Insights
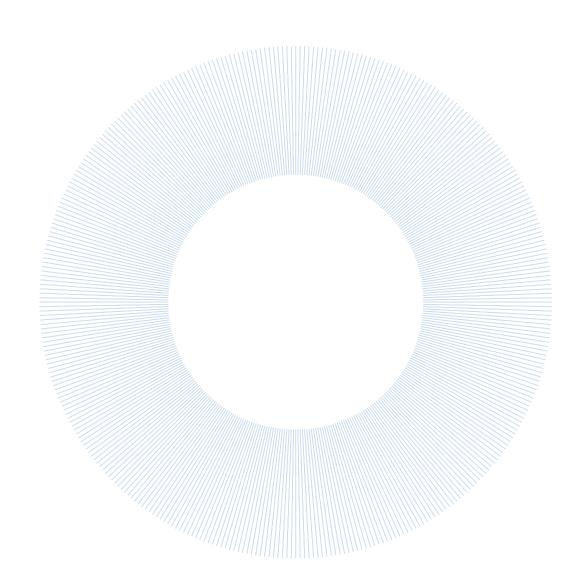
Relative Autonomy, Sociocultural Trajectories and the Emergence of Something New

Frances Morphy & Howard Morphy

About Insights

Insights captures the ideas and work-in-progress of the Fellows of the Institute of Advanced Study at Durham University. Up to twenty distinguished and 'fast-track' Fellows reside at the IAS in any academic year. They are world-class scholars who come to Durham to participate in a variety of events around a core inter-disciplinary theme, which changes from year to year. Each theme inspires a new series of *Insights*, and these are listed in the inside back cover of each issue. These short papers take the form of thought experiments, summaries of research findings, theoretical statements, original reviews, and occasionally more fully worked treatises. Every fellow who visits the IAS is asked to write for this series. The Directors of the IAS – Veronica Strang, Rob Barton, Nicholas Saul and Chris Greenwell – also invite submissions from others involved in the themes, events and activities of the IAS. *Insights* is edited for the IAS by Nicholas Saul. Previous editors of *Insights* were Professor Susan Smith (2006–2009), Professor Michael O'Neill (2009–2012) and Professor Barbara Graziosi (2012–2015).

About the Institute of Advanced Study

The Institute of Advanced Study, launched in October 2006 to commemorate Durham University's 175th Anniversary, is a flagship project reaffirming the value of ideas and the public role of universities. The Institute aims to cultivate new thinking on ideas that might change the world, through unconstrained dialogue between the disciplines as well as interaction between scholars, intellectuals and public figures of world standing from a variety of backgrounds and countries. The Durham IAS is one of only a handful of comparable institutions in the world that incorporates the Sciences, Social Sciences, the Arts and the Humanities.

The focal point of the IAS is a programme of work associated with, but not exclusive to, an annual research theme. At the core of this work lies a prestigious Fellowship programme. This programme gathers together scholars, intellectuals and public figures of world standing or world-promise to address topics of major academic or public interest. Their mission is to anticipate the new and re-interpret the old, communicating across and working between disciplinary boundaries.

Every year, the Institute invites as many as twenty highly creative individuals to spend up to three months in Durham. They are located in Cosin's Hall, a magnificent and spacious 18th century mansion which, together with Durham Cathedral and Durham Castle, forms part of Palace Green, dominating the World Heritage Site of Durham Peninsula. During their stay, Fellows engage with departments and colleges, deliver public lectures and seminars, and, above all, join an international community of researchers to address the theme selected for that year. Further details of the IAS and its Fellowship programme can be found at www.durham.ac.uk/ias/fellows

