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VERSO: SERGIO JARILLO

RECTO: HOW MALINOWSKI SAILED THE MIDNIGHT SUN

]t1[How Malinowski sailed the Midnight Sun: the academic conference as ethnographic performance

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]abs[Anthropology's scope is broader than its public, often limited to other anthropologists, while those who share their knowledge in the field with the ethnographer are too often cut off from anthropological debates about that knowledge. The anthropology conference, seen as research practice, proves successful in readmitting ethnographic subjects into anthropological dialogues. A symposium held in 2015 in Alotau, Papua New Guinea, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Malinowski's arrival in the Massim region demonstrates how Massim peoples transcend anthropologists' discursive presentations by using images, objects, and performances, diluting, along the way, anthropology's hierarchical control.

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Anthropology conferences are for anthropologists

This article is concerned with one particular instance of anthropological practice: the academic conference. It focuses on the relations that are established between researchers and their public, but also between researchers and the researched, and questions the goals of the conference as well as the means to achieve those goals. The article argues for a more inclusive anthropological practice in line with recent calls to open up the discipline to more dialogic, multidisciplinary research frameworks (Brown 2017; Holmes & Marcus 2008; Ingold 2014; 2017; Jarillo *et al.* 2020). Yet, in considering anthropology conferences as potential spaces for the participation of research subjects, the article is not so much a call for collaboration as it is an example of inclusive exchanges.

Academic conferences are conventional venues for scholarly interchange. Participants present the results of their research to a ‘community of practitioners’ (Strathern 1987: 283) with whom they share ideas, methods, and goals but also dissent, variations, and contradictions against a collective disciplinary background. Thus conceived, the conference constitutes a forum where specialists pitch their contributions to be added to the existing perspectives within a particular field. Unlike the field of natural sciences, however, in the social sciences and humanities, expounding opposing viewpoints is no obstacle to the making of a common knowledge: when describing and analysing human experience, contradictory ideas have the same currency. In fact, as Strathern has eloquently argued, these ideas are without a universal normative value. They do not necessarily stand for an all-inclusive rule of conduct or a unique worldview within a given society, but correspond instead to the different agendas that people have in that society (Strathern 1987: 285-6). Strathern’s reflection on anthropology’s impossibility of reducing contrasting ideas to a homogeneous framework is a familiar one; in shaping their own research interests, anthropologists follow the many interests of the groups they study. ‘The essence of the comparative method’, she continues, ‘is to make sense of differences, not to collapse them’ (1987: 286).

Different takes on the same phenomenon are likely to relate seemingly unconnected facts, ultimately adding to the comprehension of a society's workings. To connect the dots – to make sense of differences – anthropologists typically enlist many voices throughout their fieldwork and summon them later in the conference room.¹ In a way, conferences collapse time and space. They are occasions for field sites to converge and venues for many voices: those of researchers, their interlocutors, and the colleagues who are cited, but also the voices of discussants, conference attendees, and participants. Anthropology often finds itself in conversation with other subjects. In summoning voices to make their points, anthropologists also practise disciplinary crossovers, calling in yet more voices from other fields.

What is more restricted instead is the provenance of the many voices that participate in those debates and the terms of that participation (Brown 2017). Academic conferences are, almost invariably, conferences of academics *for* academics. With notable exceptions, the social actors from which researchers glean their materials are hardly in attendance. While anthropology is open to collaborative endeavours (Field 2008; Lassiter 2005; Rappaport 2016) and anthropologists try to share their research with the communities where they work, this is done mostly through informal discussions while in the field, or through the circulation of written, photographic, and audiovisual material (Cooper 2008). Collaborations are particularly fertile around museums in the context of co-curation and digital repatriation (Hennessy *et al.* 2013; Isaac 2007; Krmpotich & Peers 2013). But it is also true that these collaborations are premised upon a series of requirements: proximity, a willingness to engage, the socio-economic capacity to do so, and language largely determine who can participate and how. To these barriers one needs to add the increasingly tougher visa and entry requisites that certain nationals face when trying to enter Western countries. These constraints limit the extent of collaborations, and despite efforts to bring scholarship closer to the communities where the research originates, international anthropology gatherings hardly ever take place in the Global South.² The subjects of anthropological research are often excluded from the community of practitioners that

anthropological conferences address. A different community altogether, theirs is not a conversation with anthropology as much as the excuse for anthropologists to have one.

[p1]Whereas conferences need not be collaborations, they do offer a venue for debates and dialogues. I use ‘dialogue’ in its most generic sense as an exchange of ideas through discussion. I do not essentialize it in the terms proposed by the so-called ‘dialogic turn’ in anthropology (Mannheim & Tedlock 1995) and its ‘implicit phenomenological orientation’, as Crapanzano argues in his critique of dialogic anthropology and its focus on ‘the constitution of a shared world, a shared understanding’ (1990: 271). More than unity and understanding, what is shared in the conference setting is different viewpoints, which highlight dialogue’s ‘ethics of answerability, of respect to otherness and of disclosure of identity’ (Maranhão 1990: 16). Other than dialogues, conferences foster the creation of relationships and the establishment of networks. Yet the format of most academic conferences limits access and participation, and makes it easier for researchers to talk about the researched in absentia, leaving the ethics of answerability entirely to the good faith of presenters. Meanwhile, the voices of research subjects are bundled up into ‘field discourses’, a finite, distant, and hierarchically inferior category at the service of the scholars’ ‘disciplinary discourses’ (Mannheim & Tedlock 1995: 2). Whereas culture is the object of commentary by anthropologists, anthropological conferences are rarely the object of commentary by the people who make that culture.

[ha]Art in anthropology conferences

[p]Anthropologists have been addressing some of these issues recently. Although not specifically aimed at conferences, Ingold’s provocative call for anthropologists to live ‘*attentionally* with others’ (2014: 389, emphasis in original) is a cry for inclusive engagement. If anthropology is about mutual understanding and sharing (life) with people, the question remains how to facilitate non-exclusive ways of learning (Cook 2016).

[p1]During the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in 2008 in San Francisco, anthropologist Eben Kirksey and artist Marnia Johnston carried out an experiment to promote unorthodox and more dynamic responses to their research questions within the frame of a large anthropology conference (Kirksey & Johnston 2008). Through a multidisciplinary collaboration, their Multispecies Salon enlisted art practitioners, biologists, and the general public – including schoolchildren – to reflect upon the role of human-animal relations. The Salon became ‘a place where the boundaries between academic conference and traditional field site dissolved, generating conversation among anthropologists, biological scientists, and artists – encounters that generated ethnographic data and ethnographic analysis at the same time’ (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010: 558).

[p1]The inclusiveness of the Multispecies Salon is not unique: Schneider and Wright’s 2003 conference ‘Fieldworks: Dialogues between Art and Anthropology’ at London’s Tate Modern and Latour and Weibel’s 2005 exhibition ‘Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy’ at the ZKM in Karlsruhe offer examples of anthropology’s occasional push to open up dialogues beyond the discipline. Crosstalk between anthropology and art in particular appears to be a fertile ground to promote new understandings and encourage commentary and participation from the public at large (Bowman 2004). Broadly speaking, audiences are more acquainted with artistic expressions than they are with purely academic ones (Basu & Macdonald 2007: 8). Art lends itself particularly well to representing, conceptualizing, and apprehending the world and those in it – an aspiration it shares with anthropology (Jarillo 2013a; Ssorin-Chaikov 2013). Moreover, art is participatory, requiring active involvement from all those who make up ‘the social context of its manifestations’ (Gell 1998: 4). This vantage point means that art can convey certain sociocultural aspects that are neither discursive nor narrative, such as the sensorial, the kinaesthetic, or the affective, and that it can do so in a relational way by letting people participate actively in the art experience (Ingold 2013). To be clear, I do not wish to imply that meaning is inherent in art in a way that it is not in academic texts: both are subject to interpretation. The discussion here pertains more to the public and its voices: opening up

conferences to participation via the arts helps expand anthropological debates beyond academia, including more varied and dissenting voices.

