President’s Message

I want to start my first President’s Message with a thank you to everyone who made the 89th Annual Conference of the Southwestern Anthropological Association (SWAA) in Fresno possible. Simply put, the conference would not have been a success without the creative input of the Executive Board and the volunteer efforts of students and other participants. I hope everyone enjoyed the meetings and Fresno as much as I did. There are far too many people who deserve thanks than I can possibly list here but I hope you know who you are – planning and executing a conference is often a thankless task and I want to be sure that all those involved are appreciated.

Before I look forward to our 90th Annual Conference of SWAA I want to reflect on some of the panels, conversations, and programs I had the pleasure of participating in during the Fresno conference. Prior to the start of the conference, I had the pleasure of visiting Hank Delcore’s (Board Chair) senior seminar class at CSU, Fresno to share some of my own recent research and methodological approaches to multi-sited work. I left the classroom with a renewed sense of optimism about the future of our discipline and the critical thinkers we are training. I was happy to see many of the same students enthusiastically participating in salon sessions and conference related programming over the weekend.

The disadvantage of having a full program with concurrent sessions is that I found myself jumping from session to session in an effort to see a wide swath of papers. It was important for me to see many of the abstracts I had reviewed over the previous months come to fruition in presentation form. Although I missed much of what I wished to hear and see, I managed to experience some great posters, panels, and individual papers. I was especially excited to see the CSU, Fresno students working under Dr. John Pryor present their nascent archaeological findings in poster form (see photos, next page). The eagerness of these students to share their research and think about the larger context of their work should serve as a reminder to faculty that the scholarship and experience we impart is not bounded by an academic calendar or classroom. Dr. Dvera Saxton (CSU, Fresno) organized two salon sessions that brought together faculty and students alike to talk about social justice across the food system and creative platforms like zines. I was inspired by many of the pedagogical innovations and creative ways Dr. Saxton encourages her students to think about the discipline of cultural anthropology as inherently engaged, political, and timely. [See photos next page.]

At the Banquet, it was an honor to hear Dr. Yolanda Moses share her perspective on the current state of race in the United States, what the future may hold, and the role of anthropologists within this complex landscape.

Lastly, if there was ever any question about “selling” Fresno as a conference destination, I suspect many of the conference attendees are officially sold. Of course, we had the advantage of programming that allowed us to do what it is we do in anthropology – see the world from our own respective positions and experiences while enjoying a carefully curated list of local, community-based and historically significant businesses curated by the CSU, Fresno students. I look forward to the next occasion I find myself in Fresno.

Thinking forward to our 2019 conference, I would like to welcome our new board members and those who have shifted into new positions. Dr. Janet Page-Reeves (Vice President), Dr. Henry Delcore (Board Chair), and Dr. Hilarie Kelly (Social Media) will all serve the Executive Board well and I look forward to working with everyone in the coming year.

If you were able to attend the banquet in May, you might recall that the 2019 conference theme is “legibility.” By foregrounding legibility as a concept, I hope to encourage our participants from all four subfields and related disciplines to think through legibility in a way that helps us better understand what it means to decipher and make someone or something “clear enough to read” (i.e. legible). The 2019 SWAA Annual Conference takes on the task of expanding and thinking through legibility with original and critical anthropological and anthropology-allied research. I also encourage potential participants to think about what it means to make our research legible through our scholarly production and pedagogy and what it means to make our discipline legible to a broader public through collaboration and other creative means. Expect the final conference title and call for papers in the Fall newsletter.

—Sarah Grant, California State University, Fullerton
SWAA President 2018-2019

Save the Dates! April 19-20, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Garden Grove
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CSU Fresno archaeology students Linda Banuelos, Barbera Vasquez, Alexa Becerra, Polet Campos-Melchor, and Alejandra Aguinaga with their poster.

One of the Salon Sessions organized by CSU Fresno professor Dvera Saxton

CSU Fresno’s Dr. John Pryor with his archaeology students, who presented posters on their findings at the SWAA conference.

(Photos this page by Sarah Grant)
Clockwise, from top: Secretary and Registration Chair Janni Pedersen (Ashford University) in center, with CSU Fresno student volunteers at the registration table; SWAA Past President A.J. Faas (San José State University); Sarah Taylor (CSU Dominguez Hills); Amanda “Billie” Guerrero (University of La Verne); SWAA Board Members Andre Yefremian (Glendale College), Michael Eissinger (CSU Fresno), and Eric Canin (CSU Fullerton).
CSU Long Beach students Michaela Mauriello and Esly Tsai demonstrating their virtual reality project, "Dancing Through the Islands," in Scott Wilson’s session showcasing film and new media.

Terri Castaneda (CSU Sacramento) presenting archival research on an early indigenous, Native Californian exhibition initiative.

Shahab Malik (UC Riverside) explaining the charitable ethic of the Memon Muslim community in California.

UC Riverside presenters on the session, "Asiatic California: Uprooted Nationalism and Questions of Belonging" included Stephen James, who spoke on the Vietnam War Memorial in Little Saigon.

Left: Jonathan Christensen (UC Riverside) discussing Tibetans in California.

Right: Krista Perrin (University of La Verne) presenting on Chamorro activism in Guam.

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In the Book Room, clockwise from left: Weavings from Oaxaca; Filipino Lottery game card on display; books by Michael Eissinger on sale; Distinguished Speaker Yolanda Moses’ books on sale; display of graphic zines, courtesy of Laguna Collective [photos by Hilarie Kelly].
Old Apple computer, part of the Silent Auction [photo by Sarah Grant].
Photos from the Banquet, clockwise left to right: Attentive audience members; Distinguished Banquet Speaker Dr. Yolanda Moses; incoming SWAA President Sarah Grant, outgoing Executive Board Chair Jonathan Karpf, and outgoing SWAA President and incoming Executive Board Chair Henry Delcore; Sarah Grant and Henry Delcore; student paper competition winners; student poster competition winners; wonderful local student volunteers.
Student Poster Competition Winners:
Not surprisingly, many excellent posters were presented at this year’s conference. The winners were announced at the Saturday Banquet, with a tie for first place between Santana Juache (UC Merced) and Josephine Inpanya (CSU, Long Beach), and second place going to Melissa Hafey (University of Nevada, Reno).

