own children with their co-parents, and/or "**cross-nursing**" arrangements, whereby they nursed children that were not their own, and/or agreed that others shared in the nursing of their own children. Lactation, as a biological process one's body is currently engaged with, could become much more common than it currently is, and the age, sex, gender, and familial/relational profile of those lactating could be much more diverse.

People would likely lactate for much longer periods, in order to meet the nutritional needs of various children, whether related by family or not, across the course of their lifetimes. As lactation would be forced to become the statistical and the cultural norm, the cultural expectations of what becoming a parent involves or requires would shift to incorporate and accept the direct bodily dependence that nursing infants involves, and ideally, to compensate those who bear the burden of this dependence. However, due to the way that lactation could be dispersed and diversified through cross-nursing arrangements, the burden could be less than the burden of exclusive nursing currently borne by individuals, usually gestational mothers.

TOWARDS A DISPERSED LACTATION CULTURE

There are many moral considerations raised by the No Alternative scenario, such as worries about bodily autonomy and family integrity, that need to be explored. Assuming the dispersal of nursing by choice fails to trigger these concerns, there are many practical changes that could be enacted to move towards a more Dispersed Lactation Culture. One concerns **pre-natal and post-natal care**. When a person presents as pregnant to their health services, infant feeding is one of the aspects of early care that they usually receive training and support in relation to. Early on in pregnancy, gestators could be asked some further questions, alongside the standard "Are you planning on breastfeeding?": "Is there anyone in your social support network who is already lactating, who you could ask to support you in feeding your child?"; "Is there anyone in your social support network who would like to have the opportunity to induce lactation/re-lactate to support you in feeding your child?" Appropriate information, technologies, and medications could then be dispensed in order to enable

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the dispersal of lactation, if that is something the gestator would like to explore. Another concerns the extension of **childcare leave entitlements and benefits** beyond gestators to all parents and to non-parental caregivers. If nursing is going to be dispersed more widely, the cost of opting to cross-nurse must not be prohibitive for co-parents and non-parents. Finally, the argument made here regarding degendering nursing is partly speculative, since the **research on male lactation** is scant. The potentialities and limits of mammary function in bodies that employ a male gametic reproductive strategy should be explored, which could include clinical trials of the effects and side-effects of galactagogues, the relationship between mammary tissue and mammary capacity, and the development of tests to confirm whether lactation is a viable option for individual caregivers. An especial effort is also required to navigate and negotiate the gender identity of (potential) male lactators, where embodied changes and culturally loaded acts challenge received notions of maleness. Nevertheless, while short of being a situation with No Alternative, gender injustice requires us to make significant changes.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹⁸ <https://nayahealth.co/blog/if-men-breastfed/>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.sciencefocus.com/news/compound-found-in-human-breast-milk-has-the-potential-to-fight-cancer>
- ²⁰ Bertrand, M. (2020) 'Gender in the Twenty-First Century,' AEA Papers and Proceedings Vol. 110, pp. 1-24; p. 2.
- ²¹ Kleven, H., Landais, C., Posch, J., Steinhauer, A., and Zweimüller, J. (2019) 'Child Penalties across Countries', AEA Papers and Proceedings Vol. 109, pp. 122-126; see also, Kleven, H., Landais, C., and Sogaard, J. E. (2019) 'Children and Gender Equality: Evidence from Denmark', American Economic Journal: Applied Economics Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 181-209.
- ²² Bertrand, M., (2020) 'Gender in the Twenty-First Century', pp. 3-5.
- ²³ Kleven et al., (2019) 'Child Penalties', p. 123.
- ²⁴ For the purposes of the discussion here, a heterosexual pairing of male and female parents is assumed. This is because it is this arrangement that is targeted as problematic by feminists, with the idea being that the degendering of childcare achieved for these kinds of relationships will go on to benefit families that do not fit this model, be they single parent, same-sex parent, or other, non-sexual co-parenting arrangements.
- ²⁵ Gheaus, A. (2018) 'Gender', in Olsaretti, S. (ed.) The Oxford Handbook of Distributive Justice (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 389-414, p. 408; Bertrand, (2020), p. 16.
- ²⁶ Schouten, G. (2019) Liberalism, Neutrality, and the Gendered Division of Labour (Oxford: Oxford University Press), Chapter 1.
- ²⁷ Brighouse, H. and Wright, E. O. (2008) 'Strong Gender Egalitarianism', Politics & Society Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 360-372, p. 362; Gheaus, 'Gender', p. 408; Gheaus, A. and Robeyns, I., (2011) 'Equality-Promoting Parental Leave', Journal of Social Philosophy Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 173-191; Schouten, (2019) Liberalism, Neutrality, and the Gendered Division of Labour, Chapter 1 and 2; Bertrand, (2020), 'Gender in the Twenty-First Century,' pp. 16-17; Kleven et al., (2019), 'Child Penalties'.

