

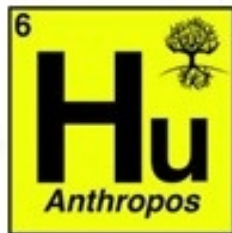
# Anthro / Zine

bodies

Anthro NOW  
pology



September 2015



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# WELCOME TO ANTHRO/ZINE

Anthro/Zine, a venue for undergraduate work of and inspired by anthropology, is a special publication of [anthronow.com](http://anthronow.com). Look for us in April, September, and December, in coordination with our print publication, Anthropology Now. This is our second issue! We didn't give up!

We welcome submissions from current and recently graduated college students of any major on topics relevant to anthropology and culture. Our April and September issues will revolve around a specific theme. **The December is open topic.** Next April the theme will be The Environment. To learn more about how to submit, check our call for submissions on page 5.

## Special Issue: Bodies

Everybody has one. The human body is a universal, but how that is experienced is shaped and informed by our culture. From the emergence of the species *Homo sapiens* to contemporary challenges of transhumanism anthropology endeavors to understand and explain the significance of the body.

### About **Anthropology Now**

Like what you see? Maybe you want to read our parent venue, Anthropology Now, a peer-reviewed journal from Routledge/Taylor & Francis that offers cutting edge research from leading scholars in illustrated articles written for a broad audience.

Check your library for the print version, or if you're rich and famous get an individual subscription for just \$55. That's less than sushi take-out! If you're a member of the American Anthropological Association's [General Anthropology Division](#) you've already got electronic access. There's also plenty of free content available at <http://anthronow.com/>.

# A/Z

## Anthro/Zine

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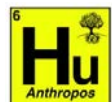
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Thanks to our authors!

2015 September



# **CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**

Interested in seeing your work published in Anthro/Zine? We want to see what you've been up to!

We are looking for authors who can communicate their personal connection to the object of their study. How does your identity or personal history interact with your experience of anthropology? What drew you to this line inquiry? To this end we are making an open call for the following:

- **Personal reflections** on academic topics, current events
- **Reviews** of books, movies, museum installations, etc.
- **Stories** that relate personal experiences or observations
- **Poetry** and **creative writing**
- **Artwork** and **Photography**

Written works should be creative and engaging and should abstain from jargon, artistic works should be relevant to the issue theme and anthropology broadly construed. Bibliographies are not necessary unless you are including a direct quote in your piece. If so then use APA style in footnotes.

Generally we are looking to publish shorter works, including some that are very brief. If you have a longer piece consider trimming it down before submitting it. Suggested lengths: "Letters" – about 200 to 600 words; "Articles" – about 800 to 1500 words; "Features" – about 2000 to 2500 words.

## **PUBLICATION SCHEDULE**

We publish three issues a year: April, September, and December. We are currently collecting submissions for our December issue which is open topic with a deadline of October 15, 2015.

April will be organized around the theme of The Environment with submissions due February 15, 2016.

## **SUBMISSION CHECKLIST**

1. Feel free to direct questions to [mthompson@marinersmuseum.org](mailto:mthompson@marinersmuseum.org) before you submit.
2. For written works use single spacing, no formatting, and save the piece as a .doc file. Embedded hyperlinks are okay, but we are not doing multimedia yet.
  - a. Name your file LastNameFirstname.doc.
  - b. Visual works should be in a .jpg file, or if already uploaded to a streaming service then sharing the URL link without an attachment is fine.
  - c. Do not submit a .doc with embedded images, send the image files separately. Do not submit .pdf files.
3. Send the file(s) as an email attachment to [mthompson@marinersmuseum.org](mailto:mthompson@marinersmuseum.org).
  - a. In the subject line use some of the genre terms in bold from the call for submissions to describe the type of submission you are making. Here just say what it is, not what it is about.
  - b. For written works follow this with a number representing the word count, for visual works write “visual” after the genre term.
4. In the body of the email include:
  - a. Your name, school, class year, and major.
  - b. Write a 1-3 sentence bio about yourself in the third person, include something about your future plans. Then state briefly what the submission is about.
  - c. You do not need to submit a resume.
5. Please submit early. You are welcome to submit multiple works. Submissions will be acknowledged within three weeks.
  - a. If you receive revisions you will be expected to make them promptly.

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# bodies



# We Dance Gypsy Dance

Andria Timmer, editor

The process of learning a culture is an embodied experience. While I learned this in my anthropological training, I did not truly understand it until I experienced it for myself while doing field research in a Roma (Gypsy) village in Hungary.

My process of gaining rapport in the village was very much an embodied one. I had been working in the village for a little of a month. As my research concerned the segregated education system for the Hungarian Roma, I spent most time at the local high school. I even slept in a closet at the school. The students knew me quite well, but I had not had much success in getting to know the broader community.

That was until one weekend in March. A *baso nova* group from Brazil was traveling through and performing in several small villages in Europe as part of a cultural exchange program. Hours before the band was scheduled to arrive, speakers were set up and the villagers began to congregate. The speakers blared popular Romani music and the streets were filled with dancers, and the most enthusiastic dancers were the grandmothers. Grandmothers had earned the right to drink, dance, and speak their mind in public and this afternoon they formed a joyful circle of dancers. In an area where women



become mothers quite young, the grandmothers were not much older than I was, but since I had not yet had kids I was still a child to them. Nonetheless, one motioned me over and encouraged me to join them, which I happily did. A dancer throughout much of my youth and early adulthood, I picked up the rhythms and steps easily. The music carried on late into the night and the women and I never stopped dancing, despite the fact that they were not fans of the music. As one explained to me, there was no guitar, and “Gypsy music has guitar!”

The next day, my status in the village had changed. I not only danced with the women, I danced passably well, and gained and acceptance I had not had before.

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Image of Roma women also by Andria Timmer.



# Creativity from Repetition

Matt Thompson, editor

Its rehearsal time at the outdoor Mountainside Theater and seven men from half a dozen different American Indian tribes are blocked out on the sand floor stage. I'm up in the seats with the director and his staff, also Indians. He addresses his performers through a microphone. "Can this be a modified Grand Entry step? What you're doing now, it's more like trotting."

The dance captain, down on the stage fifty yards away or more doesn't have to shout, the curve of the theater carries his voice up to us. "Compared to the rest of the piece it's a little off," he says. "It feels too powwow-ish."

"I don't mind powwowish," the director replies. "I don't mind it at all. It's better than trotting." Back and forth they go, creating the dance as they practice. "We're not going to fix this here on the spot. But y'all think about it amongst yourself and come up with some different things." Then the director catches the drummer flirting with one of the female dancers. "God damn it. Pay attention!"