Josephine Inpanya is a recent graduate of California State University, Long Beach. She was an anthropology major with an emphasis in bioarcheology. She began to take an interest in doing research in her Ethnographic Methods class. Her research led her to become engaged in community outreach work, focusing on the condition of homelessness in Long Beach city through the use of ethnographic and interview methods. She explored the impact of services on the homeless clients and the complexity of communication and interaction that can positively help clients to form social networks and accelerate their transition to permanent housing and finding jobs. Josephine is planning to attend graduate school to enhance her education in Bioarcheology and Forensic Anthropology.

Santana Juache-Rodriguez graduated from the University of California at Merced this past May of 2018, with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology. She graduated top of her class and had the honor of serving her fellow students as Commencement Speaker. Her love of anthropology developed during her three years at a community college where she first learned about the discipline.

Santana’s success as an undergrad has made her passion for writing and research grow exponentially and she hopes to attend graduate school in the near future. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family and cat, shopping at thrift stores, and reading fantasy novels.

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**Josephine Inpanya**

**Anthropology Undergraduate Student**

**California State University, Long Beach**

**Introduction**

The Long Beach Homeless Service Center is a one-stop organization that services as the primary coordinated entry system for homelessness services in the region. These services include medical, dental, and mental health, as well as emergency housing assistance and job training. Among these services, the Long Beach Homeless Service Center delivers a variety of programs that serve as a centralized entry point for assisting individuals experiencing homelessness. The organization focuses on the issue of homelessness as an acute and chronic issue that requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach to address. The Long Beach Homeless Service Center is committed to providing a variety of services to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families.

**Research Focus**

Gushee and Beeghly (2010) suggest that social ties greatly affect the well-being of homeless individuals and that the opportunities to form social ties may be limited due to the nature of homelessness. The importance of social ties in the lives of homeless individuals cannot be underestimated, as these ties can provide a sense of belonging and support.

**Methodology**

The methodology is centered on the observation and study of human behavior. The field observations were conducted in the Long Beach area, focusing on the interactions between homeless individuals and volunteers at the Long Beach Homeless Service Center. The participants were observed during their interactions with the Homeless Service Center volunteers and staff, as well as with other clients. The interactions were recorded using field notes, which included details about the interactions and observations.

**Preliminary Results**

Building Trust

The participants build trust with the clients and see them as “friends.” They become familiar with the clients and their needs. The clients gain a sense of confidence and trust in the volunteers. The volunteers also build trust with the clients, creating a sense of community and support.

**Discussion**

The Long Beach Homeless Service Center plays a crucial role in providing a variety of services to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families. The organization focuses on the issue of homelessness as an acute and chronic issue that requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach to address. The Long Beach Homeless Service Center is committed to providing a variety of services to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families.

**Conclusions**

The Long Beach Homeless Service Center is a one-stop organization that services as the primary coordinated entry system for homelessness services in the region. These services include medical, dental, and mental health, as well as emergency housing assistance and job training. The organization focuses on the issue of homelessness as an acute and chronic issue that requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach to address. The Long Beach Homeless Service Center is committed to providing a variety of services to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families.

**Acknowledgments**

The authors wish to thank the staff at the Long Beach Homeless Service Center for their time and cooperation. The City of Long Beach Homeless Service Center is a one-stop organization that services as the primary coordinated entry system for homelessness services in the region. The authors wish to thank the staff at the Long Beach Homeless Service Center for their time and cooperation.

**References**


**ABSTRACT:** In the United States, breast cancer is culturally understood as a disease that afflicts the individual (Jain 2012); breast cancer is something that "just happens" (DeOrnellas 2017). However, studies have shown that breast cancer rates of industrialized nations have risen over time (Hopkins 1993; Hill 1997). Additional studies have shown that women who emigrate from developed countries that have low breast cancer incidence, to localities in the U.S. with higher breast cancer rates, have a dramatically increased lifetime risk of developing breast cancer (Nelson 2006; Rastogi et al. 2008). These pockets of the country that have higher incidence rates of women's cancers can be situated diachronically and alongside the historical context of war, agrochemical use, and notions of American industrial and technoscientific "progress". As such industries ebb and flow over time, and humans and chemical carcinogens move across space, these maps become increasingly complex, and obscure links between breast cancer causation and affliction. For this research project, I have utilized autoethnographic and ethnographic research methodologies to interview breast cancer patients, in efforts to understand whether prevailing discussions of “lifestyle choices” or "genetic risk” are rhetorical controlling processes (Nader 1997) that divert attention from corporate, governmental, or other institutional accountability, and whether or not these discursive diversions shift culpability onto women who are at risk of—or living with—breast cancer.

**Introduction**

In the United States, breasts are viewed as feminine parts of women’s bodies, and are also sexualized objects of desire. Breast cancer—for similar and different reasons—is also a sexy topic of discussion. Cancer of the breast is pervasive in the United States and, according to the American Cancer Society, in 2017 approximately 316,120 women were newly diagnosed, and 40,610 died of the disease (ACS 2017). It is also a disease that has become highly marketable and commodified (Ehrenreich 2009; Jain 2012) and is surrounded with associated perceptions and narratives that permeate both collective and medical understandings of the disease, as well as the experience of being a breast cancer victim. Furthermore, prevailing practices, concepts, and knowledge in science and medicine often change over time, yet these practices and bodies of knowledge are culturally sanctioned and revered as spatiotemporally unchanging bodies of Truth (Franklin 1995). Such cultural reverence of the doctor or the scientist create isms between the doctor and the public and can manifest as disparities of authority (Balshem 1993; Haraway 1997) and validity of knowledge (Checker 2007; Singer 2011).