Copyright

RELATIVE AUTONOMY, SOCIOCULTURAL TRAJECTORIES AND THE EMERGENCE OF SOMETHING NEW

The concept of emergence brings to the fore issues of scale and level of analysis. As 'fully modern humans' – something completely new on the planet – it applies to all of us. Current Western ideology argues for the primacy of individual creativity. Anthropologists were once focused on something in between – cultures, societies, and the similarities and differences between them. Today many anthropologists have become uncomfortable with difference because all they see around them is an interconnected world that seems to challenge any concept of boundary. And yet we continue to see all around us groups that resist incorporation within larger entities. Our focus is on one of those societies, Yolngu society, showing how people can create new institutions that face in two directions – inwards to their 'world' of difference and outwards from it. We argue that humans can do this because of the complexity of social worlds that are characterised by the relative autonomy of their components – such as language, kinship system, hierarchy, mode of subsistence. Continuing societies are particular articulations of these relatively autonomous components, and these articulations may shift over time – coherence is always emergent. In periods of stability the structures that keep these relatively autonomous components in place and adjusting to one another create the coherence, the predictability, the intersubjectivity that makes it possible to exist and to act socially in the world. In times of rapid social change the property of relative autonomy allows groups the space to remake themselves, and fit into and influence newly emerging contexts out of which new bodies of practice emerge. We will illustrate this process with a concrete example of a new institution that has emerged out of a trajectory of change in mortuary practices as Yolngu society adjusts to the impact of European colonisation.

Our interest in emergence comes out of our research into change in Yolngu society.[1] As a broad definition of emergence, we are drawn to the simplicity of the one used for the 2014–15 IAS theme: 'the appearance of novelty'.[2] The very generality of the definition opens debate as to what degrees of novelty are encompassed by the term.

In philosophical discourse a distinction has been drawn between 'strong' and 'weak' emergence, in which the former implies something that is qualitatively and conceptually fundamentally different from the latter (see Chalmers, 2006). Strong emergence cannot be explained in terms of the properties of pre-existing systems or entities, whereas weak emergence is an event or property that can be seen as the outcome of relationships within a system of components. The philosopher Andy Clark (1997) approaches emergence as a systemic phenomenon of complex dynamical systems, which is the product of collective activity that takes place in a particular environment – a definition that applies well to innovation in human societies. Weak emergence is in theory predictable as a possible outcome of a particular situation, given knowledge and understanding of the factors and capacities involved. We see emergence, as social anthropologists,

in the weak sense that innovative behaviour is a characteristic of fully modern humans. Human innovations can be explained with reference to human action in context.

Anthropology is premised on the proposition that despite the surface diversity and genetic variability of human populations living today, any human infant can potentially grow up to be a well-socialised and competent member of any society in which it happens to find itself being raised. At some moment in the past it is possible that there was a major and sudden transformation in the kind of beings we became. When and how we became fully modern is a fascinating question and it probably was a case of genuine strong emergence, of something new under the sun.[3] That emergence may have been a slow, cumulative process, viewable as emergence only in retrospect, or there may have been a tipping point. But that is not our present concern.

Our concern is with the sociocultural processes that produce and reproduce differences between human populations in space and time, and the trajectories of those differences. These processes produce the different people we could have become and hence we should have the capacity to understand this difference. As a discipline, anthropology has had a history of explaining difference but has recently had problems in developing an epistemology that accommodates it. On the one hand we see difference and structure at a distance, but it begins to disappear locally as researchers look more closely; boundaries and everything else become fuzzy. What we see most clearly is relationships and processes, and hence relationality and networks have become the trope of the moment. On the other hand there is an orientation towards ontological discreteness, towards a perspective that envisages societies whose presuppositions about the nature of the world are fundamentally different from those of Western epistemological rationalism (de Castro, 1998; Descola, 2014).

While innovative action is characteristic of human behaviour, as indicated by everyday phrases such as 'creative practice' and 'innovative research', major innovations that gain currency at the level of society and become part of the trajectory of change are less common in human history. Change that we label as revolutionary, be it the development of agriculture, the industrial revolution or the digital age, occurs rarely, albeit at rates that far exceed the rate of biological change. Those changes in technology may be associated with changes in the social fabric and in the configuration of human societies, leading to changes in social organisation and governance. They may also be attributed with conceptual and epistemological significance: 'the Age of Enlightenment' or 'the scientific revolution'.