The drummer goes back to work and the dancers do their dance with the director speaking to them as they move. "I don't want to get y'all all perturbed. But it does look like a routine. Overall it's nice, it is a little busy."

Then it's a break, "Take five everyone."

The routine of learning short breaks is disciplining, punctuating rehearsal's role in the creative process. Practicing the show is another step in writing the show. At the break I dart out to my car for a bottle of water and when I come back break is over.

"I have something new for the warriors," the director announces. One of the dancers quotes the Walter Hill movie, the director ignores him.

The big new idea is body paint. The warriors will paint themselves in unison in the prelude to the dance. It seems kind of silly and there's a lot of laughter and joking about it. Funny faces and giggles as they pretend to swoop their hands around their bodies. "You're not putting on a bra," the director reprimands. Then more soothing, "This will all be coordinated out. This is just to put some ritual structure on it. All the non-Indians in the audience are going to wonder: 'How do they get the paint on them?' We're going to show them in this nice ritual."

So the seven men line up as warriors with one more on the drum. The director follows with his input, "The motion here is individual, washing, praying, putting on the paint. You could be scared. You can twitch, you can jerk. By the end of this you will have composed yourself and gotten your male courage together." The men go about their movements.

They stop and decide to do it again. Repetition is key to rehearsal. The director's assistant gets hands on and moves some of the dancers' blocking on stage.

They start again. The director commands them to cry out before they start the dance, "When you holler, holler like you mean it. Think about it this way: you're the one standing between them and your family. Think of those people as your enemy." Then he lets out a blood-curdling scream, surprising everyone.

They do it again. And again. The dancers are sweating and breathing heavy in the North Carolina summer. "Take five everyone," and we all stop to drink water.

Dear Reader,

In this issue, for your reference and edification we will cover some of the core functions of the human body. By the end of this article, you should expect to be able to navigate many of the most common activities using your body with confidence. When practicing please make arrangements to be in an open area away from anything fragile and potentially hazardous. For safety's sake use the buddy system and always proceed at your own pace.

--ed.

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# Instruction Manual for the Human Body

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## How to walk

Bexley Lam

To begin, we will be reviewing the "Default Position," also known as standing upright. Please review the following notes and verify that your stance is proper:

- Your feet should be perpendicular to the ground surface with your toes between 90°-120° forward to outward.
- Your knees should be pointed forward and should not be in front of your toes vertically. Do not lock your knees.
- Keep your hips straight.
- Lead your body with your core, i.e. your abdominal to thoracic regions. Keep your chest up and out, but do not overly "puff" it.
- Relax your shoulders and let your arms hang by your side.
- Keep your head high and your chin perpendicular with your neck.

Once you have assumed this position, you will be ready to begin walking.

1. Begin by shifting your weight on to one leg.
  2. Lift your opposite leg with a peeling motion regarding the plantar portion of your foot. Your heel should be the first to leave the ground, followed by the ball of your foot, and finally your toes.
  3. Your knee will naturally bend with this action.
  4. Swing your leg forward. Swing your arm on the opposite side of your body forward at the same time as to aid in balance maintenance.
  5. As your leg comes back down, switch your weight bearing onto it before repeating steps 2-5 with your other leg.
  6. When you are ready to stop walking, simply bring your legs together and assume the Default Position again.
-

## Process of eating, using a burrito as an example

Rowan Cardiff

1. Reach toward the burrito
  2. Wrap your fingers around the burrito with both hands, tight enough to not drop it but loosely enough not to crush it
  3. Make sure you are holding the burrito so that you are facing one of the folded ends. If you are not, turn the burrito until this is achieved. Make sure you are holding the burrito either in the middle or at the end opposite from your mouth, with both hands wrapped around it.
  4. Aim the burrito carefully toward your mouth
  5. Open mouth
  6. Take a bite out of the burrito
  7. A bite is achieved as such: with the mouth open, move your teeth together, hard enough to pierce the food, but lightly enough so as to not cause pain or damage to the teeth or jaw
  8. Chew
  9. Moving the food toward your molar teeth with your tongue, bite softly, repeatedly with your molar teeth on the food, grinding very slightly if necessary. Repeat until the food is softened enough to be swallowed without difficulty or discomfort. Note: do not bite tongue
  10. Swallow
  11. Move the food toward your throat, and flex the muscles in your upper throat to move the food down the esophagus. Note: do not inhale
- 

## Farting tips and tricks

Gregory L. Davis III

- Farts are mostly produced by E.coli, a bacteria commonly found in the intestines.
- Proceed with caution. Most farts are flammable, because of the methane and hydrogen they contain. Further a fart has, at the time of creation, the temperature of 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit and can reach speeds of up to 10 feet per second.
- One person can produce about 0.5 liters of farts a day. Men and woman will fart equally

Steps on how to fart quietly

1. Smelling cannot be helped. No matter what you do, you cannot prevent the rotten-egg odor of farts. However, the stench may be lessened by having a healthy diet.
2. Squeeze your butt-cheeks together. This will prevent the fart from being too loud.
3. Hold it in. It's uncomfortable. It's sometimes painful. But hold it in for as long as possible until it goes away or you have time to run to another room/bathroom.
4. Get out all your farts before you enter a potentially embarrassing situation (job interview, funeral). However, some situations, such as talking to your crush, cannot be prepared for, so you'll just have to pray really hard.
5. Release it little-by-little. Slowly and discreetly let little farts out instead of one giant ripper. People are less likely to notice these.
6. Spray a can of Febreze. People will smell the nice Febreze instead of your flatulence.

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## Smoking

Matthew Rondon

Be it because you stressed, tired, hungry, etc. Smoking a substance is activity only humans have been able to evolve to do. So how do you smoke?

1. Decide if you really want to inhale smoke into your lungs. (How to decide is another tutorial).
2. Acquire a smokeable substance. For the purpose of this tutorial, we are discussing tobacco.
3. Remove the product from the packaging, be sure to read all the safety and health instructions
4. Step outside. Remember it's illegal to smoke indoors in public areas and not a good idea in private either.
5. After ignoring the safety and health information, proceed to place one end in your mouth.
6. Reach into your pocket, or whatever receptacle you have your ignition device located in.
7. Once the ignition device is lit, slowly inhale as you place the open flame onto the tobacco.
8. Let that mellow smoke fill your lungs and exhale.
9. Once you realize that the smoke isn't mellow, and is actually harsh, hot, irritating, and poisonous, start hacking the smoke all over the place. BONUS if you cough into someone else's face!
10. Try to finish the cigarette, or whatever else you're smoking. Fail.
11. Toss it, and walk back inside to take pain killers for the headache that the tobacco gave you.
12. Question why you smoked in the first place, and swear you'll never smoke again.