[p1]Despite this, examples are few and far apart³ and art as a methodological tool for anthropological research remains a marginal practice within the social sciences at large (Barone & Eisner 2012; Schneider 2008; Schneider & Wright 2006). Furthermore, Kirksey's, Schneider's, or Latour and Weibel's experiments call for prior preparation and curatorial hierarchy. As a performance, the conference is carefully choreographed by the organizers. Not only do they decide who participates, but they also control the topics and how these are discussed – or displayed.

[p1]In what ways can this control be challenged or shared? Can art and art performances be mobilized by conference audiences as unsolicited responses, yet still in conversation with the themes and ideas that are being produced in an anthropological forum? Such a conversation ought to be premised on the rather counterintuitive proposition that a dialogue does not always require commensurate voices and words. If different views of the same phenomenon add up to our understanding of it in the social sciences and humanities, can we extend the comparative method to include those views when they are not only different but also expressed through different media altogether?

[p1]This need not be an appeal to collaboration with research subjects, a plea to have them dance to our anthropo-tune. Ethnographic performance is not synonymous with Mary Louise Pratt's articulation of the 'contact zone' as a space for 'collaborative work' (1991: 40). It would be wrong to assume that the researched are willing to participate in the ongoing ethnographic project by lending their voices to it (again) and by doing it on the terms pre-set in those projects, through verbal or textual hermeneutics to be consigned to institutional scrutiny (Killian 2017). The call is not so much to collaboration as it is to inclusiveness. Offering the possibility of participation does not amount to a collaboration, let alone to the co-creation of knowledge (or even sharing results, something that comes with its own problems: see Cooper 2007). Opening up anthropology fora to impromptu responses

does not necessarily need to produce new ethnographic data or analysis. In fact, it can result in a completely different set of materials, more fitting with the agenda of local research interlocutors than with that of anthropologists.

]ha[What's in a conference?

]p[Between 11 and 14 August 2015 and in coincidence with the 100th anniversary of Malinowski's arrival in the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea (PNG), I organized an international conference in Alotau, the first of its kind to take place in the Massim region of Milne Bay Province where the Trobriand Islands are located.⁴ The choice of Alotau, the provincial capital of the region where the Massim is situated, was born out of the 'necessity to bring scholarship closer to its fields and the peoples from which anthropological knowledge is derived', as the conference programme stated.⁵ 'Malinowski's Legacy', as the conference came to be known, was to be a return of sorts, and its intellectual premise was to engage with Malinowski's original ideas as he had formulated them throughout his publications. The format was conceived as a conventional series of talks at the outset, with a total of twelve speakers who were given unlimited time to present their papers. Each presenter was asked to use a quote from Malinowski as their starting point and discuss the depth of his understanding, the currency of his thought, or the influence of his concepts in the comparative ethnography of the Massim and in anthropology in general. The discursive path of the presenters took the conventional conference format of a talk/reading accompanied by the projection of slides containing images and text. Presentations both highlighted Malinowski's insights and established a departure from them, foregrounding the dynamism, creativity, and sheer complexity of Massim societies. Presenters had the floor for as long as they needed, as did the public when asking questions. To increase the chances for participation, in the final day of the conference the speakers left the podium and merged with the audience to engage in less formal conversation. Sitting in a circle,

presenters and public exchanged ideas, questions, Kula stories, and anecdotes. What made this conference different from the usual forum of specialists was its capacity of inclusion. Participation was wide and comprised Alotau urban dwellers as well as many islanders who were in town for the occasion. Trobrianders came in big numbers, as did other islanders from around the province. Students from three different schools were in attendance, and a group of conference speakers visited local schools at the end of the conference to answer students' questions about the workings of anthropology. National and regional politicians and government officials, missionaries, health workers, volunteers, traditional chiefs, village leaders, and business people were also present throughout the conference.

[p1]The Massim Cultural Foundation (MCF) played a key role in this. Incorporated as a not-for-profit association in 1994, the MCF is the result of ongoing efforts by a group of local enthusiasts to preserve and promote the rich and varied artistic and cultural expressions of the Massim. In the words of its Chairman and one of its main advocates, Chris Abel, 'Malinowski's Legacy' was a unique opportunity to showcase Massim culture and establish the basis for the Foundation's future. The MCF was instrumental in assisting with a series of events that took place around the conference, providing a counterpoint to the more academic output of the symposium and enabling the participation of artists and other Massim cultural interpreters. One such interpreter was John Kasaipwalova, a Trobriand poet and playwright who worked with other Massim artists, engaging with the themes, dialogues, and ideas presented as the conference developed. While self-promotion might have been an obvious concern for the MCF – a good opportunity to showcase its work at an event attended by national politicians and international academics – Kasaipwalova's efforts to take ownership of many of the activities that took place during the conference cannot be ignored either. A Western-educated and charismatic intellectual, Kasaipwalova is also a Trobriand traditional chief with past political aspirations. Kasaipwalova tried to perform a 'bridging' role throughout the conference, mediating between presenters (he contributed a paper himself) and attendees. He stood as a leader of the Trobriand community, directing many of the performances and suggesting culturally suitable ways

of participation. Needless to say, his vying for a position of pre-eminence created frictions among other Trobriand chiefs in attendance, particularly regarding the appropriateness of the *gum* award (see below), something that required protracted negotiations well into the conference. The large presence of Trobrianders and Trobriand chiefs also tipped the scales towards more Trobriand-centric positions in an event that was also attended by many non-Trobrianders from elsewhere in the Massim.⁶

[p] As a result of these contrasting aims and conflicting interactions, the community of practitioners' monopoly on the gathering was broken, and even the established forms of participation transcended the conference format as new activities took centre stage beyond the control of the conference organizer. The conversation – mind you, not a collaboration but an improvised set of performances – took on the shapes of dancing and singing, woodcarving, cooking and feasting, storytelling, and Kula exchanges. Woodcarving in particular emerged as the key performance used by locals to act upon the conference through the creation of cultural images, visual devices that encompass difference within a common space or form. The MCF facilitated this by providing wood pieces at the request of the carvers themselves through local cultural and artists' associations in Alotau. Although John Kasaipwalova tried to mediate and suggest a series of themes for the images to be carved, these remained ultimately the choice of the carvers and were produced as the conference proceeded. In the following section, I focus on one such cultural image as an example of how the performance of a symbol can include relational forms of understanding that do not necessarily amount to collaboration or common knowledge production.