In the nineteenth century anthropology developed an evolutionary paradigm in which human societies were seen to have been transformed by sequential, loosely articulated, revolutions in technology, economy and society: moving from stone through bronze to iron; from hunting and gathering to agriculture and industrialisation; from band through tribe and chiefdom to state. Corresponding biological changes were not necessarily implied but their possibility did create a distance in evolutionary thinking between the 'primitive' and the 'civilised' that made it difficult to imagine how a 'stone age' forager could act effectively in the contemporary European industrial world. Implicit hierarchies in 'stages' of development influenced perceptions of the synchronous diversity that existed in the world's populations both inside and outside Europe.

Anthropology's job for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was to demonstrate that contemporaneous societies, while exemplifying the diversity of the world's cultures in the present and past, could not be understood as belonging to earlier or later stages of evolutionary development. However, even while theories of racial hierarchy were on the whole

successfully challenged, the idea of an unbridgeable gap between Indigenous Australians and their invaders remained for many a common sense proposition.

Today we tend to place ourselves in an interconnected global world assuming, often wrongly, that changes that occur in one society are likely to have a rapid impact on some imagined 'whole world'. The digital revolution is the future for all human societies and is unstoppable. Social media are with us wherever we are and can only be silenced by the imposition of controls by governments and regulators. It is certainly true that technological changes in one part of the world can have a major impact on people everywhere. Global warming is one instance. Yet anthropologists, as much as politicians, struggle with the enduring nature of difference, where there is neither insuperable ontological nor geographical distance.

Human populations have seldom been isolated from one another over the long term, and boundaries have generally been permeable. But for most of human history societies with very different histories, beliefs and systems of social organisation existed at the same time and often adjacent to one another. Interaction across borders must have always been a significant feature of human societies. In such contexts emergence in the weaker sense of the development of new institutions, new forms and objects of exchange, new knowledge about the world, has always been characteristic of human societies.

A Glimpse of Yolngu History

We are going to look at change in the context of the articulation between two very different societies – the Yolngu, an Australian Aboriginal society, hunters and gatherers with a history of well over 40,000 years on the continent, as against European colonists with a history of just over 200 years in Australia. They were until recently about as separated in history as societies could be, and that history of separation had a major influence on the way that Aboriginal societies were viewed by their colonisers. Indigenous Australians were thought of as conservative and unchanging, as having lived in a stable relationship with their environment for many centuries before European colonisation, isolated from the rest of the world. In Crosby's (1986, p. 18) words: 'when Captain Cook and the Australians at Botany Bay looked at each other in the eighteenth century they did so from the opposite sides of the Neolithic Revolution'. It was then that Australia joined the rest of the world – a world at the end of the Enlightenment and on the edge of the industrial revolution (see Butlin, 1993, p. 185).

The differences in the history of the populations that encountered each other following European colonisation were great, but the view of Indigenous Australian societies as static and lacking innovation was quite false. Australia had been primarily a continent of hunters and gatherers, but its people interacted with populations to the north in Melanesia and Indonesia and internally through trading networks that cut across the vast land mass. Indigenous Australians adapted to great changes in climate and geography as sea levels rose and fell, and there is evidence for change being an integral property of religious practices and forms of social organisation. By the end of the twentieth century Butlin (1993, p. 55) was able to write that: 'In strategic terms Aborigines evolved in Australia from hunters and gatherers to resource managers and improvers' (see also Gammage, 2012).

Yolngu were colonised late by Europeans, with the first mission station being established in their lands in the 1920s. And they have been fortunate to have never been dispossessed of their own land. In the last 90 years, Yolngu have had to adapt constantly to survive the colonial process and their practices are still undergoing continual modification. Often these changes can

be seen as substitutions: guns have replaced spears for hunting game animals and outboard motors have replaced paddles. Western institutions and regimes – schools and employment requirements – have had to be accommodated and worked around. The focus of this paper is on the innovation of a form of ritual so new that the Yolngu do not have their own name for it – it is simply a 'memorial ceremony'. But before reaching our case study we need to clarify the model that frames our thinking.