13. Repeat later in the week, and continue this long, expensive, and health-damaging addiction for the rest of your life.

I hope that this tutorial helps you start, or rather stay away from, smoking. Humans have adapted to environments on every corner on this planet, and not only survived, but thrived. We are able to continue our species, because of the adaptations and habits that have evolved with us. But that doesn't mean that every adaptation and habit is good for the survivability of its species.

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## Washing your mouth

David Griffith

The bodily task we will be going over for this portion of the Instruction Manual is washing your mouth with mouth wash. This is a task that a human should do on average twice a day. Note: this task is not to replace the task of flossing your teeth. The steps for this process are below.

1. You need to have purchased mouthwash from any convenience or grocery store. You can select different types of mouthwash based on your freshness goals.
2. Twist the cap of the mouthwash off. To do this use your non-dominant hand to hold the center base of the bottle. Use your dominant hand to grab the cap. Make sure you use your brain to control the muscles of your hand.
3. Now, maintain your grip with your non-dominant hand and begin to twist the cap counter-clockwise with your dominant hand. Once again, be sure to be using your brain to control the muscles of your hand.

4. Place the cap with the open-end facing up.
5. You need to pour the standard amount of mouthwash (generally 20 ml) into a small cup. Most mouthwashes use the cap of the mouthwash as the cup. To do so use your dominant hand to tip the bottle over so that the open end of the bottle pours a liquid into the cap. Be sure to use your brain so that you control your hands properly.
6. Using either your dominant hand or non-dominant hand, pick up the cup and bring to your mouth. (Continuously using your brain to control).
7. Open your mouth using your brain to control it and pour the cup of mouthwash into your mouth. Do NOT swallow mouth wash. If you do, call poison control.
8. Now, begin to swish the mouthwash all around the inside of your mouth. To do this you allow air in each of your cheeks, your upper lip area, and your bottom lip area at separate times. Use your brain to control this feature of your body. This will cause the mouthwash to move back and forth inside your mouth. Do this for 30 to 60 seconds.
9. To keep time either count in your head or watch a clock count for thirty seconds to one minute. You must understand the basic concepts of time to do this.
10. Spit out the mouthwash into a sink or other disposable area that accepts liquids.
11. Put the cap back on the bottle and tighten by using your brain to control your dominant hand handling the cap and the non-

dominant hand handling the bottle. Twist the cap in the clockwise direction relative to the opening of the bottle. Use your brain for control of your hands and sense of direction.

12. Do not eat or drink anything for ½ hour to one hour depending on your brand of mouthwash. Use a clock or count in your head to know how long it has been.
13. Make sure to do this twice a day.

## **How to take a bite out of a sandwich**

Ryan Leavey

1. Use eyes to locate sandwich
2. Move dominate arm towards the sandwich
3. Hover hand over the sandwich
4. Grip sandwich with your hand
5. Make sure the grip of sandwich is strong enough so you don't drop it and become sad
6. Rotate hand so when you bring the sandwich up you don't bite your hand
7. Move arm in a upward motion towards the mouth
8. Once sandwich is close to mouth, open the mouth
9. Insert sandwich in the mouth
10. Close mouth and bite sandwich with your teeth
11. Continue to keep mouth close and chew sandwich with teeth
12. Swallow food
13. Repeat steps 9-12 or move arm down towards plate and drop sandwich on the plate
14. If you drop sandwich on a plate repeat steps 1-12 to repeat bite from sandwich

## How to Eat with a Spoon

Johnathan Sciance

1. The spoon should be sitting on the table next to your food, place the hand you feel most comfortable using (your dominant hand) palm down over the spoon, with the curved part away from you.
2. Curl your fingers in under the spoon and towards your thumb, while moving your thumb towards your fingers, this should provide enough pressure to pick up the spoon.
3. Angle the spoon so that the curved bowl of the spoon points downward
4. Lift your index finger (the one closest to your thumb) off the spoon, and cross it over so it is on the other side from the rest of your fingers.
5. Slide your thumb under the spoon so that the spoon now lies along the middle finger and the thumb, with the index finger resting on top.
6. Applying pressure to the top of the spoon with your index finger, angle the spoon into the dish of food you are attempting to eat, moving your arm as necessary.
7. Before attempting to raise the food to your lips, test with tilting the spoon and arms in order to see how best to handle the food you are attempting to eat. Be sure not to move too far from the dish in order to avoid making a mess.
8. As you bring the spoon up towards your lips, lean forward over the dish in order to help reduce the mess that could occur.

9. Place part of the spoon which contains the food in your mouth, closing your lips tightly in order to prevent spills.
10. As you withdraw the spoon from your mouth, tilt it slightly to empty all contents into your mouth.
11. Eat as normal.
12. Repeat steps 6 through 11 until the meal is complete.

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## How To Flex the Bicep

Justin Siddens

Flexing the bicep is used primarily for aiding in the practice of lifting objects or lifting the body to a higher elevation (normally in conjunction with the quads, hamstrings, and lower back muscles when lifting an object, and with the shoulders, chest, and upper back muscles when lifting the body). Through the evolution of humans, culture has progressively relied on fitness as a means rating of sexual competition. Another common use of the bicep is to express a human's level of fitness – the larger the bicep, the more likely that person is to be sufficiently fit.

The following are steps to optimally showcase the biceps:

1. In the upright position, lift the shoulder directly outward to approximately 90 degrees perpendicular to the torso.
2. Make sure the forearm and upper arm are at 180 degrees to each other with the elbow being the vertex.
3. Also note the phalanges must be at 180 degrees to the forearm with the wrist being the vertex.
4. Twist the forearm 180 degrees clockwise (with your own eyes as the reference point)

5. At this point, with the hand open, the palm should be facing directly upward and the elbow cap should be facing directly downward
6. Pivot the forearm approximately 100 degrees towards you with the elbow being the vertex
7. Clench the phalanges into a fist, resembling a ball-like structure with the thumb being exposed, resting on the other fingers.
8. With the entire arm in this position, squeeze the bicep and triceps simultaneously, the flexing of the triceps will add to the effect of enlarging the bicep for a proficient arm size growth.