Because scientific and medical knowledge is not an entity that exists free of prevailing cultural assumptions and diachronic historical processes (Franklin 1995), I considered the potential for culture and politics to manifest in the medico-scientific processes of diagnosing and treating breast cancer, as well as attempts at breast cancer prevention. These suppositions arose throughout personal experiences with the disease, and I began to theorize that the breast cancer epidemic and scientific knowledge, treatments, and perceptions of the disease and its causes, are shaped by these sociopolitical phenomena. Thus, I launched an ethnographic research project to explore these potential issues, as well as the possibility for prevailing cultural ideologies to reinforce power inequalities by protecting industrial and corporate interests over those of women. I also hoped to understand how, if at all, these popular narratives create or exacerbate the complex suffering of breast cancer patients.

**Keywords:** Breast cancer, industry, politics
When designing this project, I had several research questions in mind. First, I wanted to explore the interconnections of industry, disease production, and oncological treatments. Second, I hoped to ascertain whether or not breast cancer could be theoretically imagined as a physiological consequence of systemic inequalities and having a body in the era of the Anthropocene. Finally, I wanted to examine how cultural ideology shapes scientific understandings of breast cancer causation and prevention, and how personal perceptions and popular narratives impact the lives of breast cancer victims, themselves.

The sources that have provided a structural framework for my research cut across various scientific disciplines and include—but are not limited to—anthropology, medical science, ecology, public health, and regional industrial history. In the following, I provide a literature review of interdisciplinary topics and recurring themes that pertain to my ongoing research of the breast cancer epidemic, perceptions of the disease, and the entanglements of cancer and the environment. Within this research, I have chosen to recognize “environment” in the context of the era of the Anthropocene, rapid industrial development, and human-produced risk that is local, global, and diachronic (Fortun 2001; Haraway 1997; Morton 2013). I also include a great focus on the entanglements and biopolitics (Foucault 1976) of cancer in the body, as well as the controlling processes (Nader 1997) that create conceptual narratives which blame cancer victims for their disease (Singer 2011), while reinforcing industry and power inequalities (Balshem 1993; Checker 2007), and creating the patient-consumer and a commodified patient/disease (Jain 2012).

**Historical Context and Theoretical Approaches to Authority, Industrialization, and Disease**

**Industrial Chemicals and Cancer in the United States**

Though spectacular in many ways, scientific and technological advances within the United States have created legacies of toxicity. The Atomic Age brought about the ideological promise of national superiority through nuclear deterrence (Mascio 2014), the mass production of energy, and treatment for disease. Along with these potentials, this industry has produced toxic fission products, power plant meltdown, and an accumulation of nuclear waste; all of which have led to the poisoning of environments and bodies. What has perhaps caused more pervasive damage in the U.S. are the agrochemical industries, which can also be linked to wartime manufacturing. Sandra Steingraber (2010) tracked the historical developments of the use of such industrial chemicals—as well as the introduction of these chemicals for personal use in the home—and situated their commodification alongside burgeoning cancer clusters.

The combination of two phenoxy chemicals—2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T) with 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D)—occurred in the context of war. This combination, which is widely known as Agent Orange, was deployed in Vietnam by the U.S. military, in efforts to kill crops, underbrush, and rainforests (Steingraber 2010). Likewise, the mass production and use of dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) also occurred during wartime. During World War II, it was used in the devastated region of Naples, as typhus had begun to rampant spread via insect carriers such as fleas, lice, and mites (Steingraber 2010). These insecticidal and herbicidal industries flourished during the wars but when the wars ended, there was a concerted effort to maintain the production and consumption of these chemical commodities.

Although the chemical combination that comprised Agent Orange was eventually banned, its phenoxy herbicide relative 2,4-D became the primary ingredient in weed-killing products marketed for golf courses, farming, and lawns of private residences. With the newfound pervasive use of 2,4-D both commercially and privately, came a rise in lymph cancers of people working in specific occupations, children, and pet dogs (Steingraber 2010). As with phenoxy herbicides, the use of DDT was marketed for commercial and private consumption. Clever marketers used propagandistic advertisements to convince the general public that insects and humans could not cohabit; facilitating the loss of knowledge that such cohabitation had previously occurred for the duration of human existence, and simultaneously increased the risk of home maintenance practices. Essentially, after World War II, children were born into greater amounts and assortments of chemical refuse than ever (Steingraber 2010). Along with these children—and the generations thereafter—the military and chemical industries grew, exponentially.

“Lifestyle” Rhetoric and Social Spencerism

Martha Balshem (1993) discussed the relationships between a Philadelphia community (given the pseudonym Tannerstown) with a high cancer incidence rate, local industrial pollution, perceptions of cancer causation, and the implicit forms of medical authority that exist within these relationships, especially in the forms of legitimacy and power. Balshem began her research as a member of an interdisciplinary team of scientists, which aimed to reduce cancer incidence in the community, through education and awareness that could motivate community members to change their cancer-causing lifestyles.