[ha] *Gum*: the spiral of growing conference asides

[p] One of the recurrent images of 'Malinowski's Legacy' was a visual symbol known in Kiriwina (Trobriand Islands) as *gum*. *Gum* proper is the central point of a spiral motif usually incised in the prowboards of Kula canoes. As a visual metaphor, the *gum* conveys several allegories. It alludes to the spatial and temporal point at its origin and to the unlimited growth potential of the spiral. The *gum*

evokes what anthropologist Allan Darrah, following Kasaipwalova, has called ‘non-linear thought’ or ‘spiral thinking’ (personal conversation, August 2015), the person’s capacity to acquire knowledge by progressing in multiple directions, spatially, temporally, and conceptually (Malnic 1998: 142). The *gum* recalls how the shell of the chambered nautilus grows following the rule of the golden section: each new section of the shell replicates the previous one, albeit on a larger scale. The *gum* connotes the possibilities embedded in the spiral, where past events are still visible and serve as templates for future ones, modelled upon previous growth intervals. As a time allegory, the *gum* alludes to the proximity of past and future: the future sinks its roots into the past, and the past is constantly expanded and brought into the future (Jarillo 2013b: 27; 2017: 143; Scoditti 2012: 88). The *gum*, thus, is an origin point for everything; it already contains all there is to be – or all that could be. Collapsing past and future into the present, the *gum* is a metaphor for all the cyclical events that take place in the Massim, including the Kula exchange or the regeneration of life after death (Damon & Wagner 1989).

The *gum* is what Wagner calls a ‘cultural image’: a trope that ‘condenses whole realms of possible ideas and interpretations and allows complex relationships to be perceived and grasped in an instant’ (1987: 56). The self-generating power of spirals and their capacity to unfold and reveal manifold possibilities has been noted before in other Melanesian contexts that do not necessarily limit it to an image. Reed (2006), for example, has observed how documents (e.g. warrant covers) in the prison context of PNG also work as spirals of sorts, encompassing a multiplicity that reproduces itself through replication while remaining constant in their form. In this case, the spiral was brought to the conference repeatedly by some of the presenters in their papers. Exegesis of the *gum* varied, giving even more currency to Wagner’s observation that ‘only the image itself is certain’ and how it has the ‘power of containing all the possible meanings’, making interpretation ‘an individual matter’ as opposed to the ‘synthesizing power’ of the image held in common (1987: 56-7).

[p1] The *gum* ended up being debated during the conference, particularly in relation to an award to be conferred to presenters by the MCF in the shape of a spondylus shell headband with a

carved *gum* in it – a traditional decoration known as *sedabala* reserved to chiefly clans in the Trobriand Islands. Some chiefs in attendance considered that the *sedabala* could be inappropriately bestowed upon ‘commoners’ and argued that the name and meaning of the award had to be changed into *gum* instead. Throughout that discussion, and as it was incised, painted, and ultimately awarded, the *gum* was enacted in ways that are reminiscent of its power as a condensed generator of relationships with no other reference than itself. Many of these relationships were mediated by the activities that took place every day at Wanigili, the conference venue. The high-ranked Kula valuables on exhibition suggested the circularity of knowledge that is at play in the Kula, that all-encompassing activity that requires constant learning through give and take (Leach & Leach 1983). Several *tokula* (Kula people) participants in the conference made this explicit by carrying out Kula talks in Massim languages and exchanges. *Tokula* also offered genealogies for the valuables they had brought to the conference.

[p]All these parallel activities had developed as reactions to the proposed themes of the conference and as contributions from Massim peoples present in Alotau. They provided a local viewpoint on Massim culture but also a perspective on Massim culture’s engagements with those who study it and with their theories. As an immediate response to the academic presentations, the parallel activities constituted a conversation that evolved more through images than words, one where images helped carve a relational space not necessarily in the terms envisioned by scholars.

[ha]A conference of images

[p]Images play a key role in Melanesia. Grounded more on experience than on exegesis, images act as complex substitutes for (or encompassments of) performances, ideas, and relationships (Wagner 1986: xiv). Like objects, they exist to achieve things rather than to theorize or be theorized with (Gell 1998). Despite their status as ‘condensed meanings’ (da Col 2013: xii), their purpose is neither

contextualizing nor explanatory. Instead, images constitute comprehensive units that are often evaluated in terms of their rightness (O'Hanlon 1992: 604-5): that is, whether they accomplish their goals – or, as Reed has it, in terms of their 'productivity' rather than their 'signification' (2006: 172). Take, for instance, the image of a Trobriand garden. In Malinowski's definition, the rightness of the garden is perceived by Trobrianders not in terms of 'aesthetic enjoyment' but rather as an encompassment of the practical knowledge, the systems of magic, the relationships, and the actions that make the garden and 'which promise to him [the Trobriander] safety, prosperity, abundance and sensual pleasure' (1965 [1935]: 10).

[p1]Visual components played a key role for an audience that did not see their engagements as exclusively discursive. Milne Bay Province is home to more than sixty languages, and even though English remains one of the official languages in PNG, some people either do not speak it at all or they do not feel comfortable communicating in it. In anticipation of this, presenters were asked to contribute their field photographs, to be exhibited during the conference. Looking at photographs taken by scholars throughout their years of fieldwork in the Massim gave conference attendees the chance to recognize themselves and their relatives as central actors in the interactions and exchanges at the origin of ethnographic research. Photographs also afforded people the opportunity to actively explore some of the themes of the conference: the relations between anthropologists and locals; sociocultural change in the region; or the connections between named people, objects, and places.

[p1]This sharing of images also gave locals the chance to generate their own stories and effect image reconfigurations, reassessing the past when commenting on images they were seeing for the first time. In order to add more time-depth and scope for image-based elaborations, some unpublished plates from Malinowski's first field trip to the region and a series of photographs from the 1947 New Guinea Nutrition Survey Expedition to the Trobriand Islands were chosen.⁷ Alotau audiences recognized people in the old photographs by tracing their likeness to living relatives. A medical officer photographed in Losuia in the 1940s – the first native medical officer in Kiriwina – was thus

identified: ‘he has the same face as his grandchild’, a Trobriander affirmed, stating the Trobriand customarily sanctioned likeness of an individual to her/his father. Images like that one connected past to present, the living to their ancestors, while also giving visual shape to the ‘social doctrine’ of father-offspring resemblance, as Malinowski put it (1987 [1929]: 173), revealing old connections that may have been voiced or written – but never *seen* until then.

[p1] Photographs display this condensed nature of knowledge in Melanesia, settling matters by showing how things ought to be. In this case, a particular photo evidenced a prescribed relationship pertaining to Massim culture: the likeness of father and child. As a Trobriander in attendance explained, the face of a child is moulded (*ikuli*) by his or her father through acts of nurturance that result in the child taking the semblance and character of the father, despite the fact that children in Massim matrilineal societies belong to the mother’s *dala* matriclan. The fact that the medical officer in the photo looked like his living grandchild is the result of *ikuli*. The image, according to local interlocutors, not only showed the relation between the medical officer, his father, and his grandson; it also evidenced a general Massim cultural tenet and its continuity in time. In the Trobriand Islands, attributing resemblance to the mother is a tacit taboo. Unspoken, this paradox was nonetheless visually corroborated by an image that encompassed the transmission of patrilineal heritage (Mosko 2017).