Relative Autonomy

The concept of relative autonomy (Morphy and Morphy, 2013) is central to our analysis. It is a phrase to which we give an ordinary language meaning, while acknowledging it is steeped in the history of structural Marxism through its deployment by Althusser (1969) and Godelier (1977). We define relative autonomy minimally as a property of 'social phenomena that can be identified as analytically distinguishable components of a sociocultural system' (Morphy and Morphy, 2013, p. 178).

A key example developed by Godelier with respect to social phenomena (1977, 2011) concerns the relationship between kinship and the economy. Godelier's emphasis is on the durability of kinship. He writes that the functions of kinship 'cannot be confused with any others (organizing hunting power, etc.), it is kinship's particular functions that give these relationships a basis in their own structures capable of ensuring their relative autonomy and their permanence with respect to the more or less rapid succession of forms of production and power' (2011, p. 182). The corollary of this is that kinship systems can vary markedly, independently of the economic base of societies.

Australian Aboriginal systems of kinship and marriage varied hugely across the continent. Although in some cases it is possible to argue for a correlation between certain features of social organisation and variations in habitat, this is generally not the case. The Yolngu kinship system has much more in common with the systems of the agricultural societies of the Indonesian archipelago and Vanuatu than it does with that of the Pintubi and Pitjantjatjara of Central Desert regions of Australia.

Similar considerations apply to linguistic variation. There were once more than 200 distinct languages in Australia, but language is relatively autonomous with respect to other aspects of society. *Relatively*, because in its particular context a language is learnt through living in a society and will have certain features that can be argued to reflect aspects of that society. In the Yolngu case, there are many examples of language fit – one is the relationship between language and moiety (see below) (Morphy, 1977).

Yolngu society and the Yolngu world are divided into two moieties called Dhuwa and Yirritja.[4] The moieties are patrilineal and exogamous: a person belongs to their father's moiety and has to marry someone of the opposite moiety. The land is either Dhuwa or Yirritja, animals are either Dhuwa or Yirritja – a shark is Dhuwa while a crocodile is Yirritja. There are separate lands of the dead for the two moieties. And language is modified on the basis of moiety – in one part of Yolngu country, members of the Yirritja moiety speak dialects known collectively as Dhuwala, whereas members of the Dhuwa moiety speak dialects known collectively as Dhuwal. In purely linguistic terms, Dhuwal dialects differ from Dhuwala ones only because of a relatively minor final vowel deletion rule. But the effect of this rule is to produce speech varieties that sound very different from one another, and that are highly salient markers of the moiety distinction (Morphy, 1977). We would argue that such identifiable analogues between language and

social organisation point to structural factors that influence the articulation between relatively autonomous domains of life.

Adjacent Aboriginal cultures to the south and west do not have the same kind of moiety system and have quite different systems of kinship and social organisation. Their languages are hence not patterned by moiety (and indeed not all the Yolngu-matha languages show this moiety distinction). Their material culture and hunter-gatherer way of life is, however, almost identical.

The concept of relative autonomy allows us to view societies as dynamic wholes but with relatively autonomous components that can change at different rates. As we shall see, Yolngu ceased to practise secondary and tertiary reburial within a few years of missionisation – the moiety division, however, is as central today as it was at colonisation. We can also identify sociocultural components that operate at different scales of inclusion and exclusion across the fuzzy boundaries of cultural difference. All Australian children go to school; few Australian children are socialised into incest prohibitions that exclude half of their world as potential marriage partners.

Something New: The 'Memorial Ceremony'

One area in which we have traced the changing trajectory of Yolngu society since colonisation is in the form and content of mortuary rituals (Morphy and Morphy, 2011). We will rapidly summarise the changes that have occurred since European colonisation in the late 1920s. The 1920s provides our baseline but we do not assume that was the beginning of history – only of history as we know it.

In the 1920s Yolngu practised primary, secondary and tertiary burial. The body was first painted with a design that references the person's ancestral inheritance, then was buried in the ground or exposed on a platform. Six months or so later the bones were retrieved, cleaned of any remaining flesh and placed in a bark container. Relatives carried the container from place to place, and kept it on a raised platform when they stopped to camp. A few years later the bones were broken up and placed in a hollow log coffin in the person's clan country. This long process of gradual disposal allowed a space for extended mourning, and enabled the person's spirit to return safely to the land. Yolngu believe that life is initiated by conception spirits associated with particular focal places in the clan's estate and that on death the person is reincorporated within the ancestral realm. The skeletal remains are made gradually inert through the process of the mortuary rituals.