As with Steingraber’s connections of the military industrial complex to the proliferation of domestic chemical industries, Balshem described the influx of chemical industrial production, jobs, and wealth in Tannerstown after World War I. However, decades later, these industries steadily declined, and unemployment and lower wages became commonplace. Not unlike many other industrial regions, this left Tannerstown with an inheritance of ongoing toxicity, while no longer offering economic stability. Nonetheless, these industries were still responsible for a considerable amount of Tannerstown employment, as well as a constant chemical odor in the air and a white film that would build up on the windows of homes. These realities were scrutinized by Tannerstown residents. Despite the industrial history of the region, the cancer-prevention team of scientists (including Balshem) that was employed to reduce local cancer rates advised residents to change their “improper” consumption habits: such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and eating the “wrong” foods (Balshem 1993). However, Tannerstown residents perceived the claims of the scientific community to be infantilizing and laced with moral judgement. The community also decried the hypocrisy underlying the scientists’ recommendations: residents were essentially being told that the they themselves should work on cleaning up their living habits, rather than bothering polluting industries to utilize mindful modes of operation and clean-up efforts.

The community generally rejected the blame-the-victim concepts implicit within the lifestyle rhetoric presented to them by scientists, and many openly shifted blame towards the toxic industries in which they worked and neighbored. Furthermore, most of them seemed to know, even if scientists did not, that eating the “wrong” foods, smoking, or drinking alcohol are not risk categories that exist within a vacuum, nor are they decisions that are made free of history and circumstance. Likewise, Steingraber also described the flawed results of scientific studies that measure a singular life factor (such as diet or exposure to a single chemical), as their analyses were predicated upon the assumption that no other chemical exposures or
dietary factors are present within a lifetime and, furthermore, that such combinations of factors do not create new sets of risks.

Additionally, Merrill Singer (2011) discussed environmental racism, risk perception, and the concepts of “lifestyle choices” as they pertain to diet. Singer’s study examined the experiences and perceptions of environmental risk within a low-income, predominantly African American community in Ascension Perish, Louisiana, which is located somewhere along a stretch of the Mississippi River. Unfortunately for this community, a number of chemical, plastics, and nitrogenous fertilizer manufacturing companies are also rooted along this stretch of riverside land.

People in Ascension Perish had been experiencing a number of health issues (including skin sloughing off after a bath, respiratory disease, and high rates of cancer), and also noted the smell of ammonia in the air and the stinking, foul-tasting water from their taps. The residents in Singer’s study attributed many of these experiences to pollution from the industries that surrounded their community, but most were impoverished and depended on the institutions that were poisoning them to survive. Meanwhile, spokespersons for these industries would greenwash their work, by presenting their careful attempts to relocate at-risk species (not humans, of course) away from their production sites, while reminding locals to maintain their individual health by “eating right,” exercising, and not smoking. As some community members began to believe they were complicit in their own developmental health ailments, it became clear that this hegemonic rhetoric had successfully altered some public perceptions of the causes of poor health in Ascension Perish (Singer 2011), and effectively broke down institutional accountability and communal suffering by individualizing illness.

Steingraber also presented counter arguments to lifestyle rhetoric. At an international environmental convention, she described an attendee who was discussing an outbreak of liver cancers among the St. Lawrence beluga whale, whom fed off of a type of fish that were contaminated by waterside chemical industries. This individual asked if the beluga whales were drinking too much alcohol, smoking too much, or subsisting off of junk food (Steingraber 2010). These questions combat the idea that cancers in humans are merely caused by poor consumption choices of individuals.

Furthermore, Steingraber also described the interconnections of public health and socioeconomic class, as it pertains to diet. Lifestyle rhetoric links poor diet to cancer causation, and there have recently been national strategies to direct people to make better food and beverage consumption choices; yet these platitudes ignore the structural “webs of causation” (2010:152) that most often lead to poor consumption choices, as there can be little actual choice in consumption behaviors. In other words, even in the incidence where individuals disproportionately consume junk food, the pricing disparities, and lack of time, energy, and geographic accessibility to healthy foods are phenomena that can prevent the poor from making different consumption “choices”.

The lifestyle rhetoric is a controlling mechanism that protects industries from indictment for polluting bodies and causing cancer epidemics. The Social Spencerist concepts that are embedded within American reverence for rugged individualism and morality are also woven throughout the lifestyle rhetoric, echoing classist tones in which personal defects—such as irresponsibility or ignorance—perpetuate plights of the working-poor or, in this case, the cancer patient. The pervasiveness of relating cancer to lifestyle choices in scientist-community discourse is evidence that the controlling processes (Nader 1997) which uphold an economic and social structure have permeated medico-scientific understandings of cancer (Steingraber 2010; Balshem 1993; Singer 2011). These insidious ideologies can create myopia concerning scientific efforts to prevent or treat cancer, and can exacerbate the suffering of people living with, or at risk of, the disease.

Comparative History

Though the United States is the setting for my research, historic literature also provides international examples of political ideology compelling scientific theory. In the USSR during the mid-20th Century, the government sponsored the work and outdated, pseudoscientific theories of agronomist and biologist Trofim Lysenko (Graham 2006). In the wake of the forced collectivization of farms and resultant famine under the authoritarian regime, Lysenko’s rejection of Mendelian genetics, and his emphasis on Lamarckian concepts of soft inheritance and promises of improved crop yields were well-received by Stalin (Gordin 2012; Sterling 2004). Furthermore, Lysenko came from a background of the working poor, and Stalin believed his support of Lysenko could make the authoritarian leader appear to be a friend of the proletariat (Krementsov 1996). Lysenko’s work was so heavily supported by the USSR, that dissenting Soviet scientists risked being ousted from their positions, imprisoned, or even executed. Unfortunately, Lysenko’s misguided work exacerbated the extent and duration of famine in the region.