[p1] Images in the Massim are experienced communally and relationally. An image is communal because it requires the members of a community’s evaluation, approval, and endorsement to be considered representative of that community’s shared lifeworld. And it is relational because it is assembled through the constant back and forth that links people to each other, to the objects of their knowledge, and to their environment (Crossland & Bauer 2017). The discussions around these photographs may have yielded a different outcome altogether had they taken place with separate individuals, as the hierarchical authority of each one of them would have gone uncontested, leaving researchers to choose whose interpretation was the most legitimate one. Experiencing images

communally and relationally challenges the hierarchy of individual interpretations: one voice is not more relevant than another and all conclusions are temporary and negotiable. It also highlights the fragmented nature of knowledge, foregrounding the ways in which the image can be relevant to different people, as opposed to the image's purported truth asserted as an indisputable, immutable absolute. This motivated contrasting kinship claims for the people in the old photographs and lively debates questioning matriclan ties.

[p1] Throughout 'Malinowski's Legacy', photographs acted as 'performative objects' (Bell 2010: 353), mobilizing the audience not so much in interpretative terms (what does this image mean?) as in agentic ones (what can we do with this image?). Another set of photographs exhibited at Wanigili will help us understand how, rather than elaborating and commenting on these images, a group of Massim peoples decided to perform with them, lending additional weight to the notion of cultural image as encompassment of performance.

]ha[*Sail the Midnight Sun*

[p] The set of images in question was a series of photos depicting the fourteen carved panels of *Sail the Midnight Sun*, a folk opera written by John Kasaipwalova. *Sail the Midnight Sun* combines a series of creative expressions – what Euro-American tradition categorizes under performing and visual arts – inscribed within the traditional Trobriand *kesawaga* dance.⁸ Kasaipwalova's folk opera takes its cue from one of the most epic and well-known narratives of the Kula cycle: the story of Imdeduya and Yolina. Haunted by the beauty of Imdeduya, a woman from Muyuw who appears to him in dreams, the young Yolina sets off in his canoe from Tewara Island, in the Dobu-speaking region of the D'Entrecasteaux archipelago, determined to marry her. Yolina, the Midnight Sun, follows his father's advice and exchanges gifts and shell valuables with the islanders of the Kula ring as he sails eastward, making his way to Muyuw. He is finally reunited with Imdeduya and their

marriage produces a son (also named Yolina). Later, however, Yolina kills their son in a jealous rage and sails back towards Tewara. Imdeduya magically capsizes his canoe from a distance but he survives and is carried safely ashore on the back of a giant fish.

[p1] *Sail the Midnight Sun* is only one of the many iterations of a Trobriand tale that is not circumscribed to its oral recounting. Instead, the story of Imdeduya and Yolina is experienced as an image, the encompassment of a series of performances, concepts, and relations that can expand into different forms and temporalities. It is a love story that spells out the workings of Massim customary institutions and practices such as marriage, magic, kinship, or exchange. But the story also carries images rich in symbolism that are hard to put into words (Leach 1981). Kasaipwalova's interpretation of the fate of Imdeduya and Yolina resulted in a written poem (in English) and its adaptation in 1980 to the stage as a folk opera performed by Goroka-based Raun Raun Theatre, nationally and internationally. In Kasaipwalova's iteration, conceived in the years leading to PNG's independence in 1975, Yolina the son is reborn, echoing the birth of the new nation and operating as an allegorical link between a traditional past and a modern future. *Sail the Midnight Sun* was a metaphor at a time when the people of PNG were embarking on a new journey full of opportunity for freedom and development. The play adapted the Trobriand story in ways that channelled social protest and the political claims of anti-colonial and independence movements (May 1982). In 1979, a group of seven Trobriand master carvers incised the story of Imdeduya and Yolina in fourteen panels (currently at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne), materializing their experience of some of the cultural images that the tale carries (Balai 2006) (see Figs 1 and 2).

[Please insert Figures 1 and 2 near here]

Figure 1. One of the panels of *Sail the Midnight Sun* carved by Emmanuel Yobwita in 1979. The panel shows Yolina taken ashore to Yakaeva beach in Kiriwina by a giant fish. (Credit: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Catalogue no. 2003.176.14.)



Figure 2. One of the panels of *Sail the Midnight Sun* in the making during the conference, now in the Massim Museum (Alotau, Papua New Guinea). The panel illustrates Yolina's dream before he sets on his search for his future wife Imdeduya. Designed by Emmanuel Yobwita, carved in Alotau by Hosea Batia from Munuveyou, Muyuw (Woodlark) Island. (Credit: Sergio Jarillo.)



Images of the woodcarvings of *Sail the Midnight Sun* exhibited at the conference venue caught many attendees by surprise. Among them was one of the original master carvers of the panels, Emmanuel Yobwita from Kwebwaga Village. Yobwita reminisced about carving the panels with

some friends more than thirty years earlier and patiently described the storyboards one by one at my request. But his recollection also held the promise of a performance: Yobwita said that even better than explaining the panels, he would carve the story of Imdeduya and Yolina again. In hindsight, this was not a surprise move. Whenever I had asked anybody in Kiriwina to explain to me what the story of Imdeduya was about, I invariably wound up with people performing the whole story instead of talking about its significance. Yobwita's idea was immediately co-opted by Kasaipwalova and others, its new iteration adapted to mark two anniversaries: Malinowski's arrival in the Massim and PNG's fortieth year since independence, both anniversaries bringing international academics and national figures together. On the days before the beginning of the conference and throughout its duration, Yobwita and other carvers observed the photos of the old panels and began carving new ones. They worked while the conference presenters addressed the audience, listening with attention while carving, and occasionally lifting their heads to watch the images projected on the screen. The carvers did not seem interested in the fate of the older panels, unbothered by their vanishing and reappearance in another country. Instead, Yobwita and the other carvers' response to this loss of cultural heritage was to make new storyboards (see Fig. 3).

[Please insert Figure 3 near here but within this existing section if possible]

Figure 3. Master carvers Emmanuel Yobwita (left) and Valaosi Tobigaveka (right), during ‘Malinowski’s Legacy’ conference, with photos of the old *Sail the Midnight Sun* panels at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, on the back and the new carved panels in the making against the wall, 13 August 2015. (Credit: Sergio Jarillo.)



jp1[Carving a new set of panels of *Sail the Midnight Sun* was a way of acting on the old panels and their fate, on the one hand, and on the themes that were being discussed by conference presenters, on the other. Through this new iteration – the repetition of a process that can be traced to the old panels, Raun Raun Theatre’s play, Kasaipwalova’s poem, and each one of the storytelling performances, to name but a few signposts in the story of Imdeduya – carvers asserted their co-ownership of a myth and their ongoing capacity to enact it.⁹ Theirs was also a way to affirm the cyclical nature of cultural images. The knowledge encompassed in the image of Imdeduya (the productivity embedded in Kula and marriage; the parallel workings of witchcraft and seduction; the destructive force of jealousy) is shared every time carvers reproduce it in its different forms. We

anthropologists, however, find it hard to share this knowledge unless we can elicit interpretations of the image and write those down. In order to have a fruitful dialogue – one that transcends the bounded ethos of scholarship while keeping its comparative goals intact – it becomes key to dispense with essentialisms such as academia's predilection for the reification of the discursive vs the non-discursive.