After people moved into mission settlements mortuary rituals gradually changed (Morphy and Morphy, 2011). While the missionaries found the burial practices a little confronting the changes were not forced upon the Yolngu. Over time the focus has moved to primary burial; people on the whole are only buried once. Gradually the painting of the chest has been replaced by other means of connecting the dead to the ancestral domain – we observed in sequence over time the painting of the coffin lid, the placing of bark paintings beside the coffin, and the painting or printing of cloth to be used as a shroud for the body. Although the bones were no longer retrieved, mortuary rituals continued to be extended affairs. Instead of placing the bones in a bark container, clothing and other possessions of the dead were carried around in a suitcase for years. Finally came a ceremony in which the possessions were buried or placed in a hollow log coffin. The songs and ritual dances associated with the 1920s' mortuary rituals continue to be performed in these altered circumstances.

When we began our fieldwork in the 1970s, introduced technology was providing a new possibility for extending mortuary practices. Death and burial provide a context for working out relationships into the future – for determining group leadership, for settling disputes and confirming marriage arrangements and political alliances. A sign of underlying tensions is the struggle for 'ownership' of the body – the right to decide the spirit journey, which groups take the leading roles, and more recently where the body will be buried. In the tropics, bodies decay rapidly and in the past there was little time for disputes to be resolved before initial burial. But in 1974 the building of the local hospital's mortuary opened the possibility for extending the pre-burial period. Yolngu seized the possibility with great alacrity, to the extent that the hospital encouraged them to build their own mortuaries. Today Yolngu keep bodies for as long as is required in large transportable freezers. This means that the body is sometimes kept for the length of time that in the past would have elapsed between primary and secondary burial, that is, for several months.

Having briefly sketched the background in which we see a trajectory of accommodation and change in Yolngu mortuary rituals as they adjust to the changed circumstances of colonisation, we now turn to a more recent ceremony which, though an outcome of their colonial history, is at first sight more an engagement with the encompassing world.

Over the last 40 years some Yolngu have gained fame outside their local area. Yolngu have played a leading role in the struggle for land rights, and since the 1970s have continued to occupy a place in the nation's political life. They have also become an increasing presence in Australia's cultural life as artists, dancers, film stars and singers. And they have played a central role in the development of educational theory through the concept of 'both ways' education. A sign of a person's prominence in Western society is now the holding of a memorial service and in exceptional cases a state funeral (Morphy, 2016).

The offer of a state funeral or holding a memorial service in a person's honour creates a problem for Yolngu for reasons that should now be apparent. Yolngu burial ceremonies are central to Yolngu political life and to the destination of the person's spirit. The burial ceremony enacts an ancestral journey across space and time using ancestral beings located in place to guide or transport the spirit. The journey has to be structured to take the spirit from the place of death, or from the place where the dead body has been brought, to its spirit country (see Morphy, 1984, for details). A state funeral could really only be undertaken in Yolngu country – and that would conflict with European custom, where such ceremonies, typically, take place at major religious sites – such as cathedrals – in metropolitan centres. The funeral would also have to take place on a set day. Yolngu use of mortuaries is designed to avoid naming the day until the politics of funerals has been played out. And then things can move very fast. Yet Yolngu welcome fame and understand the value of having a prominent place on the nation's stage. So they have invented their own form of memorial ceremony.

Today when a person of renown dies there is an expectation that there will be a memorial ceremony that brings in distinguished visitors from outside – politicians, educators, art gallery directors, church leaders, even anthropologists. It is important to note that the subject is always a person who has a reputation outside the community. Clan leaders whose renown is internal to the community will be the subject of a major funeral but not a memorial ceremony.