While Lysenkoism is an overt case of political influence within scientific theory and the institutional enforcement of particular scientific epistemologies, many U.S. institutions are increasingly politicizing science in more implicit ways. This includes special interests’ funding academic sciences which produce knowledge that are situated within ideological constraints—like those that align with the assumptions of the Defense Department—but are still presented with the façade of objectivity (Price 2008). In the United States, elite capitalists are the primary decision-makers in the context of production, consumption, and legislation that enable industrial practices, as well as dissemination of ideological information that justify certain forms of development. Unfortunately, such operations have unequal distributions of benefits and loss (Cernea 1997), and the communities that are disproportionately faced with increased disease rates due to industrial production tend to not be communities in which elites are likely to face direct consequences. Moreover, lifestyle rhetoric can be seen as an example in which one scientific theory is embraced and widely disseminated; this theory is one that blames cancer victims for their disease, ignores anthropogenic links to cancer, and serves as a mechanism to deliver a hegemonic discourse that aligns with the goals of the elite.

The issue of breast cancer is tautly entangled with controlling processes (Nader 1997), cultural narratives, discrepancies in power and authority, and defies dominant Western spatiotemporal concepts. Steingraber (2010) described the historical context of the pervasive use of chemical carcinogens in the United States, as well as the controlling mechanisms that were utilized in motivating consumers to purchase toxic products and acquiesce to a constant and endless exposure to chemical cocktails. As Steingraber (2010), Singer (2011), and Balshem (1993) have shown, these controlling mechanisms extend beyond encouraging the widespread personal use of chemicals, and bleed into the fallacies within discourses concerning the causes of—and death from—cancer. These cultural ideologies are cloaked in the shroud of scientific truth, which actively produces disparities in the valuation and validation of varying epistemologies (Balshem 1993; Steingraber 2010; Checker 2007; Singer 2011). Furthermore, the power that the medico-scientific community wields is often not recognized within itself (Balshem 1993; Haraway 1997, 2016). Nor does this...
community—or the greater disciplines within the “hard sciences”—tend to recognize the ways in which culture constrains the capacities of the scientific scope (Martin 1991; Franklin 1995; Haraway 1997, 2016). This often causes outliers who refute these issues to be viewed as having problems of non-compliance or ignorance (Lyon-Callo 2004; Thun and Sinks 2000; Besley et al. 2008). Furthermore, these disparities in authority and power simultaneously create fallacies within the dominant cultural narrative and deflects accountability away from toxic industries and the government as a protective agency. Ultimately, the anthropogenic hazards and other realities produced by neoliberal industries and empowered by plutocratic culture do not articulate kindly with bodies of the living in the Anthropocene (Morton 2013).

Research Sites and Methodology

Along with the review and analysis of secondary literature sources, my research included qualitative ethnographic methodologies, such as participant observation and semi-formal interviews. Due to ethical concerns of privacy within a medical space, all participant observation aspects of my work were solely auto-ethnographic—in other words, drawn upon my personal experiences and observations of data. These observations began in 2016, after my diagnosis and initial induction into the world of the breast cancer patient, and continues to the present. The primary observatory locations involved a respected Bay Area cancer research center and an affiliate women’s cancer center. While I recognize such experiences and observations are a contribution to my data and methodology—with myself as a subject—I directed greater focus on the other women in my study as subjects.

During the participant interview process, I had arranged for eleven open-ended interviews to occur over a three-month period, which began in November of 2017. These interviews occurred in locations chosen by participating breast cancer patients in the greater Bay Area and were audio-recorded for later transcription. The informants I interviewed were women from ages 30 to 64, and were from varying backgrounds. These women had all been diagnosed with different stages of breast cancer and, at the time of the interviews, each of the women were in different phases of treatment; two were recently diagnosed with little or no treatment, another two had already undergone some of their recommended surgeries and treatments, and the remaining seven were two-or-more years post-treatment.

I also drew upon peer-reviewed articles, public records, and other literature about breast cancer, from interdisciplinary origins. These studies, statistics, and historical and ethnographic data provided a structural framework for my research and discussion about breast cancer as a disease that is situated within the Anthropocene, ideology, power relations, and controlling processes (Nader 1997). The literary review also included themes that articulated with those in my primary data.

Results

My secondary literature review included studies which have shown that breast cancer rates of industrialized nations have risen over time (Hopkins 1993; Hill 1997), and when women who emigrate from developed countries that have low breast cancer incidence, to localities in the U.S. with high breast cancer rates, they experience a dramatic increase in lifetime risk of developing breast cancer (Nelson 2006; Rastogi et al. 2008). These pockets of the country that have higher incidence of women's cancers can be situated diachronically and alongside the historical context of war, agrochemical use, and notions of American industrial and technoscientific "progress." I have also reviewed an abundance of medico-scientific studies that showed the biological susceptibility of the female breast to chemical accumulation or changes (Durando et al. 2007; Falck et al. 1992; Li et al. 1996; NTP 2006; Rundle et al. 2000; Sherman 1994; Thayer 1990; Wang et al. 1996; Welch 1993). In some cases, these researchers or government agencies dismissed their own results because increased mortality and susceptibilities to carcinogens occurred “only in one sex group” (Thayer 1990:16)—meaning females. Such devaluation of data which proves female mammals to be more susceptible to adverse health effects and increased mortality caused by the exposure to chemicals can be viewed as an example of contemporary sex inequality, as it pertains to unequal distributions of risk. Other data was dismissed because the mutagenic effects on rats were assumed to not replicate in humans (EPA 2003). Still, more recent studies have shown that exposure to carcinogens or hormone-disrupting chemicals at the “right” stage of mammary development, can lead to a proliferation of cell-divide later in life, in the form of breast cancer (Birnbaum and Fenton 2003; NTP 2006; Rayner et al. 2005; Steingraber 2010). Additionally, more than three-quarters of all potential cancer clusters that are reported by concerned community members are dismissed by public health officials after a phone call, even though most chemicals that have been discovered to be human carcinogens were only realized as a result of thorough cancer cluster investigations (Thun and Sinks 2004). Despite this abundance of data, my primary and secondary research indicates that links between environmental toxins and breast tumors are not openly discussed, even with women who have contracted the disease. Moreover, the predominant narratives concerning cancer prevention almost exclusively blame the chosen lifestyles of cancer victims (Anand et al. 2008).