]ha[Ethnographic performance

]p[How are we to reconcile image, meaning, and performance in a way that makes knowledge commensurate with experience? Answering that question implies searching for overlaps: how much is there in common between the academic theatre of conferences and the theatre of life where ethnographers and their subjects perform? In suggesting a more ethical role for anthropologists, Dell Hymes proposed that the goal of researchers 'should not be "extractive" but mediative', advocating for a mutual sharing of knowledge and trust (1996: 60). Anthropologists and locals in the field need to perform together, playing out their roles as expected, but also anticipating the other's part. The boundaries of that anticipation are defined by the extent to which our perceptions of the world can be held in common. In the field, understanding culture demands more experiencing and performing than describing. This is particularly true of those cultural images that defy explanation. Performing cultural images is a way of participating in those life experiences that anthropologists codify as knowledge.

]p1[How, then, was 'Malinowski's Legacy' an ethnographic performance, an instance where anthropologists make sense of life experiences *together* with the people they study? 'Performance', Fabian notes, 'is not what *they* do and *we* observe; we are both engaged in it' (1990: xv, emphasis added). With Fabian, I do not take performing to be analogous with informing, the extractive ethnographic model where information flows unidirectionally from informant to researcher. Instead, I conceive performance as intersubjective exchange. Knowledge is not exteriorized from a

homogeneous, pre-existing script. On the contrary, it is assembled through a back and forth of tentative definitions, discourses, images, and connections by all the participants who attempt, at one given moment, to pin it down, with no distinctions between subjects, objects, and researchers other than their perspectives, be those conventional, contingent, coincidental, or contrasting (Fabian 1990: 13, 19; Irving 2007). What is shared, thus, is not the content – the manifold interpretations – but the performances through which these interpretations are assembled.

[p1] I am aware that this might be construed as a call for collaboration, in line with Pratt's (1992) articulation of the 'contact zone': a space for intercultural meeting and exchange that has found fertile ground in museums and throughout the humanities and the social sciences, with the noble intention of promoting a shared agenda of empowering locals and decolonizing institutions (see also Clack, Brittain & Turton 2017; Clifford 1997; Wilson 2016). It is not. During 'Malinowski's Legacy', if academics had a common goal (the advancement of knowledge of the Massim, or learning more about Malinowski), this did not match the agenda of the rest of the local participants and attendees, who worked towards different aims (the performance of their cultural values; the (re)affirmation of their status as carvers, chiefs, or cultural interpreters; carrying out Kula exchanges; networking with politicians, etc.). At least the two agendas did not correspond in the terms that I and the other presents envisioned. From an academic perspective, the contact zone presumes co-operation, reciprocity, and commensurability in the exchanges, none of which were at work at Wanigili. Furthermore, what I propose under ethnographic performance is not concerned with meaning, a shorthand for Western epistemologies, to be debated rather than performed or enacted. Instead, 'Malinowski's Legacy' provided a space for action and experience where institutionalized knowledge was pushed to the margins. Despite all the performances that took place in Wanigili, the conference space still remained institutional, and, as such, equally subject to asymmetrical relations. Robin Boast's critique of the contact zone also applies to the conference space: 'No matter how much we try to make the spaces accommodating, they remain sites where the Others come to perform for us, not with us' (2011: 63). Perhaps the caveat – if there is one – is to be found in the conference's location.

This particular conference made way for ethnographic performance *only* because it took place in a province in PNG, and the images and objects with which locals performed had not been ‘designed from the outset to appropriate the resources necessary for the academy’ (Boast 2011: 66).

[p1] That said, it remains equally hard to argue for anthropology’s performative qualities. Anthropology is so deeply nested in its literary tradition that even one of its more oral practices – the conference presentation – takes the form of a paper read out loud. Presentations quickly turn from promising performances to monotonous readings imposed upon a captive audience (Kuldova & Kvile 2011). After accumulated hours of presentations, it should not come as a surprise if some of the ideas that stick with any audience are those most easily envisioned. Slides may distract from arguments made by the presenter, but they also encourage the retention of those arguments through visualization. In Alotau, a great deal of images were displayed during the conference, such as the panels from *Sail the Midnight Sun* (see Figs 1 and 2 above) or a series of canoe prowboards (Figs 4, 5, 6, and 7 below). Some of them were picked up by members of the audience to produce other images, creating a visual overlap. Again, let me emphasize that this likeness involves *only* the images: perceptions resulting in individual interpretations did not necessarily overlap. To illustrate these conversations through cultural images, I wish to follow the fortunes of three of them: the recurrent *gum* spiral; its cognate the *ubwala* star symbol (also known as *utun* or *utuyan*); and the anthropomorphic *bwalai* spirits. These are cultural images deployed by Massim carvers and others, not so much to interpret knowledge but to enact it. As such, I will treat these three images as objects in the sense defined at the beginning of this article: as encompassments of performances. These images encompass actions, genealogies, and cosmologies, tracing associations between Massim human and nonhuman actors and between the living and their ancestors. Once they were displayed and seen by the audience, these three images were recast to create new images.

]ha[Spirits, spirals, and stars

]p[One of the presentations on Trobriand Christianity cited the parallel drawn by a French missionary in 1848 between three Massim demiurgic ancestors (Gereu, Marita, and Tudava) and the Christian concept of the Trinity (Gnecchi-Ruscone 2012: 399). Although judged to be far-fetched even by other missionaries at the time, similar analogies between Christian concepts and local cosmologies eventually proved successful in integrating vernacular beliefs and Christian religion. To illustrate this point visually, a quote from Malinowski was shown together with an old *lagim* prowboard from a Kula canoe.¹⁰ The *lagim* immediately caught the audience's attention, owing to its unusual configuration, with three humanlike figures carved out at its top. These figures are known in Kiriwina as *bwalai*. Bepelled with the right *megwa* magic prior to sailing, the *bwalai* are inhabited by spirits that will take the crew safely ashore in case of shipwreck. Yobwita, his fellow master carver Valaosi Tobigaveka, and others explained that failing to magically enhance the *bwalai* will result in them turning evil and devouring the crew if the canoe capsizes (see also Jarillo 2017: 155). Although representations of the *bwalai* can vary from one Trobriand prowboard to another, their number is always one or two. The *lagim* projected during 'Malinowski's Legacy', however, unusually featured three *bwalai* (see Fig. 4).

[Please insert Figure 4 near here and within this section]

Figure 4. Canoe prowboard from the Massim with three *bwalai* anthropomorphic spirits carved on top, an unusual number that may reveal an early reception of Christianity in the region and its reflection on Massim cosmologies and their material representations. (Credit: Stan Florek, Australian Museum, Sydney. Catalogue no. A16220.)



[p1] We cannot know the exact intention behind the carver's unorthodox image, but the three *bwalai* hint at an adoption of the Trinity: newly found Christian spirits engraved in Trobriand form as a reinforcement of the apotropaic function of the *bwalai* (see Fig. 5). This use of the image as a sensuous, prediscursive tool of mimetic appropriation (Mageo & Hermann 2017) does not require interpretations to be efficacious. The image is enough to visualize the links between the *bwalai* and the Trinity without having to theorize about those links. It does, nonetheless, allow us to attempt to trace its past genealogy (how it came to be) and its future fortunes (what can be done with it).