Each memorial service differs according to the person's engagement with the non-Yolngu world. We will summarise the key common features. A day is set for the event and the clan who would normally organise the funeral (the person's mother's mother's clan) take responsibility for inviting people to attend and developing the programme together with the

person's family. The memorial ceremony takes place before the body has been buried. On one occasion when we were present the person's body was placed centre stage in her coffin, which was returned to the morgue after the ceremony. The ceremony comprises Yolngu dance performances and speeches from distinguished visitors. There is a set timetable and people are urged to limit themselves to five minutes. It is not easy to limit politicians' speaking time and even harder to limit Yolngu dance performances. One ceremony we attended, which was set to end at midday, was not even half-way through the programme by mid-afternoon. The attending federal ministers were getting anxious that their planes would be stranded as darkness set in. They were uncertain of the protocols applying. Fortunately, one of their aides found the courage to approach the Yolngu organisers, who said that they could make their speeches at any time. There is no set place for outside dignitaries, those for whom, ostensibly, the ceremony is being organised.

The Yolngu performances have to be sequential. But the sequence is quite different from the sequence at burial ceremonies. In a burial ceremony, the dances performed belong exclusively to the person's own moiety. The spirit of the dead person can only be guided through the agency of its own ancestral beings. The memorial ceremony is structured instead on the basis of kindred, following a person's line of descent through mother and father and cutting across moiety lines. It is nonetheless important that the Yolngu relatives are happy with the way they have been included or, as an organiser of one memorial ceremony told us, disputes will carry over to the 'real' burial ceremony. The emphasis on real here is significant.

While the memorial ceremony is a new kind of event, it clearly is created out of the articulation between two relatively autonomous societies – Yolngu and European. It is meaningful to both but members of the two audiences experience it and understand it in different ways. It is a Yolngu construction that gives place to European performers who are selected because they represent the person's external renown. What the non-Yolngu speakers say and even the sequence in which they appear is not orchestrated by the organisers – beyond being given a space. The Yolngu performance is orchestrated. As one person told us, it is like a jigsaw puzzle putting together the pieces of the person's life. The jigsaw puzzle of Yolngu performance has no meaning to the observers except as a spectacle – but that is why it works so well for them (Morphy, 2016).

The jigsaw analogy is a good one if it is understood that Yolngu have the pieces to create an almost infinite number of different performances. The dances and songs that are performed and the images that are created exist independent of any particular context. The same song can be sung at a circumcision ceremony, at any stage of a mortuary ritual, at a purification ceremony on recovery from an illness, or in the evening around a camp fire as a form of rehearsal. And today those songs and dances are performed in many new contexts – at a graduation ceremony, at the opening of a building, or at the opening of an exhibition in Darwin, Sydney or as far away as Seattle. Yolngu have cultural resources that can be deployed in many different contexts and hence the creation of this new event, the memorial ceremony. Its stimulus came from outside and from Yolngu engagement with the encompassing world.

Yolngu mortuary rituals usually focus on the sacred law of one of the moieties, only linking clans of the same moiety and hardly referencing the opposite moiety. The person's mother's clan's songs, dances and paintings are absent. It is significant that the memorial ceremony is almost unique as a ritual in involving performance elements – songs and dances – from both moieties and that it centres on the dead person's ego-centred kindred from both moieties. This has the appearance of novelty.

Conclusion

In looking to explain human action in the world it is essential to see it as being multi-determined. The Yolngu memorial ceremony is not just 'for outsiders'. It can also be seen as a context for expressing emerging changes within Yolngu society, as part of a structured process of adjustment, and it is this that motivates the Yolngu side of the performance. Using the systems theory terminology of weak emergence, the memorial ceremony is an event to be performed in an intercultural context created out of the relatively autonomous components of two macro-level systems in the process of articulation.