Thus far, my primary research has shown stark commonalities concerning breast cancer patients’ perceptions of what causes the disease, as most of the participants indicated their internalization of lifestyle rhetoric in regards to their breast tumors. Specifically, many described their cancer as being potentially linked to their problematic choices. Emilia Albrecht was diagnosed at age 38, shortly after giving birth to her second daughter. Like many others I interviewed, she initially feared that her diagnosis was a death sentence. Emilia’s oncologists suggested that she developed breast cancer because she gave birth and breastfed too late in her life. Seven years after her diagnosis and treatment, Emilia still believes that her waiting to have children is what caused her cancer, the loss of her breasts, and long-term onco-anxiety. Other participants also noted at least one of the following as having possibly caused their breast cancers: drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, eating the “wrong” diet, consuming too much caffeine, not consuming enough vitamins, or being too stressed. Naomi Jones, who was haunted by past traumatic experiences and relationships, believed her breast tumor was a manifestation of negative emotions that she failed to let go of. Others blamed their biology, indicating that having cystic breasts or “bad genes” was the cause of their disease. Some described these factors one moment, then dismissed them by describing the “randomness” of breast cancer later on.

None that I have interviewed thus far overtly perceived industry or regulatory institutions as being responsible for the breast cancer epidemic—nor their personal cancers—though some hinted at the “inescapability” of water, air, soil, and food toxicity. Anahita Murphy mentioned that her husband attributed her breast cancer to growing up near a Chevron refinery, which left a layer of a white substance over the porch of her childhood home. None of her doctors entertained this possibility, so she dismissed his idea. Jennifer Aimes, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer at age 42, was also diag-
posed as a BRCA-2 mutation carrier and blamed her genetic mutation for her disease. Upon my inquiry into her history, Jennifer discussed the work she did as a child, picking fruit from orchards in the Santa Clara Valley, and getting paid by the crate. My further research into the history of the region showed that these orchards were routinely sprayed with dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, which is a currently banned toxic insecticide that has been linked to aggressive breast tumors.

Jackie Brennan was 40 years old when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She grew up in Reedley, California; a town not too far from the Bay Area, in which one can see the air. Upon a recent drive with her through Fresno and Reedley, I noted the brownish-grey mist that hovered high and wide over the vast, flat land; tightly hugging the crops and orchards that it cloaked in the promise of insect or weed death. The atmosphere was dense and felt more like it was displacing the air in my lungs, rather than filling them. Jackie grew up working and playing in these local orchards that were bathed in human carcinogens and, though she did recognize the abundance of chemicals in the region and the associated respiratory health problems suffered by others, she did not contribute her cancer to these exposures, and imagined her disease as unavoidable. However, she has also chosen to dramatically alter her diet to reduce her cancer risk.

In one of my own experiences, I had asked my breast oncology surgeon if she was aware of any current research involving testing extracted breast tumors for chemical carcinogens, and about the possibility of submitting my tissue for such testing after it had been analyzed in the lab for clear margins. I wanted to investigate potential causes of my cancer. She denied knowing of any ongoing research and informed me that trying to fund such testing on my own would cost tens of thousands of dollars. She assured me that my tumor was likely due to a defect in my body, and referenced the existence of “bad neighborhoods” in society as analogous to my breast cancer: “Some people just have bad cellular neighborhoods.”

Discussion and Conclusion

Pervasive ideologies pertaining to breast cancer and lifestyle rhetoric, and the internalization of these blame-the-victim concepts or ideas of “randomness,” permeate both medico-scientific and popular understandings of the disease’s origins, and consequently compounds the suffering of breast cancer patients. Similar to the phenomenon of hard-stance global warming denial (Morton 2013), I argue that the cultural or politico-scientific dismissiveness or silence, in the context of discussing most cancers as being human-environmentally produced, is compelled by similar ideological beliefs. Addressing breast cancer as an anthropogenic epidemic and demanding change to facilitate its prevention is a threat to neoliberalism, chemical industries, and their accompanying belief systems. Like the extensive implications of an oil spill—but far less visibly—the legacies of carcinogenic chemicals in the air, water, soil, and bodies shatter Western conceptualizations of time, space, and centrality of things in relation to time. Like global warming, the “action at a distance” (Morton 2013:39) across space and time that leads to cancer obscures direct, causal links and their aesthetic symptoms, making them difficult to prove (Morton 2013), and the element of cultural/ideological threat makes the concept even more readily deniable. Moreover, the fact that there is extensive scientific data showing the susceptibility of the human breast to chemicals, endocrine disruptors, and the development of malignant breast tumors—yet half of the population is incessantly put at risk of contracting the disease—displays the structural devaluation of women.

One of the initial goals for my research has been to qualitatively contribute to knowledge, by facilitating public understanding of the ways in which controlling processes and power inequalities physically manifest within bodies—through disease epidemics, like breast cancer—and are resultant of constructed environments that are driven by capital or sociopolitical notions of progress. I also hope to broaden physician’s understandings of the ways in which ideology can, and sometimes does, influence science and constrains the scope of analysis. Finally, I hope to create a shift in prevailing discussions about breast cancer causation, so that it is possible to reduce breast cancer incidence as well as the complex suffering of breast cancer victims everywhere.

NOTES

1. The Anthropocene is understood as the era in which humans have had a significant impact on the Earth and its geological processes and ecosystems (Waters, et al., 2016).