[Insert Figure 5 near here]

Figure 5. Canoe prowboard carved by master carver Paul Kalubaku in Yalumgwa Village (Kiriwina, Trobriand Islands) in 2009. Kalubaku replaced the traditional *bwalai* with a crucifix to evidence the protective role of Jesus (Jarillo 2013b: 201). (Credit: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. Accession no. 2018.10.1-2.)



jp1[In the debate following the presentation on Trobriand Christianity, a member of the audience recounted the first time he had heard the story of the Three Wise Men, the biblical Kings who journeyed to Bethlehem, and how they were guided in their trip by the morning star. A day later,

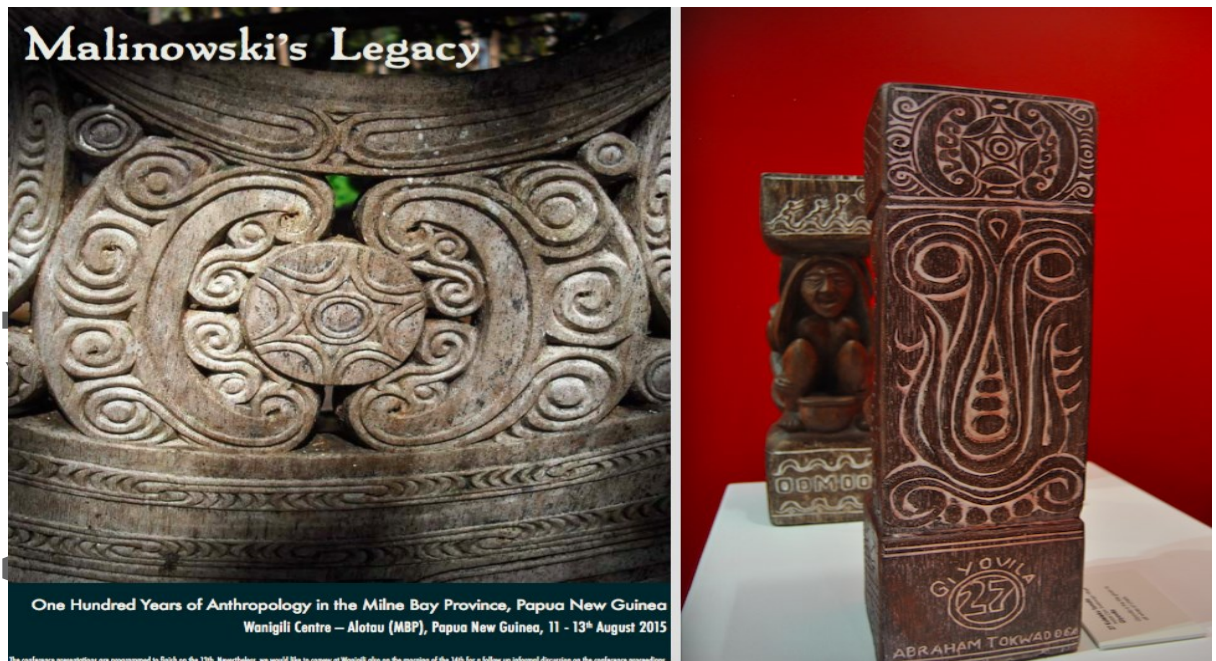
I saw Yobwita working on one of the new panels of *Sail the Midnight Sun*. The panel in question was a tryptich in the shape of a *lagim* canoe prowboard. At the very top, Yobwita was incising three *bwalai* (see Fig. 6). He explained to me that the three *bwalai* were in fact the Three Wise Men and that the symbol incised right below them was the morning star, which is also used by Massim sailors to orientate themselves in their sea journeys. The immediate genealogy of the star symbol in question can be traced to yet another image circulated during the conference through the poster and the programme printed for ‘Malinowski’s Legacy’ (see Fig. 7). The poster showed a detail of the prowboard of an *anageg* canoe, a seagoing vessel made in the northeastern Kula ring. *Anageg* canoes’ prowboards, known in the local languages as *kunubwara*, are different in shape from Trobriand *lagim*; they also have a different set of symbols carved on them. When I photographed this *kunubwara* in Muyuw (Woodlark Island) in 2010, the carvers there explained to me that the star-shaped emblem is known as *utun* (generic for star) or *utuyan* (the morning star).¹¹ When I asked Trobrianders for a name for that emblem, however, they gave me *kubwana* and *ubwala* instead. Past attempts at interpreting the *kubwana*, *ubwala*, or *ubwara* (an alternative spelling of *ubwala*) emblems have produced contested explanations. A concise review of the Massim literature, moving from west to east (from the Trobriands to Muyuw), yields the following.

]Insert Figures 6 and 7 near here[

Figure 6. Detail of tryptich panel in the shape of a *lagim* canoe prowboard carved during the conference, featuring three *bwalai* anthropomorphic spirits on top and the *ubwala* star-like symbol below them, 13 August 2015. Massim Museum Collection, Alotau. (Credit: Sergio Jarillo.)



Figure 7. The conference poster (left), from a canoe prowboard photographed by the author in Muyuw (Woodlark) Island in 2010. The *ubwara/ubwala* star-like symbol seen at the centre was replicated and incised on top in the forty *tokwalu* statuettes carved during the conference (right), now at the Massim Museum, Alotau. (Credit: Sergio Jarillo.)



[p1]The Reverend S.B. Fellows first identified the *kubwana* emblem as Venus and the *ubwala* one as representing ‘morning stars of lesser magnitude’ (less bright planets?) in his description of Trobriand decorated war shields in 1898 (1899: 151). Beran, in his iconographic revisit of Trobriand war shields together with Chief Pulayasi, claims the *ubwara* represents a tadpole (2011: 35). Malinowski says *ubwara* corresponds to a type of wild plant used in garden magic (1965 [1935]: 106). Campbell also acknowledges this correspondence and identifies a symbol with that name incised in Vakutan Kula canoes, although it appears to be more stylized than its Muyuw equivalent (2002: 107-8). Scoditti glosses *ubwara* as ‘house’, ‘place’, ‘space’, or ‘the fruit of a tree, probably seen in section’ in the context of Kula canoes in Kitava Island (1990: 122). Further to the east, Damon describes ‘circular-like forms that are said to be eyes’ for the *kunubwara* of Muyuw (2017: 331-2).

[p1]Adding to this condensed overview, the comments obtained during the conference from other Trobrianders pointed to the proximity of *ubwara* (the symbol) and *kunubwara* (the name for prowboard in the northeastern Kula ring), and to the fact that the concentric circles carved inside the *ubwara* represent the *gum* spiral. Not incidentally, some of those commentators were high-ranked Trobriand chiefs (*gumgweguya*). They insisted that in the Trobriand Islands the *ubwara* symbol pertains to chiefs and can only be sported as a sign of their rank in their residences, yam houses, and canoes.

[p1]The disagreements in the different interpretations of the image are irrelevant. The meaning of the *ubwala* is certainly not undisputed, even though the image is definitely shared across the region. As an image held in common by Massim peoples, the *ubwala* creates a series of regional associations throughout the area, relating different conceptualizations of planetary, agricultural, architectural, and navigational elements (Damon 1990). In the context of ‘Malinowski’s Legacy’, the *ubwala* also linked Massim seafaring to biblical wayfinding, connecting the *bwalai* to the Three Wise Men through the morning star and therefore the Kula ring to Christianity by proxy. The treatment that carvers and audiences gave to the *bwalai* and the *ubwala* images effects a transition between the traditional world of the Massim described by Malinowski and the modern Massim enacted in the

conference. Similarly to Yolina's odyssey in *Sail the Midnight Sun*, these images encompass the aspirations of Massim peoples forty years after PNG's independence. The carvings visualize local expectations of belonging and participation in what are perceived to be global movements:

Christianity and modernity.