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## How to blow your nose

Arden Wolfenden

1. Locate a tissue or Kleenex for a blowing surface
2. Find a comfortable position, I suggest seated as you may find yourself light headed if it is done forcefully.
3. Start with the palm of your hands facing up and the outsides of your pinky fingers touching.
4. Drape the tissue to cover your fingertips and palms and press the pads of your thumbs against the middle of your center finger (or wherever it comfortably reaches) so that the tissue is secured underneath the thumbs in both hands.
5. Maintaining the grasp of the tissue with your thumbs, allow your palms to turn slightly inward to face one another, leaving a gap between the tips of the index fingers big enough to accommodate your nose.

6. Hold your hands in this position as you bend at the elbows and direct your hand and tissue formation to your face and nose area.
7. Once you have found your nose, situate it in the space between the two index fingers. Both fingers should still be covered by the tissue.
8. Close your index fingers around your nose so that they loosely pinch each side, but not too tight as to restrict air flow from the nose.
9. Breathe in deeply through your mouth and then close your mouth
10. Brace your hands against your face and forcefully exhale through your nose, holding the tissue to catch and absorb the discharge.
11. After the exhale is complete pull tissue away from your face by straightening at the elbows.  
*\*optional step: Look at the tissue to view product. This will not be pleasant, but it is a common practice among some people.*
12. Repeat steps 1-11 multiple times if necessary or until your nose feels clean and empty.



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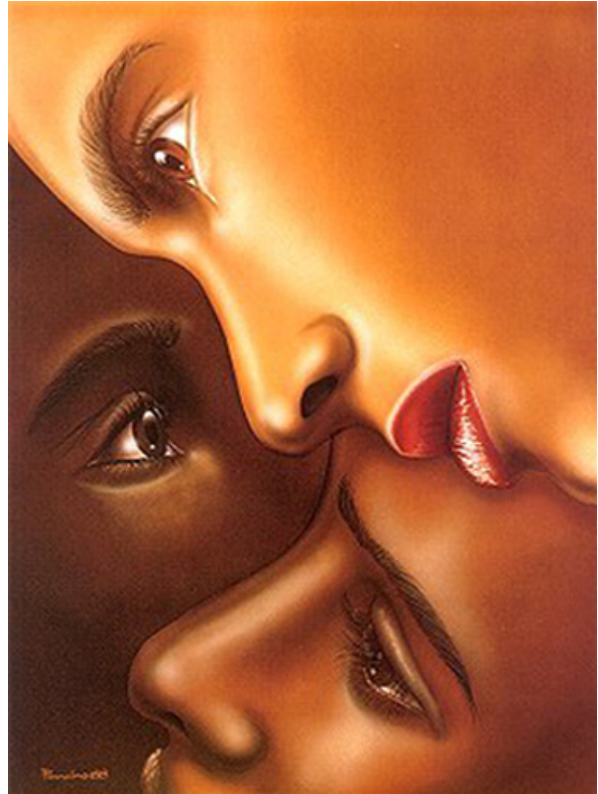
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# The Skin I'm In

Desiree Moore

What I remember most about my life is that I have to be and love myself. I dueled in my core which concluded in a win of strength and dignity. I dueled with my skin and the common, ignorant perception unleashed on me because of my complexion. I remember the sudden moment when I looked into a mirror and saw the skin I'm in. It was some type of uplifting encouragement and for the very first time, my dark, almost onyx black eyes surrounded me and had me notice that there was something inside that was worth more than what I could have ever imagined. I thought long and deep upon myself and slowly meditated until the point at which I could see that I am beautiful. What I saw was much more than a simple glance, but was a certain light shimmering around me.

It felt like love, freedom, and happiness all wrapped in one simple smile. It was an immediate moment in time so to speak. My brownish black hair down to the tips of my toes and then around to the darkest chocolate skin that surrounds, makes me who I am. The skin is an external covering. It's the most sacred and largest organ in the body. I couldn't imagine something happening to something so precious. I couldn't imagine, looking back at that same mirror to see a change from the outside. My skin is the one thing that makes me who I am. It makes me different from everyone else in the world. It has made me realize my strengths and weaknesses. I was chosen to be dark, not light or brown but of the darkest pigment. To be that is a gift and yet a quest, almost like a journey which made a difference in my world of just black and white with no gray in between. To be colored dark. Not just brown or a plain black young teenage girl but dark as an image that is brought in your mind to make a change. A change in me. A change that ended my



relentless battle between me and my skin and even the concave world outside of me. I have grown to find more happiness in myself, my life, and my world. But what I have remembered is my skin is not only my destiny, but a gift or choice but my absolute eternity.

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**Desiree Moore** graduated from Christopher Newport University in May of 2015 with a degree in Sociology and Communication Studies. She is now a graduate student at George Mason University studying Counseling and Development and hopes to work with youth.



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Image of artwork made available through Arts and Culture with Miss Frank ([link](#)).

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# The Body: A Product of Biology or Culture?

Jackie Nguyen

Throughout history, anthropology of the body has been seen as ubiquitous yet still largely “black-boxed” by researchers according to Margaret Lock in “Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and the Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge” (1993). Slowly, a shift occurred towards the idea of bodily representation and awareness of biological bodies as a universal foundation by which culture expresses its boundless complexity. My belief in the importance of understanding the body in anthropological terms stemmed from my pre-medical classes, which I felt underemphasized the infinite variation and implications of culture on the body. Through observing the body in terms other than anatomical, we can create individualized medicine that incorporates factors extending beyond a person’s biological body.

That the human body as a product of both biology and culture can be seen in various ways: from the embodiment of social relations to racialized bodies, beauty, and gender identity. The first example that demonstrates that an individual’s biology and culture affects their body is the link between health and social status. Social status, which varies by culture in terms of the placement and treatment of individuals per class, can manifest in the biological body. As seen in the film “Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?” race, gender, and class all affect quality of life. For example, the CEO of a hospital in the film has lower stress levels due to being the person in charge and in control. On the other hand the other employees, from charge nurses to janitors, all had greater amounts of stress and health issues due to not being in control of their careers and having those at positions above them.