- ²⁸ Bertrand, (2020), 'Gender in the Twenty-First Century,' p. 17. Fernández, Folgli, & Olivetti have found that direct exposure to proscribed, counterstereotypical behaviour is the key to changing gender stereotypes across generations, see Fernández, R., Fogli, A., & Olivetti, C. (2004) 'Mothers and sons: Preference formation and female labor force dynamics', Quarterly Journal of Economics Vol. 119, No. 4, pp. 1249-1299.
- ²⁹ Brighouse and Wright, (2008), 'Strong Gender Egalitarianism', pp. 367, 369.
- ³⁰ Fraser, N. (1994) 'After the Family Wage: Gender Equity and the Welfare State', Political Theory Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 591-618, p. 610.
- ³¹ Young, I. M. (1985) 'Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics', Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 173-183.
- ³² Perhaps animal agriculture has been banned by climate conscious or vegan politicians and dairy alternatives have been slow to scale up to meet demand for formula; perhaps infant formula has been ruled unsafe due to a watertight link with poor health outcomes or high levels of contaminants; or (more likely and closer to recent experiences) the unsustainability of the production and distribution of formula both to scale and to very high standards of quality has become increasingly apparent, leading to widespread shortages, higher prices, numerous lawsuits and a gradual divestment in the formula industry.
- ³³ According to the last national infant feeding survey in the UK, carried out in 2010, 81% of babies received some human milk by being "put to the breast" at birth. At birth, 69% of babies were exclusively being breastfed. By 6 weeks, 55% of babies were still receiving some human milk, with 23% being exclusively breastfed. By 6 months, 34% of babies were still receiving some human milk, with 1% being exclusively breastfed, as per the WHO recommendations. See <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/infant-feeding-survey/infant-feeding-survey-uk-2010>.

- ³⁴ McDonald, K., Amir, L. H., Davey, M. (2011) 'Maternal bodies and medicines: a commentary on risk and decision-making of pregnant and breastfeeding women and health professionals', BMC Public Health Vol. 11, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-11-S5-S5>.
- ³⁵ Although "[n]early all women are biologically capable of breastfeeding", there are a number of barriers to initiation and continuation, including self-reported insufficient milk, which can often be overcome with appropriate support. See Rollins, N. C., Bhandari, N., Hajeebhoy, N., Horton, S., Lutter, C. K., Martines, J. C. et al. (2016) 'Why invest, and what will it take to improve breastfeeding practices?', Lancet Vol. 387, pp. 491-504; p. 492; and Pérez-Escamilla, R., Tomori, C., Hernández-Cordero, S., Baker, P., Barros, A. J. D., Bégin, F., Chapman, D. J., Grummer-Strawn, L. M., McCoy, D., Menon, P., Ribero Neves, P. A., Piwoz, E., Rollins, N., Victora, C. G., and Richter, L. (2022) 'Breastfeeding: crucially important, but increasingly challenged in a market-driven world', Lancet Vol. 401, pp. 472-485; pp. 476-477.
- ³⁶ Success can be improved with the use of a supplementary nursing system (SNS), which attaches a thin feeding tube to the nipple before a baby is positioned to latch on, which encourages the baby to persist at suckling without the frustration of receiving no milk, as they can draw milk from a bottle attached to the feeding tube. This mimics nursing, and if done regularly, can stimulate the mammary glands into the production of milk. This system can also be used in cases of low milk supply, to stimulate the glands into producing a greater supply, leading to a better chance at producing enough milk to be the exclusive food source for an infant.
- ³⁷ Hewlett and Wilsons' anthropological study of allomaternal nursing (nursing of children by persons other than their mothers) found the practice in 97 out of 104 cultures for which ethnographic data was available. In 6% of these cultures, allomaternal nursing was "normative", comprising about 20% of the feeds babies received. Grandmothers were the most common allonurses used. See Hewlett, B. S. and Winn, S. (2014) "Allomaternal Nursing in Humans", Current Anthropology Vol. 55, No. 2, pp. 200-229. Relactation by grandmothers is described in Slome, C. (1956) "Nonpuerperal Lactation in Grandmothers", The Journal of pediatrics Vol. 49, No. 5, pp. 550-552. Analysis of the milk of a lactating grandmother found it was comparable to that produced by younger persons, apart from a