2. Ascension Perish is a pseudonym

3. Auto-ethnographic methods can be seen described by Chang (2008), Reed-Danahay (1997), and Ellis (2004).

4. All participant names in this essay are pseudonyms.

5. Though BRCA 1 and 2 mutations dramatically increase the lifetime risk of breast cancer, mutations of the BRCA genes have been found to not be predispositions for carcinogenesis, and cancers in BRCA mutation carriers are linked to chemical carcinogens, hormone disruptors, and other non-genetic risk factors (Bennett, et al. 2000; Gorabi et al. 2014; King, et al. 2003; Venkitaraman 2002).

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Brieann at work
For our 2018 Conference, President Hank Delcore planned a walking tour that was originally conceived as an opportunity to view some of the more colorful murals in the southern party of the city. All available spaces filled quickly, and our three, highly knowledgeable local guides enthusiastically provided us with multi-layered commentary on the surprisingly rich architecture and design background of this "ag town," as well as the social and cultural forces behind the scenes. This event was such a success that Incoming President Sarah Grant has already made plans to incorporate tour experiences into next year's conference.
1982 mural by F. John Sierra on the State of California Building. Note the emphasis on California's cultural diversity and the contributions made by all.

Brotherhood of Man Memorial in Fresno County Courthouse Park  "By Clement Renzi, This semi-abstract bronze statue is dedicated to Monsignor James G. Dowling, Rabbi David L. Greenberg and the Very Reverend Dean James M. Malloch, the three men who created the KMJ radio program “Forum for Better Understanding,” which featured discussions of religious concepts and social issues. The statue was cast in Verona, Italy using a “lost wax” technique." See [http://www.fresnolibrary.org/hlrc/mshcp.html](http://www.fresnolibrary.org/hlrc/mshcp.html) and [https://www.fresnobee.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/marek-warszawski/article177495426.html](https://www.fresnobee.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/marek-warszawski/article177495426.html) for more information on Fresno's public art.

Street signs explain the neoclassical architecture of older, South Fresno, which replaced even earlier Victorian-style buildings. What happened in Fresno mirrored architectural trends and changes elsewhere in the urban world.

Example of guerilla street art that deliberately transgresses what is officially considered "respectable" public art. This was done to make a statement about underrepresented voices in the city, which faces gentrification and other urban development issues.

This comforting sculpture is titled "The Visit" and is by Clement Renzi.
There are street artists in coastal Mexico who balance rocks on the shore. Those are temporary, and their construction a form of performance art. This piece suggests a more permanent, sustainable balance?

Mariposa Plaza, featuring both an historic clock tower and newer, Mexican-themed public art called Acero Picado, designed to be warm and welcoming of local residents. [https://www.ncclf.org/fresnos-new-public-art-acero-picado/](https://www.ncclf.org/fresnos-new-public-art-acero-picado/). Below, another view of Mariposa Plaza.

Water in a hot, dry land. “Aquarius Ovoid” is by Japanese-American sculptor George Tsutakawa and can be found near on the east side of Fulton Street between Tuolumne and Fresno streets in downtown Fresno. His son Gerard Tsutakawa, also a sculptor, restored both this piece and “Obos” as part of the Fulton Street Reconstruction Project.”


Read more here: [https://www.fresnobee.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/marek-warszawski/article177495426.html#storylink=cpy](https://www.fresnobee.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/marek-warszawski/article177495426.html#storylink=cpy)
A warehouse area has been transformed into a studio for local muralists, who have adorned the outer walls with their colorful and energetic work. Gaining visibility elsewhere in the city, as well as financial support and recognition outside of the city, are concerns that two of the artists expressed to us, as they graciously explained their work and mission.
From top left: Remarkable mural by the late Francisco Vargas, depicting Fresno's rich history; Serena Vargas, the artist's daughter and an artist herself, gave a short lecture on the mural and the general Fresno mural scene; a detail of one of the letters, each one of which references the local, statewide,

**Conclusion**

Over half of the world's population is now classified as urban by demographers. The Society for Urban, National, Transnational and Global Anthropology (SUNTA) is a section of the American Anthropological Association, which will be meeting in San José in November, 2018.

Having met in San José several times, SWAA members might want to suggest or organize walking tours there. We can expect that anthropologists will be increasingly turning their attention to the ongoing development of diverse urban cultures. A good place to start is with a walking tour of your local city.

As our tour of Fresno demonstrates cultural exhibitions are not just within four walls, but frequently can be found out on the streets.
The Fossil Chronicles: How Two Controversial Discoveries Changed Our View of Human Evolution
By Dean Falk
University of California Press (2011), 280 pages

Two discoveries of early human relatives, one in 1924 and one in 2003, radically changed scientific thinking about our origins. Dean Falk, a pioneer in the field of human brain evolution, offers this fast-paced insider’s account of these discoveries, the behind-the-scenes politics embroiling the scientists who found and analyzed them, and the academic and religious controversies they generated. The first is the Taung child, a two-million-year-old skull from South Africa that led anatomist Raymond Dart to argue that this creature had walked upright and that Africa held the key to the fossil ancestry of our species. The second find consisted of the partial skeleton of a three-foot-tall woman, nicknamed Hobbit, from Flores Island, Indonesia. She is thought by scientists to belong to a new, recently extinct species of human, but her story is still unfolding. Falk, who has studied the brain casts of both Taung and Hobbit, reveals new evidence crucial to interpreting both discoveries and proposes surprising connections between this pair of extraordinary specimens.