This issue can also be observed in primates who were part of a group in which they were subordinates with an alpha primate in charge. As seen through scans of their hearts, the alpha primate had healthier and less clogged arteries while the subordinate primates had a much higher risk of myocardial infarctions due to the stress of having the alpha primate control them. The body is a byproduct of both culture and biology in that the environment and social issues that surround an individual produces internal health damage that will affect them in the long run. Lack of access to healthcare, prominence of warfare, and chemical contamination of local water supplies all demonstrate aspects of culture by which an individual may experience and in turn will take a toll on their health.

|

**What shapes a person  
is not only what they  
were born with but also  
how they learn to use  
and define themselves  
through the culture they  
grew up with**

|

Another example which demonstrates the body as being a product of both biology and culture is regarding race and beauty today. As discussed by Eugenia Kaw (1993) in her article, “Medicalization of Racial Features: Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery,” the predominant cosmetic surgery



requests from Asian women are Caucasian inspired alterations such as double-eyelid surgery, nose bridges heightened, and nose tips altered. These Asian women who are interested in having such procedures done have noticed a pattern which demonstrates that those who succeed are Caucasian and the only way they can achieve something is attempt to look Caucasian. Another reason why these surgeries, especially double eyelid surgeries, are performed is the desire to fit in to American society where conventional beauty is seen to be White. The dominant standard of beauty in American culture does not include Asian features, and therefore this is an example of how culture shapes the individual body as well. As seen in the film, “Girl Like Me,” many of the Asian girls admitted to considering and even going through with the surgery in order to fit in with their classmates as well as to be seen as more beautiful. American culture stresses the idea that beauty means being Caucasian and therefore in order to be beautiful (and successful) one must transform oneself.

The final example which demonstrates how culture and biology interact to form the body as a product can be seen through gender identity and the body. As gender is a culturally produced term that distinguishes between male and female this is not to be confused with sex, a biological differentiation between man and women. The idea of man and woman is never simple because there are many variations of identity which people link themselves to. According to biology, what makes an individual male or female depends

on the amount of testosterone or estrogen levels as well as having an XY or XX chromosome. However, oftentimes these categories do not line up or a person may feel like a woman but actually have a Y chromosome and was born with male genitals (and vice versa). In this way, biology and culture influence the body in that it is not only what the individual was given when he or she was first born but it is also their culture and how they were raised is who they choose to identify themselves to. A specific example can be seen with Caster Semenya, a track and field world champion who has always identified with females yet biologically has a Y chromosome. Scientifically she would be considered a true “male”. But, as she proves to be another example of biology and culture not exactly lining up with each other, she is a clear definition of how the individual body is complicated and there is not necessarily a socially and politically “correct” gendered body. What shapes a person is not only what they were born with but also how they learn to use and define themselves through the culture they grew up with. The body has always been and will always be a product of both biology and culture and will never be differentiated from either one.

Understanding anthropology of the body sheds light on how a person’s culture may affect their health, and how the body is in fact not truly universal. The way people see their own bodies in terms of concepts such as gender or beauty clearly demonstrates that culture plays a role in what signifies the “body.” As a future physician, I believe that

recognizing how culture influences the body and how it is viewed will allow for more culturally appropriate medical care. The purpose of this personal reflection is to expand the dialogue regarding how anthropology and biology are intertwined as seen through issues such as social disparities in health, and how to hopefully eliminate this in the future with the incorporation of anthropology in medicine.

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**Jackie Nguyen** (UC Irvine) is a graduated pre-medical anthropology major interested in examining the blurred line between medicine and society, with hopes of using this to provide more culturally-understanding patient care.

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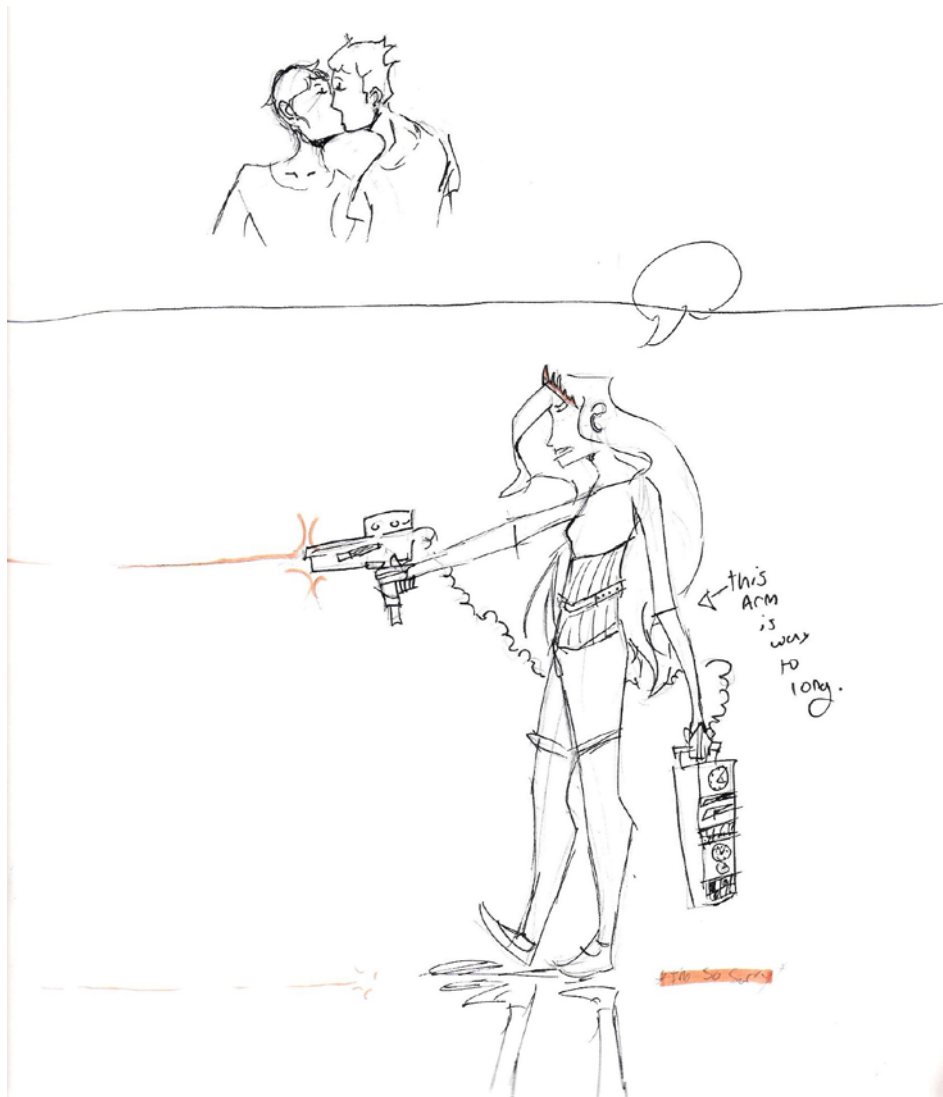


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Image of before and after blepharoplasty on an East Asian woman via Wikimedia Commons ([link](#)).

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# Neanderthals: Were they human?