- lower protein content, see Gindler, J., Nwankwo, M. U., Omene, J. A., Glew, R. H. and Roberts, I. M. (1985) "The Quality of Milk in a 65 Year-Old Nigerian Woman", Nutrition Research Vol. 5, pp. 1209-1213.
- ³⁸ In the medical literature, this is referred to as nonpuerperal lactation. La Leche League International provides support to those interested in inducing lactation: <https://llli.org/breastfeeding-without-giving-birth-2/>, accessed 14/07/23. See Wittig, S. L. & Spatz, D. L. (2008) 'Induced Lactation', American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 76-81. A study of induced lactation in 240 adoptive parents found that in many cases, supplementation was required as insufficient milk was produced to be an exclusive source of nutrition for the child. See Auerbach, K. G. and Avery, J. L. (1981) "Induced lactation: A study of adoptive nursing by 240 women", American Journal of Diseases of Children Vol. 135, No. 4, pp. 340-343.
- ³⁹ The literature on this is limited but developing. Biologists and sociobiologists are wont to casually mention the possibility, for example, Swaminathan, N. (2007) "Strange but True: Males Can Lactate", Scientific American September 6 2007, see <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/strange-but-true-males-can-lactate/> (accessed 17/07/23).
- ⁴⁰ The full details are as follows: "Both sexes of all mammals have mammary glands. While the glands are generally less well developed and nonfunctional in males, the degree of underdevelopment varies among species. At one extreme, in mice and rats, the mammary tissue never forms ducts or a nipple and remains invisible from the outside. At the opposite extreme, in dogs and primates (including humans), the gland does form ducts and a nipple in both males and females and scarcely differs between the sexes before puberty. During adolescence the visible differences between mammalian sexes increase under the influence of a mix of hormones from the gonads, adrenal glands, and pituitary gland. Among the hormonally caused changes is a growth spurt in the mammary glands in females. Hormones released in pregnant females produce a further mammary growth spurt and start milk production, which is then stimulated by nursing. In humans, milk production is especially under the control of the hormone prolactin. [...] It should be emphasized that male and female differences in hormones aren't absolute but a matter of degree: one sex may have higher concentrations of a certain hormone and more receptors for

- it. In particular, becoming pregnant is not the only way to acquire the hormones necessary for breast growth and milk production." According to Diamond, male lactation as a "bad evolutionary gamble", yet, "the human species [is] a leading candidate for male lactation." "Females, but not males, have been undergoing natural selection for milk production for tens of millions of years. In all the species I cited to demonstrate that male lactation is physiologically possible--humans, cows, goats, dogs, guinea pigs, and Dayak fruit bats too--lactating males still produce much less milk than do females. That leaves us to speculate whether somewhere out there, undiscovered, some mammal species lurks whose males and females share the burden of lactation equally--or which might evolve that sharing in the future." Finally, "[s]oon, some combination of manual nipple stimulation and hormone injections may develop the confident expectant father's latent potential to make milk. While I missed the boat myself, it wouldn't surprise me if some of my younger male colleagues, and surely men of my sons' generation, exploit their opportunity to nurse their children. The remaining obstacle will then no longer be physiological but psychological: Will all you guys be able to get over your hang-up that breast-feeding is a woman's job?" Diamond, J. (1995) "Father's Milk", Discover January 19 1995, see <https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/fathers-milk> (accessed 17/07/23).
- ⁴¹ Jones, S. (1999) Almost Like a Whale: The Origin of the Species Updated (London: Black Swan, Transworld), pp. 401-402.
- ⁴² See Laura Shanley, "Milkmen: Fathers Who Breastfeed" for examples: <https://unassistedchildbirth.com/inspiration/%20milkmen-fathers-who-breastfeed/>
- ⁴³ Reisman, T. and Goldstein, Z. (2018) Case Report: Induced Lactation in a Transgender Woman', Transgender Health Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 24-26. García-Acosta, J. M., San Juan-Valdivia, R. M., Fernández-Martínez, A. D., Lorenzo-Rocha, N. D., Castro-Peraza, M. E. (2020) 'Trans Pregnancy and Lactation: A Literature Review from a Nursing Perspective', International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health Vol. 17, No. 44 doi:10.3390/ijerph17010044

This collection represents the best of the work submitted for inclusion in our Celebration Event on the 2nd July 2024.

New Beginnings

by Naomi Williams

¡CANARIAS TIENE UN LÍMITE!

by Chris Waite

Addressing knowledge inequality: visual and arts-based methods as a possibility

by Meifang Zhuo

**Seeing Is Believing,
Seeing Is Not Believing,
and Seeing Is Believing Again**

by Tsung-Hung Su

Opinion piece

by Beth Cumber

**Colonialism and consumption:
material identities in global
perspective**

by Eloisa Ocando Thomas

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by Jenny Brown

A huge thank you to all of our 2024 contributors.