The ceremony stems from the articulation of two relatively autonomous systems at different levels of existence – it emerges out of both and, in a sense, has two frames of action and two modes of appreciation. On the one side is Australian society, that complex entity encompassed by the nation state, and on the other is Yolngu society with many centuries of existence in place. The Australian memorial ceremony is a familiar institution that happens in different ways for different people – a family resemblance frames its diversity of forms. The Yolngu form will be appreciated and understood in many different ways by non-Yolngu participants, but Yolngu participants will also understand it in a different way from outsiders. To Yolngu it exemplifies emergence into a world in which they live 'both ways'. Yolngu, by acknowledging the need to become part of that world, are joining in the memorial ceremony as an evolving Australian institution in their own way and partly on their own terms. But in joining in they are also involved in a process that entails the transformation of their own society, envisaging an emerging future where their society changes in fundamental ways.

The new ceremony provides a context for working through emergent processes, in which the underlying structure of Yolngu society is changing in subtle but profound ways. The emphasis in the memorial ceremony on the person's ego-centred kindred reflects a change that is occurring in relationships between patrilineal clans, and in how a person's social universe is constituted. Burial ceremonies, despite all the changes they have undergone, continue to emphasise a relationship between clans of the same moiety. The concern with the person who has died is with their spirit substance, which belongs to the clan and which must be guided back, with the help of other clans of the same moiety, to their clan country. The emphasis in the memorial service is on the affinal relationship that forms the basis of a person's ego-centred kindred – their mother's clan, of the opposite moiety, is as prominent as their own clan.

And this is where the concept of relative autonomy can be powerfully redeployed, and the two halves of the memorial service re-integrated. For the European audience, this service is a celebration of this person – as an individual. For the Yolngu audience, by the very act of agreeing to mount such performances, there is a leakage of that European way of constituting the person into their system. The ceremony is the site of coming to terms with Western individualism, but also refashioning it along Yolngu lines, where a person is still, above all else, a person of their moiety and clan, but also a particular individual, with particular ego-centred kindred. It is, actually, part of the struggle against submergence into the hegemony of Western ways of constituting persons and societies. Emergence turns out to be a rather political idea in the social sciences and, simultaneously, something that is very hard to pin down when the starting point is something as complex as the person-in-context.

[1] Yolngu is the term most often used today to designate the speakers of the closely-related Yolngu-matha (matha = 'tongue', 'language') languages (in the majority of which 'Yolngu' designates '(Aboriginal) person'). Numbering over 6,000, their homelands are in north-east Arnhem Land in the Top End of Australia's Northern Territory. We have worked with Yolngu, predominantly those from the ex-mission settlement of Yirrkala and its surrounding homelands communities, since 1974.

[2] https://www.dur.ac.uk/ias/themes/emergence/ (accessed 21 August 2017). This paper was initially written as a seminar given as part of the programme on Emergence, when we were privileged to be fellows of the Institute of Advanced Study at Durham. We have revised it as a result of our continuing engagement with topic, stimulated by the interdisciplinary environment we found ourselves in.

[3] Strong emergence is seen as a problematic concept in analytic philosophy and an extremely rare occurrence if it occurs at all. Interestingly, those examples which might fit the criteria for strong emergence are 'aspects of the mind [that] still strenuously resist ontological and causal reduction; examples include fine grained intentionality, the qualitative aspects of consciousness, freedom and certain normative states' (Bedau, 2002, p. 43; see also Chalmers, 2006). Interestingly, these examples are anthropocentric and are associated with key aspects of our present understanding of the characteristics of fully modern humans.

[4] The moiety distinction is so fundamental and all-encompassing that there is no word for moiety. Everything and everyone simply is either Dhuwa or Yirritja. There is, however a suffix – kunditj – which denotes a collectivity or a set of people from one moiety or the other, thus 'Yirritja-kunditj' means 'the Yirritja people' (with reference to some particular frame of action).

Reference List

Althusser, L. (1969) *For Marx*. London: Allen Lane.

Bedau, M. (2002) Downward causation and autonomy in weak emergence. *Principia* 6(1): 5–50.

Butlin, N. (1993) *Economics and the Dreamtime*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chalmers, D. (2006) Strong and Weak Emergence. In Clayton, P. and Davies, P. (eds.) *The Re-emergence of Emergence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clark, A. (1997) *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Crosby, A. W. (1986) *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

de Castro, E. V. (1998) Cosmological deixis and Amerindian perspectivism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4(3): 469–88.