Coltan Scrivner



Neanderthals, named after the Neander Valley in Germany, were first discovered in 1829, with the type specimen being discovered in 1856. The discovery of the type specimen was a timely one – preceding the publication of *On the Origin of Species* by just three years and opening the floor for ideas of about human evolution. In contrast to anatomically modern humans (AMH), Neanderthals were a much less pervasive group, occupying only the southern half of Europe as well as parts of the Middle East, with the most extensive archaeological evidence falling in Western and Central Europe. Neanderthals controlled this region of the world until about 40,000 years ago. Coincidentally (or possibly not so coincidentally), AMH migrated through the region about 45,000 years ago, allowing around five millennia for the two groups to interact. In addition to the overlap, recent evidence from

paleogenetics and archaeology points to at least some interaction between the two groups.

I hesitate to use the word species here for two reasons. Species is a somewhat vague, albeit incredibly useful, word scientists use to categorize living things. Typical definitions of species include the capability to produce fertile offspring, though this is not all-inclusive (e.g., American bison, *Bison bison* and domestic cows, *Bos taurus*, can produce fertile offspring: the “beefalo.” This is a more extreme example, since bison and cows belong to an entirely different genus as well). The other reason I hesitate to use the word species is due to the fact that anthropologists aren’t exactly at a consensus with the species categorization of Neanderthals. The current acceptance falls more on the line of *Homo neanderthalensis* as opposed to them being a

subspecies of *Homo sapiens*. Perhaps this is a result of our own superiority complex in tandem with cultural notions of how Neanderthals looked and acted. However, the most recent scientific evidence hints at Neanderthals being much more like AMH than previously assumed.

Until relatively recently, hypotheses regarding the cultural and intellectual capabilities of Neanderthals were lacking an ample empirical basis. Much of the argument likely stemmed from the nominal physical differences between Neanderthals and AMH, as humans have an unfortunate knack for depreciating anything that isn't like us. It is also possible that the origin of the Neanderthal description is due in part to the fact that some of the first descriptions of Neanderthals came from a specimen who was aged and exhibited chronic arthritis. Although the specimen suffered from some bone and joint deformities, a reevaluation of the skeleton suggests that the ape-like reconstruction of the specimen was exacerbated by the scientist's own preconceived notions regarding the specimen. Indeed, the very word "neanderthal" took on a derogatory definition, referring to "an uncivilized, unintelligent, or uncouth person." While Neanderthals – with their stalky figure and pronounced brow ridge – did look different from AMH, no real evidence suggests that they were any less intelligent than our own ancestors. It seems that the image of inferiority that was cast upon the Neanderthals derives from the same mindset that endorses "*sapien*" as our own specific epithet. Often the defining features of being "human" involve not only a high level of intelligence, but also language, symbolic thought, and complex social structure. Where do the Neanderthals fall in regards to these traits?

While other species certainly have social

structures, and some primates even display a rudimentary form of culture, humans seem to be unique in displaying a complex form of culture that can be distinctive between different groups of individuals. Archaeological evidence suggests that Neanderthals did live in social groups, as many primates do. However, it seems that their social groups may have been much smaller and more intimate than their AMH contemporaries. Still, Neanderthal sites seem to indicate a social structure on par with those of AMH living at the same time. One of the signs of a more complex culture is the burial of the dead. This not only demonstrates social acuity, but potentially symbolic thought (see the burial at La Chapelle-aux-Saints, for example).

Other indications of symbolic thought and culture can be seen in jewelry. Relatively recently, a team of archaeologists found evidence of Neanderthal jewelry dating back about 50,000 years. In this case, archaeologists discovered marine shells alongside mixed pigments at a Neanderthal site on the Iberian Peninsula. The shells contained perforations, suggesting ornamental use, and some shells had been painted with a mixed pigment. Two years ago, a separate team of archaeologists also found painted marine shells at a Neanderthal site in Italy, dating to about 47,000 years ago. The significance of these findings, aside from the indication of culture and symbolic thought, is that the shells most likely do not represent an imitation of jewelry produced by AMH. The date of 50,000 years is at least 5,000 years before AMH made it to Europe, suggesting that Neanderthals independently created the jewelry. In addition to marine shells and pigments, archaeologists in France have also discovered eagle talons in Neanderthal sites, presumably used for symbolic decoration. Furthermore, the

oldest specialized bone tools to be discovered in Europe belong to a Neanderthal site, signifying Neanderthal innovation before AMH reached the area.

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Along with art and symbolic expression, language is often cited as a defining feature of our species. Language should be understood in this case as a complex system of expressing *thought*, and not simply a system of communicative sounds used in mating and/or protection. Though our capacity for language is a result of many converging factors, two things in particular seem to contribute to our ability to speak: the hyoid bone and a particular allele of the FOXP2 gene.

The hyoid bone acts as a supporting structure for the larynx, tongue, and other muscles involved in speaking. A recent analysis of a Neanderthal hyoid bone using 3D reconstruction has shown that the Neanderthal hyoid would function almost indistinguishably from the modern human hyoid. In addition, Neanderthals carried the allele of the FOXP2 gene that is present in modern humans. Absence of

this gene causes severe language disorders, and so it is believed to be an important factor in our speaking ability. Though these two factors are not sufficient for ability to speak, they are two of the most necessary components. Taken together with the fact that Neanderthals produced tools, a cultural skill that is typically made possible via language, the evidence seems to point to the species having a language of their own. Scientists have even gone so far as to simulate what a Neanderthal's voice might sound like given their physiological arrangement. Assuming that Neanderthal anatomy and social structure is as similar to modern humans as it seems to be, it isn't much of a stretch to conceive of Neanderthals having a language of their own.

Early interpretations of Neanderthals were largely representative of the socio-historical context of their time and not in archaeological or osteological evidence. Neanderthals were seen as an ape-like species, incapable of higher intellect and culture. Archaeological evidence – including examples of symbolic thought, art, advanced tools, and burial of the dead – has begun to paint a picture of Neanderthals that is at odds with the picture of a sub-human, "caveman-like" creature. DNA evidence has also shed light on the similarities between AMH and Neanderthals. Not only do AMH and Neanderthals share about 99.5% of their DNA, but between 1 and 4% of the DNA in our genomes came directly from Neanderthals. In addition, Older specimens of AMH have been shown to consist of up to 11% Neanderthal DNA, suggesting interbreeding between Neanderthals and our own ancestors. Moreover, there seems to be DNA from a third species, the Denisovans, in our (largely Melanesian and Aboriginal) genomes and Neanderthal genomes. This new view of the lives of

our ancient ancestors almost brings to mind a Tolkien-esque Middle Earth, wherein interactions between different groups of “humans” were not altogether uncommon.