¶¶¶ Carvings also visualized the relationship between the place and its anthropologists. Malinowski's role as one of the founders of ethnographic research based on participant observation was reiterated in the conference. This role, though, was shared unambiguously by the Massim as a locale and its people as agents at the origin of Malinowski's ideas and concepts. Once again, this was discussed by conference speakers and performed by the audience. Since the *gum* provided a timeless template for this cyclical sailing between past and future, its presence was guaranteed in yet another set of carvings that envisioned both PNG's journey as a nation and the role of the Massim in reaching beyond its temporal and geographical confines.

¶¶¶ During the conference, carvers had been working on a set of *tokwalu* sculptures, figurative representations to which authors attach a story of their choice. *Tokwalu* are cultural images containing a wide range of ideas, practices, and institutions that are recognized as culturally significant by Massim peoples. The images chosen covered a broad spectrum of Massim culture. They embodied, among other things, the institutionalized freedom of Trobriand teenage girls (*nakapugula*) and the convention of premarital sexual experimentation of *toulatila* teenage boys. They illustrated stone landmarks of the Massim, people who turned to rocks, and the cannibal ogres from Kiriwina and Muyuw (Dokanikani, Kantokey, and Topilayu). There were *tokwalu* with renditions of Topileta, the guardian of the underworld of Tuma, and *tokwalu* imaging the founding myths of some *dala* matriclans and their relationship to places, people, or constellations, and the role the latter have in keeping the gardening times (*kweluva* seasons). Carvers attempted to show the workings of *bwagau* sorcerers and came up with portrayals of culture heroes and named ancestors. One *tokwalu* celebrated the legendary status of individual female Kula players. Some sculptures materialized specific social practices such as the behaviours expected from widowers or from the wives of chiefs, whereas some

others tackled more general and all-encompassing concepts such as Trobriand *gula* (culture, custom). Overall, forty *tokwalu* were carved during ‘Malinowski’s Legacy’ (see Fig. 8).

[Please insert Figure 8 near here]

Figure 8. Some of the forty statuettes carved during the conference, now at the Massim Museum in Alotau, materializing Massim myths, characters, and institutions. Different renditions of the *ubwala/ubwara* star symbol and representations of the Three Wise Men can be seen on top. The ‘00M00’ symbol created expressly for the occasion is incised at the bottom. 13 November 2016. (Credit: Sergio Jarillo.)



Unravelling the stories with their authors resulted in one version of the story, the momentary interpretation of a myth, an historical fact, or an instance of daily life. But as cultural images, each one of the forty *tokwalu* encompasses more than a story. Viewers familiar with Massim culture were able to recognize common symbols in the *tokwalu*, whereas more obscure references called for elicitation and debate. The *tokwalu* sanctioned a possible origin point from which further iterations could progress in multiple directions. With the themes of the conference in mind, John

Kasaipwalova suggested a common thread for the forty carvings. Each *tokwalu* bears the inscription '00M00' in its base. The inscription is to be read from the centre to the left and to the right, starting with the 'M'. The first two '00' represent the last 100 years in the Massim; the 'M' stands for both 'Massim' and 'Malinowski' and is itself composed of two '1's mirroring each other, so that from centre to right there is another '100' representing the next 100 years. Past and future, Malinowski and Massim, are linked in each sculpture over a 200-year period. Adding to this visual symbolism, on top of each statuette are the Three Wise Men/*bwalai* of the Christian/Massim tradition, guided by a star rendered as an *ubwala*-like symbol with a *gum* spiral inside it.

[p1]The *bwalai*, the *gum*, and the *ubwala* show how images encompass other images and how relations among these are traced every time those images are activated. Each time these images are performed (carved, shown, viewed, discussed, and re-carved), old relations are re-enacted and new ones are established. In the context of the conference, these new relations connected academic visitors and locals to form a temporary community where all the themes that were presented, discussed, and enacted represented different positions within the dialogues that unfolded in Wanigili. The statuettes, the carved panels, the photographs, the dances, the Kula valuables, or the facial decorations – all of them cultural images – acted as mediators among these positions.

[p1]It is worth recalling Maranhão's description of dialogical knowledge as a 'game of instances of understanding conditioned not by the logic of the categories of knowledge but by shifts along a spiral line traced through the subject speakers' (1990: 1). Although the shifts in Alotau remained dialogical, they were expressed through images. If knowledge was produced during the conference through these performances, it was necessarily 'shrouded in skepticism and emphasize[d] process over essence' (Maranhão 1990: 1). At Wanigili, process was the performance and essence the interpretations of that performance.

Conclusion

If this iteration were a circle, it would be now closed. The solid, unchanging images of the forty statuettes and the panels would be an arrival point, freezing a debate of which ‘Malinowski’s Legacy’ was the last stage. Yet in spiral thought, proper closure does not exist. The images of ‘Malinowski’s Legacy’ are still mediating cultural perceptions and generating more images. More than a year after the conference, the Massim Museum and Cultural Centre opened in Wanigili (November 2016), offering Massim peoples a meeting place to carry out their cultural projects. The carvings made during the meeting were acquired by the museum, the material embodiments of some of the conversations that took place in August 2015. The encounter staged in ‘Malinowski’s Legacy’ has a continuation in the museum, a place where conversations about Massim culture take place in local terms, favouring a wider participation – more people, from different backgrounds and engaging through different media – than normally found in academic conferences.

Recent calls to make anthropology more accessible and more accountable to the public argue for a reconciliation between theoretical abstraction and social engagement (Fassin 2013; Kolshus 2017). The linchpin of this reconciliation is ethnography, both as a process of engagement and as a stage where the ‘dramaturgy of the real’ is performed by ethnographers and their interlocutors (Biehl 2013: 580). A more inclusive ethnography must not reduce these engagements to written notes first and abstractions after. Instead, a shared ethnographic enterprise demands an openness to experience people’s lives as practical knowledge. These engagements, needless to say, must include the people anthropologists work with.

This of course is a highly situational premise: it is contingent upon the presence of the ethnographer in the field. Instead, anthropology is the story of a separation. In due time and space, away from the field, anthropologists draft the interpretative narratives that are to become articles and monographs. The whole process is one of gradual detachment from the people who produced and

participated in the events described and analysed (Astuti 2017: 10). The final product is, at best, a mediation, a translation, a reduction, a model that moves away from the encounter that originated it. Most anthropology conferences serve as venues for the telling and retelling of that original encounter, but they are hardly conceived as a re-enactment of that encounter instead. As anthropologists, we would rather seek confirmation of our theories from other anthropologists. Reliving original encounters with our original subjects might result in alternative interpretations departing from our accounts. Life hardly follows a straightforward line, and the unfinished contingency of the real world is ever changing. Like the *gum* spiral, anthropological knowledge is non-linear thinking. It grows by going back and forth, retracing its steps to progress in multiple directions.