Descola, P. (2014) Modes of being and forms of predication. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4(1): 271–80.

Gammage, W. (2012) *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Godelier, M. (1977) *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- - - . (2011) *The Metamorphosis of Kinship*. London: Verso.

Morphy, F. (1977) Sociolectal variation in a Yu:Ingu language of north-east Arnhem Land. *Canberra Anthropology* 1(1): 51–60.

Morphy, F. and Morphy, H. (2011) 'Soon we will be spending all our time at funerals': Yolngu Mortuary Rituals in an Epoch of Constant Change. In Howell, S. and Talle, A. (eds.) *Returns to the Field*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 49–72.

- - - . (2013) Anthropological theory and government policy in Australia's Northern Territory: the hegemony of the 'mainstream'. *American Anthropologist* 115(2): 174–87.

Morphy, H. (1984). *Journey to the Crocodile's Nest*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Press.

- - - . (2016) Extended lives in global spaces: the anthropology of Yolngu pre-burial ceremonies. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 22: 332–55.

Backlist of Papers Published in Insights

No.	Author	Title	Series
2012 Volume 5			
1	Elizabeth Archibald	Bathing, Beauty and Christianity in the Middle Ages	Futures II
2	Fabio Zampieri	The Holistic Approach of Evolutionary Medicine: An Epistemological Analysis	Futures II
3	Lynnette Leidy Sievert	Choosing the Gold Standard: Subjective Report vs Physiological Measure	Futures II
4	Elizabeth Edwards	Photography, Survey and the Desire for 'History'	Futures II
5	Ben Anderson	Emergency Futures	Futures
6	Pier Paolo Saviotti	Are There Discontinuities in Economic Development?	Futures II
7	Sander L. Gilman	'Stand Up Straight': Notes Toward a History of Posture	Futures II
8	Meredith Lloyd-Evans	Limitations and Liberations	Futures II
2013 Volume 6			
1	David Martin-Jones	The Cinematic Temporalities of Modernity: Deleuze, Quijano and *How Tasty was my Little Frenchman*	Time
2	Robert Levine	Time Use, Happiness and Implications for Social Policy: A Report to the United Nations	Time
3	Andy Wood	Popular Senses of Time and Place in Tudor and Stuart England	Time
4	Robert Hannah	From Here to the Hereafter: 'Genesis' and 'Apogenesis' in Ancient Philosophy and Architecture	Time
5	Alia Al-Saji	Too Late: Racialized Time and the Closure of the Past	Time
6	Simon Prosser	Is there a 'Specious Present'?	Time
2014 Volume 7			
1	Robert Fosbury	Colours from Earth	Light
2	Mary Manjikian	Thinking about Crisis, Thinking about Emergency	Time
3	Tim Edensor	The Potentialities of Light Festivals	Light
4	Angharad Closs Stephens	National and Urban Ways of Seeing	Light
5	Robert de Mello Koch	From Field Theory to Spacetime Using Permutations	Time
6	Jonathan Ben-Dov	What's In a Year? An Incomplete Study on the Notion of Completeness	Time
7	Lesley Chamberlain	Clarifying the Enlightenment	Light
8	Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis	Matters of Light. Ways of Knowing in Enlightened Optics	Light
2015 Volume 8			
1	Valerie M. Jones	Mobile Health Systems and Emergence	Emergence
2	Stéphanie Portet	Studying the Cytoskeleton: Case of Intermediate Filaments	Modelling
3	Peter Cane	Two Conceptions of Constitutional Rights	Emergence
4	Nathan J. Citino	Cultural Encounter as 'Emergence': Rethinking US-Arab Relations	Emergence
5	N. Katherine Hayles	Nonconscious Cognition and Jess Stoner's *I Have Blinded Myself Writing This*	Emergence
6	Alice Hills	Waiting for Tipping Points	Emergence
7	Margaret Morrison	Mathematical Explanation and Complex Systems	Emergence
8	Tim Thornton	Emergence, Meaning and Rationality	Emergence
9	John Heil	The Mystery of the Mystery of Consciousness	Emergence