A recent, extensive evaluation of the archaeological evidence concerning the technological, social, and intellectual inferiority of Neanderthals has concluded that evidence for Neanderthal inferiority is absent, and there have been incorrect assumptions regarding their demise. The traditional explanation of the “superior” AMH outcompeting and replacing Neanderthals does not have the empirical basis necessary for a strong hypothesis, and seems to be nothing more than a remnant of early 20th century ideology. I don't doubt that AMH may have had a more complex social structure than Neanderthals. However, a combination of social differences, climate change, adsorption through interbreeding, and potentially wolf domestication (though the latter is scant in evidence) likely all contributed to the end of the Neanderthal lineage. Still, our idea of what it means to be human is quickly changing in light of new findings. Perhaps we need to take a fresh look at Neanderthals – as well as the recently discovered Denisovans – when we evaluate the essence of what it means to be “human.”

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**Coltan Scrivner-** (U. Central Oklahoma) is a student of anthropology and biology. He is interested in multidisciplinary approaches to studying humans and their interactions. He plans to pursue a Ph.D. and research in human evolutionary studies.

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Image of Neanderthal model via Flickr user Erich Ferdinand ([link](#)).

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# No Affirmation Needed, thx

Jordan Dorsey

Movies and TV are what inspired me to start a blog about the female experience, but likely not for the reasons you're thinking. Outside of entertainment media's objectification of women, promotion of female competition, and other deplorable expressions and stereotyping of womanhood/femininity, I started the blog due to the utter and almost complete lack of female directed movies and TV shows. Men tell stories about men all the time through entertainment media. Men even tell stories about women and the female experience through entertainment media. Rarely are women telling the stories. Rarely are women sharing their own experiences, their peers' experiences, or *male* experiences. If we women are only seeing our lives as told by men, then we're only seeing ourselves through the lens of patriarchy. Like any other oppressed group, we internalize the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the oppressor and we lose what it truly means to be *female*.

I find there is great power and strength in camaraderie - in knowing that someone else, however similar or dissimilar to you, has experienced something you're going through. My hope is for [No Affirmation Needed, thx](#) to



become a platform for women to share, digest, and relish the female experience. The goal is to gain visibility for women by women (with a conscious effort to include diverse perspectives), and in doing so create a space for all women to feel important, empowered, and ultimately at peace with themselves as women. Women need to hear the experiences of other women, and MEN need to hear them as well. Patriarchy will not end with women standing silently. The strength and social change that could come from creating a higher visibility of the female experience is immense. [No Affirmation Needed, thx](#) seeks to tap into that potential and diminish patriarchy.

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**Jordan Dorsey** was born and raised in Central Virginia where she spent most of her time outdoors with friends and family. She attended Christopher Newport University where she received a BA in Sociology and a minor in Leadership Studies. Jordan has since served in AmeriCorps as a member of the NCCC-FEMA Corps program in Iowa and in the VISTA program in Maryland. She currently resides in Baltimore and works for the ACLU of Maryland.



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# A Woman in a Man's World

Lindsey Kraus

The human body and how people embody their identity has always sparked my interest because no two people embody their identity the same. I am particularly fascinated by how women in politics are constructed and constrained in the political world. There are so few women in politics and it seems like the only coverage about them is negative or criticism based on their outfit choice. While it is common knowledge that women in the political world are judged and evaluated differently than their male counterparts, there never seems to be a solution. Critiques of female politicians' performances, decisions, scandals, and even outfits show how their gender is used as an explanation for their actions as if being a woman is the reason for all of their problems and faults. The common understanding the media presents is that female politicians are influenced by their gender above all and are not to be judged based on their competence. Why does this never seem to change despite other advances? The discourse surrounding women politicians tends to focus first and foremost on their gender and this is represented in her choice of outfit. Fashion become a standard to judge performance and ability of female politicians suggests their motives in a way that male politicians do not experience. You rarely hear a male politician criticized over his choice of suit or tie.

One prominent woman in the political world who is constantly scrutinized and judged is the First Lady. While not elected to her position, the First Lady is expected to stand in for the values and ideals of what it means to be a



proper woman. She is constantly vulnerable to critique for violating any expectations and this can be seen in the criticism of her outfits. When the First Lady is discussed in media, her outfit is usually mentioned and used as a platform to talk about other issues. This becomes problematic when she is perceived of violating her role as a fashion forward, yet modest and classic dresser. For example, Michelle Obama chose to wear a red Alexander McQueen dress for the State Dinner held for China. While the dress was beautiful, it was heavily critiqued for several reasons. One, the color red was considered improper and inconsiderate of the Chinese culture, as was the choice of a British designer. Further, criticism suggested Mrs. Obama's dress was too bold and outshined the president and drew attention away from her husband and the honored guests. Not only was her dress improper but she was also accused of violating her traditional role as a woman by drawing attention away from her husband. Critics further used these points to suggest Michelle Obama was endangering the United States' already shaky relations with China. The First Lady's choice of dress was

constructed in the media as is it would potentially put trade with China at risk. This event stood out to me and further sparked my interest in the rhetoric surrounding women in politics.

As a communication major and anthropology minor, I find the topic of women in politics interesting and have aimed my studies toward the way female politicians are criticized from a variety of perspectives. From a communication standpoint, I have looked at the rhetoric and implications of constructing women based on their outfits, actions, and gender. All of these factors work together to create a precedent for future female politicians and have implications for the stereotypes of women in politics. Anthropology has allowed me to think outside of the communication mindset because I am constantly thinking about all the perspectives at play in a given controversy. Both of these influences have led me to question why First Ladies are criticized and constructed based on how they embody their roles as both a woman and politician.

In the case of Michelle Obama's dress at the Chinese State dinner, her outfit choice served as a gateway to discuss politics about China. Through this study I found that the controversy over Michelle Obama's red dress was dominated by outside factors, like the strained trade relations with China. I was able to understand the motives driving the controversy because it was clear that while the First Lady is a prominent role model for the perfect woman, she also an important woman in the political world. While this study was useful in determining the motives behind this specific controversy, it more importantly sparked my interest in First Ladies and what this all means for women in politics.

Michelle Obama's dress choice for a State Dinner is only one of many examples where

First Ladies have been criticized because of their outfit choice. This is a common theme for female politicians and is in part due to a double standard held for women in the political world. It is impossible to talk about women in the political world without mentioning something about their appearance, hair, or outfit choice that is uncommon for male politicians. It will be difficult to change the way women are criticized in politics because they are still seen as a minority and until they become the norm, it will be difficult to judge them using the same standard as male politicians. Critics and the public could benefit from applying multiple perspectives to the constraints these women face to attempt to start conversations about changing the constraints.