Available at Amazon.com

Food and Power in Hawai‘i: Visions of Food Democracy
Edited by Aya Hirata Kimura and Krisnawati Suryanata
University of Hawai‘i Press (2016), 241 pages

In Food and Power in Hawai‘i, island scholars and writers from backgrounds in academia, farming, and community organizations discuss new ways of looking at food policy and practices in terms of social justice and sustainability. Each of the nine essays describes Hawai‘i’s foodscapes and collectively makes the case that food is a focal point for public policy making, social activism, and cultural mobilization. With its rich case studies, the volume aims to further debate on the agrofood system and extends the discussion of food problems in Hawai‘i. Given the island geography, high dependency on imported food has often been portrayed as the primary challenge in Hawai‘i, and the traditional response has been localized food production. The book argues, however, that aspects such as differentiated access, the history of colonization, and the neoliberalized nature of the economy also need to be considered for the right transformation of our food system.

The essays point out the diversity of food challenges that Hawai‘i faces. They include controversies over land use policies, a gendered and racialized farming population, benefits and costs of biotechnology, stratified access to nutritious foods, as well as ensuring the economic viability of farms. Defying the reductive approach that looks only at calories or tonnage of food produced and consumed as indicators of a sound food system, Food and Power in Hawai‘i shows how food problems are necessarily layered with other sociocultural and economic problems, and uses food democracy as the guiding framework. By linking the debate on food explicitly to the issues of power and democracy, each contributor seeks to reframe a discourse, previously focused on increasing the volume of locally grown food or protecting farms, into the broader objectives of social justice, ecological sustainability, and economic viability.

A History of Anthropology as a Holistic Science
By Glenn Custred
Lexington Books (2016), 268 pages

A History of Anthropology as a Holistic Science defends the holistic scientific approach by examining its history, which is in part a story of adventure, and its sound philosophical foundation. It shows that activism and the holistic scientific approach need not compete with one another. This book discusses how anthropology developed in the nineteenth century during what has been called the Second Scientific Revolution. It emerged in the United States in its holistic four field form from the confluence of four lines of inquiry: the British, the French, the German, and the American. As the discipline grew and became more specialized, a tendency of divergence set in that weakened its holistic appeal. Beginning in the 1960s a new movement arose within the discipline which called for abandoning science as anthropology’s mission in order to convert into an instrument of social change; a redefinition which weakens its effectiveness as a way of understanding humankind, and which threatens to discredit the discipline.

**Evolving Human Nutrition: Implications for Public Health**
By Stanley J. Ulijaszek, Neil Mann, and Sarah Elton
Cambridge University Press (2012), 414 pages

While most of us live our lives according to the working week, we did not evolve to be bound by industrial schedules, nor did the food we eat. Despite this, we eat the products of industrialization and often suffer as a consequence. This book considers aspects of changing human nutrition from evolutionary and social perspectives. It considers what a ‘natural’ human diet might be, how it has been shaped across evolutionary time and how we have adapted to changing food availability. The transition from hunter-gatherer and the rise of agriculture through to the industrialisation and globalisation of diet are explored. Far from being adapted to a 'Stone Age' diet, humans can consume a vast range of foodstuffs. However, being able to eat anything does not mean that we should eat everything, and therefore engagement with the evolutionary underpinnings of diet and factors influencing it are key to better public health practice.


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**Scanning the Pharoahs: CT Imaging of the New Kingdom Royal Mummies**
By Zahi Hawass and Sahar Saleem
The American University in Cairo Press (2015), 376 pages

The royal mummies in the Cairo Museum are an important source of information about the lives of the ancient Egyptians. The remains of these pharaohs and queens can inform us about their age at death and medical conditions from which they may have suffered, as well as the mummification process and objects placed within the wrappings. Using the latest technology, including Multi-Detector Computed Tomography and DNA analysis, co-authors Zahi Hawass and Sahar Saleem present the results of the examination of royal mummies of the Eighteenth to Twentieth Dynasties. New imaging techniques not only reveal a wealth of information about each mummy, but render amazingly lifelike and detailed images of the remains. In addition, utilizing 3D images, the anatomy of each face has been discerned for a more accurate interpretation of a mummy’s facial features. This latest research has uncovered some surprising results about the genealogy of, and familial relationships between, these ancient individuals, as well as some unexpected medical finds. Historical information is provided to place the royal mummies in context, and the book with its many illustrations will appeal to Egyptologists, paleopathologists, and non-specialists alike, as the authors seek to uncover the secrets of these most fascinating members of the New Kingdom royal families.

Available at Amazon.com

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**Same-Sex Marriage, Context, and Lesbian Identity: Wedded But Not Always a Wife**
By Julie Whitlow and Patricia Ould
Lexington Books, (2015), 186 pages

This book demonstrates that everyday interactions and struggles over the right words to use are at the heart of the experience of those in same-sex marriages. At a time when same-sex marriage is on the cusp of becoming legal across the United States, the authors demonstrate through in-depth interviews and rich survey data how the use of relationship terms by married lesbians is tied to a variety of factors that influence how their identities are shaped and presented across social contexts. Via rich anecdotes of how married lesbians navigate the social sphere through their varied use or avoidance of the term *wife*, this volume is provides groundbreaking insights into how social change is being constructed and made sense of through an examination of real-life interactions with family and friends, on the job, and across service and casual encounters. The authors introduce us to the concept of contextual identity to explain how history and social context inspire cultural change. This first-of-its-kind analysis demonstrates how the first lesbians to marry have navigated acceptance and rejection, insecurity and political strength through their use of language in daily interactions. This book will surely resonate with anyone interested in understanding how married lesbians are presenting themselves at this historical juncture where social change and linguistic nuance are colliding.

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## SWAA Newsletter

The **SWAA Newsletter** is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by the Southwestern Anthropological Association.

Submissions should be sent to: beerickson@fullerton.edu or to Barbra Erickson, CSU Fullerton, Division of Anthropology, Fullerton, CA 92834-6846. Phone: (657) 278-5697

Due Date: 1st of the month of publication for Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issues (approximately March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1).

Authors, please include a brief statement describing your interests and affiliation.

Newsletter Editor, Barbra Erickson.

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