[p1] Most of the anthropological data that has been flowing out of the Massim ever since Malinowski opened it up to foreign researchers tends to stay outside of the Massim region. Few people there have access to what has been said about them and their culture. Even if and when part of that information makes a return of sorts, it does so mostly in written or audiovisual form (Connelly 2016; Cooper 2008) and hardly ever in vernacular languages. Knowledge is thus constrained into a shape that Massim ways of knowing did not contemplate until Europeans arrived in New Guinea. What has been written about the Massim harkens back to colonization and the postcolonial era in form and content. The fact that it has been written, recorded, and stored reinscribes that particular time in history in an academic context. In this form, the encounter is already predetermined and not amenable to changes.

[p1] Audiences in Alotau offered a different type of encounter. In ‘Malinowski’s Legacy’, the audience’s reaction to anthropology’s interpretative narratives was articulated through images. Ethnographic performance extends the times and spaces of fieldwork, but also the way that fieldwork is codified. To consider the conference as a fieldsite means to accept that anthropological knowledge can take different forms than those established by the academic orthodoxy – even when this knowledge is debated within a classical venue of academic circles. What the *gum* suggests, though, is

a form of knowledge that is not susceptible to appropriations. Massim ways of knowing, as they are visualized by the *gum*, create interrelated – and sometimes contrasting – views as part of larger iterations. Unlike Kirksey and Helmreich's Salon or the 'contact zone', 'Malinowski's Legacy' did not dissolve boundaries: these kept on appearing and disappearing in Alotau, generating non-exclusionary sites for everyone to express their understandings within a larger, common space.

[p1] What I propose under ethnographic performance is not a method, applied to generate comments on the social world and build models of it with comparative aspirations and universal value. Ethnographic performance tries to provide a space where researchers and researched can participate and act together in that social world. A space that allows ethnographers to give up hegemonic control and move instead into an arena where relationships can be established without having to align them to any hierarchic ordering. It is a question not so much of understanding the world through others but of experiencing it with others, and to do so through exchanges. Throughout fieldwork, researchers and their interlocutors engage in constant exchanges: both parties ask questions and both parts answer them, to the point where it might be hard to discern in which direction knowledge flows, if it flows at all. The (post)script of that experience creates a separation of roles and the illusion that the researcher obtained 'knowledge' from the researched. The result is a worldview to be compared with other worldviews.

[p1] Malinowski in Alotau was not reduced to a script for comparison. He was summoned as a series of images and embodiments, so that he could be associated with other Massim images. To learn about Kula, gardening, sailing, or magic nowadays, researchers must embrace that multiplicity. Like Yolina, the anthropologist's journey must encompass the aspirations of those he or she shares a life with. Ethnographers sailing the Midnight Sun are performing yet another iteration in the ongoing exchange cycle between anthropology and Massim peoples. Anthropological riches, like Kula valuables, are never yours to take home forever, and are without relevance unless they keep on circulating.

[nt]‘Malinowski’s Legacy’ took four years in the making and was made possible thanks to financial and logistical contributions from the Wenner-Gren Foundation (Initiatives Grant GR INIT 79) and the Massim Cultural Foundation. The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) and Curator for Pacific Ethnography Jenny Newell also contributed to my trip to PNG and helped promote the conference through AMNH’s website. I would like to thank all the Trobriand participants (*kadatokisi mina Kilivila komwedona lokumesa manakwa mitin Alotau olopola*), as well as the people from all over Milne Bay Province and beyond who attended (some from as far away as Woodlark Island and Gawa). The conference would not have been successful without the generosity of Chris Abel, Sharon van Boven, and Julius Violaris. Many thanks, too, to the scholars who made the effort to travel to Alotau: Harry Beran, Andrew Connelly, Fred Damon, Allan Darrah, Linus Digim’Rina, Jordan Haug, John Kasaipwalova, Ippei Moma, Mark Mosko, Andrew Moutu, Marilyn Strathern, and Steven Winduo. A special thank you to Michelle MacCarthy, co-organizer of the conference in its early stages, and to the many others who showed interest but could not make it to PNG. My gratitude also to the anonymous reviewers who contributed to the improvement of this article through their comments.

[nt]¹ Clearly anthropologists also engage with the voices of interlocutors and informants through other media and in other contexts beyond conferences (websites, social media, classrooms, museums, etc.). An analysis of those contexts warrants its own study and is beyond the scope of the present article, namely exploring alternatives for the reconfiguration of the academic conference.

² A search of the Conference Proceedings Citation Index – Social Science and Humanities (CPCI-SSH) through Web of Science’s Core Collection shows a total of 275 published items in anthropology and interdisciplinary social sciences for the 2009-19 period. The results reveal that only eight conferences took place in the Global South in the last decade from which proceedings or articles were published.

³ For example, the work that the curatorial collective Ethnographic Terminalia has been developing since 2009 (<http://ethnographicterminalia.org/about>, accessed 18 February 2021)

⁴ The conference was partly funded by a Wenner-Gren Foundation Initiatives Grant (\$5,000). The Massim Cultural Foundation also contributed with transport costs through the charter of a boat to bring a group of dancers from the Trobriand Islands.

⁵ See conference programme: <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/anthropology/news-events/malinowski-s-100th-anniversary-conference/> (accessed 18 February 2021). I have provided a brief of the conference elsewhere (Jarillo 2015), written from PNG shortly after it was over.

At the time of the conference, I had already carried out intensive fieldwork in the Massim (2008-10, 2013) researching, among other things, its material culture, social change, and cosmologies, and was fluent in one of its languages (Kilivila).

⁶ Demographics also played a part in this, as the Trobriand community is by far the largest one in Alotau.

⁷ See National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, catalogue numbers NAA INV 05029900 to 05033600.

⁸ Malinowski's *kasavaga*, a 'ceremonial figure dance' performed during the *milamala* harvest celebrations (1987 [1929]: 295).

⁹ The carvers' actions are also telling of the Massim peoples' attitude towards image preservation. As Kasaipwalova puts it, acts of remembrance and re-enactment take preference over preservation of a particular image or object (Malnic 1998: 143-4). Or, to put it otherwise, images are preserved through their constant re-elaboration, a concept far removed from the Western paradigm of object conservation.

¹⁰ The quote read: '[T]he cardinal dogma of God the Father and God the Son . . . would completely misfire in a matrilineal society, where the relation between father and son is decreed by tribal law to be that of two strangers' (Malinowski 1987 [1929]: 159). It did not quite misfire. The Trinity may not have been fully included in Western discursive frameworks straight away but it was nonetheless adapted as an image early on, offering new possibilities to reconfigure vernacular cosmologies.

¹¹ Master carvers in Budibudi, east of Muyuw, call that symbol *kubwan* instead. They, too, associate it with the morning star.

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Malinowski et le soleil de minuit : le colloque comme performance ethnographique

Résumé

La portée de l'anthropologie est plus vaste que son public, qui tend à se résumer aux seuls anthropologues, tandis que ceux qui partagent leurs connaissances avec l'ethnographe sur le terrain sont trop souvent éloignés des débats anthropologiques autour de ce savoir. La conférence d'anthropologie, lorsqu'elle est abordée en tant que méthode de recherche, s'avère efficace pour réintroduire les sujets de l'ethnographie dans les dialogues anthropologiques. Un symposium organisé à Alotau (Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée) en 2015 pour commémorer le 100^e anniversaire de l'arrivée de Malinowski dans la région du Massim, démontre comment les peuples du Massim transcendent les présentations discursives des anthropologues en combinant images, objets et performances, ce qui leur permet d'atténuer le contrôle hiérarchique de l'anthropologie.

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