I love to study the topic of women in politics and how they choose to embody their gender because there are so many implications and room for change that can be found by constantly questioning the norm. By taking this issue of how women are constructed and embody their gender through media coverage and the public eye, there is room for greater meaning and understanding about how women are constructed as a whole. This can potentially be helpful for future female politicians and change the narrative

surrounding female politicians. While there has progress in working towards equality for women, there is still a long way to go. I think there needs to be a larger focus on these female voices and perspectives in order for there to be change in the way they are criticized and constrained. By questioning the norm and common understanding, there can be room for growth and attention given to groups of people whose voices are not heard or dominant and this holds true for women in the political world.

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**Lindsey Kraus** is a graduate of Christopher Newport University's class of 2015, she received a BA in Communication with a minor in Anthropology. She is currently working towards her Master's degree in Communication at Illinois State University. Ultimately, she would like to use her degrees in communication to work on addressing the constraints surrounding women in the political world.

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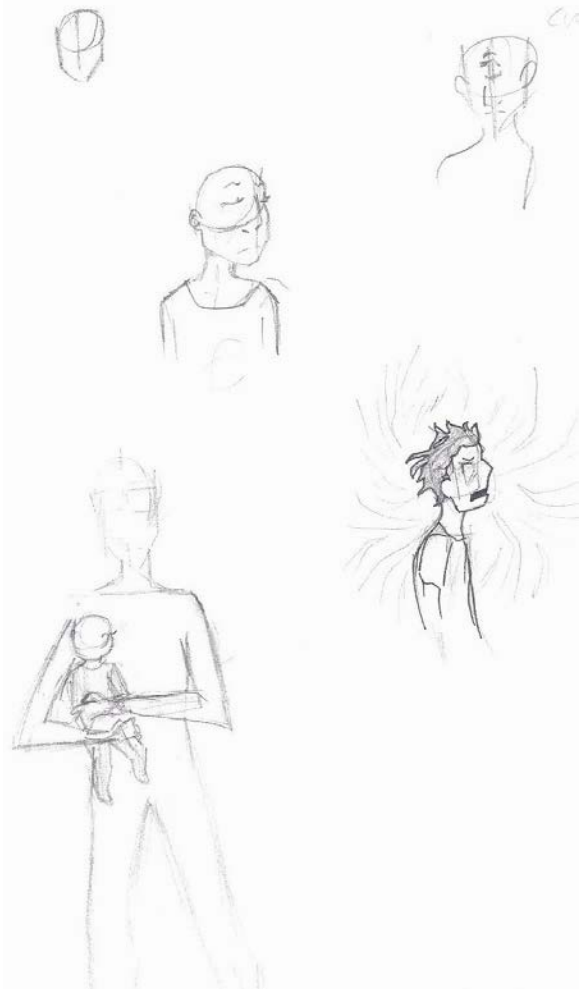


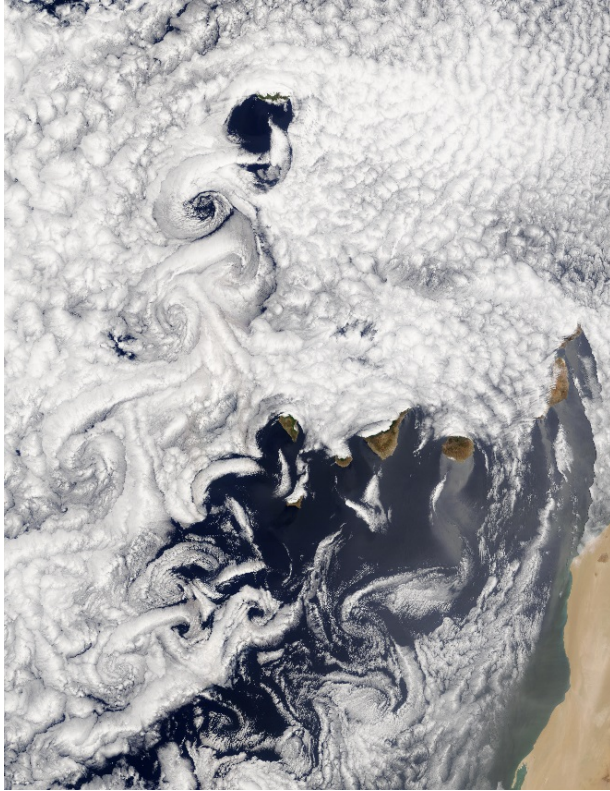
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Image of six First Ladies, via Wikimedia Commons ([link](#)). Fair use of image for educational purposes of Michelle Obama in Alexander McQueen dress from NY Daily News ([link](#)). For more on fair use see [this definition](#) via Stanford University Libraries.

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# Fluid Forces

Brett Weighill

I am not conservative, liberal, cis, trans, black, white, poor, elite, disabled, nerdy, or cool.

I am. And so are you....

Our identity is a river, dynamic and flowing. However, the labels we assign ourselves and others aim to permanently classify, simplify, and objectify. Through this, the river of our identity becomes like an artistic image. Staged, constructed and captured in time. We can show it off, frame it in different lights, and use it as a reference point in our discussions, but we will never be able to swim in the photograph of water. We cannot invite others to feel the flow of the rapids or the cool of the slow bends. We will never float around the unseen corner. The borders of our picturesque label trap us in a sedentary moment and remove our power to change the landscape.

Instead, ride the current. And as you reach the precipice of the cliff, scrape the unknown and leave your mark like the eroding waterfall. In the end, we create our own rainbows.

I am neither dead nor alive.  
I am the falling rain and the rising vapour of an infinite ocean. Lifted up by enlightenment and pulled down by an earthen force.

I am neither artificial nor natural.  
I am a fractal representation of a whole. Cells, clothes, and tools held together by the same energy that locks cosmic bodies in a timeless dance.

I am neither human nor animal.  
I am an agent in the manipulation of matter. A pencil tip driven by biological hunger, skills sharpened by the selective blade of evolution.

I am neither male nor female.  
I am the product of two, four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four.... diverse humans. My body is proof of equal representation.

I am neither gay nor straight.  
I am a social being, drawn in by the glow of a smile, the music of laughter, the dance of debate, and the warmth of embrace. The potential of my love is limitless.

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**Brett Weighill** (University of Lethbridge) is an aspiring ethnobotanist studying the role of culture in constructing landscape, traditional uses of natural resources, and discourses of power through hierarchical symbolism.

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Image of vortex formation over the Canary Islands via [Wikimedia Commons](#) ([link](#)).

